

**Gladstone Area
Water Board**

Expression Of Interest (EOI) Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB)

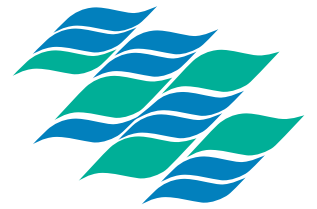


**Recreation Business
Opportunities at Lake Awoonga**
Commercial Operators

Issue Date: 20 November 2024

EOI Reference Number: Lake Awoonga Commercial Operator EOI

Closing Date for Submissions: 5pm on Wednesday 4 December 2024



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A message from the GAWB Chief Executive Officer

We are delighted to open this Expression of Interest for potential commercial opportunities at Lake Awoonga in Central Queensland.

As the owner and operator of Awoonga Dam since 1973, Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) has been proud to offer high-quality, free to use recreational areas for our local community and visitors. We provide these spaces to enhance the liveability of our region.

In 2019, we asked the community what improvements they would like us to make and from this input we formed the 2020-2025 Lake Awoonga Recreation Strategy. To date, we have delivered initiatives including:

- new and upgraded picnic shelters and BBQ areas
- more car parks and boat trailer spaces
- new swimming pontoons and a boat loading ponton
- an additional boat ramp at Boynedale Bush Camp - the Trevor Burgess Boat Ramp
- Increase opportunities for people with different mobilities and needs to enjoy our recreational areas.

These upgrades have further enhanced the recreational areas meaning Lake Awoonga remains the perfect destination for camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, and enjoying a meal at the BBQs.

As well as enhancing the facilities, we are creating more activities for visitors.

Our Lake Awoonga Scavenger Hunt, originally an initiative for our 50th anniversary in 2023, has become an annual tradition thanks to huge demand. Families can search for the elusive Barry the Barramundi from July to October each year.

In 2023, we also opened an educational interpretive display at the Aquaculture Gladstone multi-species fish hatchery, adjacent to Look Out One. Open Monday to Saturday 9am to 3pm, the interpretive display has become a must visit destination for schools, families, visitors and those with an interest in aquaculture.

Now we look to the next opportunity - inviting commercial operators to consider how their business could complement the offering at Lake Awoonga. We are keen to hear your ideas on what commercial operations could be on offer at Lake Awoonga and I encourage you to submit your ideas through our Expression of Interest process by 5pm Wednesday 4 December 2024.

Regards,

Darren Barlow



Overview

Gladstone Area Water Board (GAWB) is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from businesses and entrepreneurs to help enhance the visitor experience at Lake Awoonga by bringing fresh and innovative services to the area.

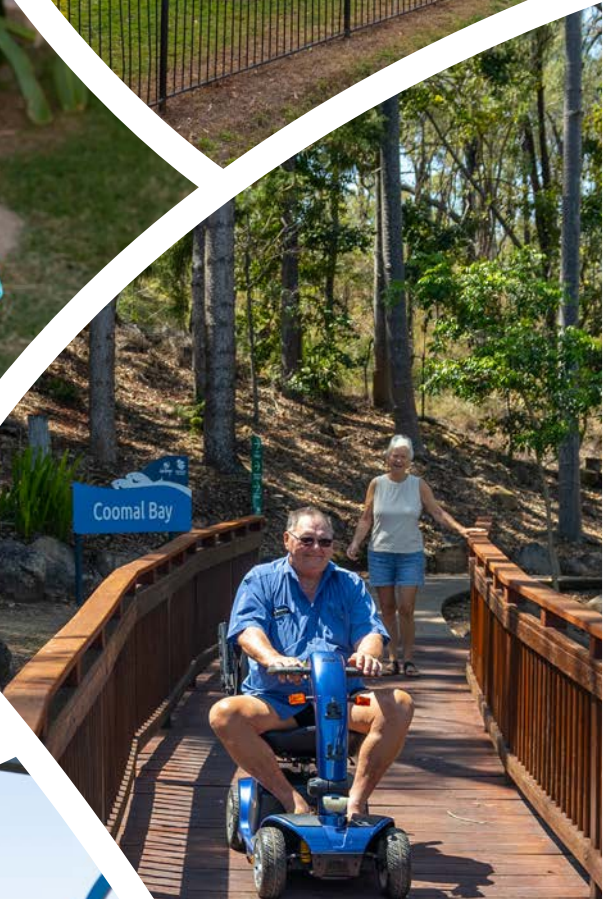
GAWB is open to proposals to explore a wide range of creative ideas for commercial or recreational ventures.

We encourage potential operators to think beyond food and beverage services. Ideas such as a bait and tackle shop, a museum, art gallery, or other unique attractions are welcome. GAWB is eager to hear from those who can offer something distinctive that would elevate Lake Awoonga as a key destination for locals and tourists alike..

This could look like a permanent setup, a rotating roster, or part-time operations during school holidays or weekends. We want to hear your ideas which complement the existing attractions and contribute to the area's vibrancy.

Whether it's enhancing recreational experiences or offering creative services, GAWB invites submissions which will enrich the overall appeal of Lake Awoonga and support its continued growth as a premier destination in Central Queensland.







Location and destination appeal

Lake Awoonga is conveniently located just a 30-minute drive from Gladstone and within easy reach of other major regional centres like Rockhampton and Bundaberg.

Its accessibility makes it an attractive destination for both day visitors and those seeking an extended stay.

Each year, Lake Awoonga attracts approximately 108,000 visitors. The lake is a key attraction in the Gladstone region, renowned for its natural beauty, recreational activities, and peaceful environment. Visitors can enjoy a wide array of outdoor pursuits, including fishing, boating, hiking, and wildlife watching, all year round.

It is also a premier destination for Barramundi fishing and throughout the year there are a number of fishing competitions held at Lake Awoonga throughout the year..

Recently, GAWB completed an extensive upgrade at Riverston Bay, transforming the area into an even more inviting destination for day trips, family outings, and larger events. The enhancements include new picnic shelters, barbeques, expanded car parking, and greater waterfront access. One of the key design features of this upgrade was to support the inclusion of weekend food vendors. Multiple general power outlets and access to water have been strategically installed close to the foreshore, making it easier for vendors to set up and operate with convenient proximity to the water's edge. Additionally, improved accessibility features ensure that people of all abilities, including wheelchair users, can fully enjoy the beauty of Lake Awoonga, making it a welcoming destination for everyone.

Lake Awoonga is also home to Aquaculture Gladstone, a multi-species fish hatchery, which supports one of the largest fish stocking programs in Queensland. This facility draws consistent visitor numbers, particularly from families, fishing enthusiasts and eco-tourists. More than 10,000 people have visited in its first year alone.

Lake Awoonga attracts thousands of leisure visitors annually, making it a prime destination for businesses looking to tap into a steady flow of tourism. This EOI is a unique opportunity for businesses to become part of this vibrant and growing destination. Your business will be positioned at the heart of a popular, much loved location, benefitting from consistent visitor traffic and the lake's growing reputation as a must-visit spot in the Gladstone region.





Vision for Lake Awoonga

Lake Awoonga is a unique and vital part of the region's natural beauty, serving as both a recreational hub and an ecological treasure.





Identity as a destination:

Recognising the beauty of the natural environment, with its rich biodiversity and scenic surroundings, Lake Awoonga is a must-visit destination. While there are competitive offerings in nearby areas, Lake Awoonga stands out due to its unparalleled ecology diversity, making it a unique wildlife refuge close to the coast. With over 220 bird species, including vulnerable and endangered species like the Southern Squatter Pigeon and the Red Goshawk, the lake is a key destination for wildlife enthusiasts.

Educational opportunities:

Beyond recreation, Lake Awoonga is a place of learning. Visitors have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the lake's operations, natural environment, and the significance of sustainable outcomes. The Aquaculture Gladstone interpretive display opened in November 2023 and the interest from visitors, particularly school and special interest groups, has been extremely high. Groups are seeking educational enrichment at Aquaculture Gladstone, then looking for opportunities to enhance their visit by exploring Lake Awoonga and visiting key vantage points for the dam such as Look Out One.

Enhanced recreational use:

As part of our commitment to making Lake Awoonga a must visit destination, we aim to create spaces that offer a broader range of recreational uses and encourage longer stays and repeat visits. With the lake's natural beauty as a backdrop, our new and upgraded facilities offer more opportunities for people to experience and enjoy the environment in different ways, whether it's through fishing, boating, walking, or simply relaxing by the water.

Accessibility:

Lake Awoonga is a destination which is accessible for all. Recent upgrades have focused on ensuring the lake integrates different user groups and transportation modes, from walking trails and vehicle access to boating facilities. Improved signage and wayfinding systems make it easier for visitors to navigate and explore the area, ensuring an enjoyable and seamless experience for everyone.

Community-focused:

The lake is a cherished part of the local community, with existing facilities already loved and well-used by residents. Our new and upgraded facilities allow for more opportunities for community gatherings. Lake Awoonga is and will remain a place for people to come together, relax, and enjoy the natural environment.

Responsible development:

In every decision at Lake Awoonga, there is strong consideration given to environmental factors. Spaces and activities are designed to respond sensitively to the natural surroundings, ensuring Lake Awoonga remains a sustainable and vibrant destination. Our goal is to balance visitor enjoyment with responsible stewardship of this vital ecological area.

Legend

-  Gazebo
-  Restroom
-  Playground
-  BBQ
-  Carpark

Car Park

Awonga Dam Road

Recreation Area

Ironbark Gully



Riverston Bay

Legend

-  Gazebo
-  Building
-  Restroom
-  Playground
-  BBQ
-  Carpark

Recreation Area

Car Park

Boat Ramp

Recreation Area



Scope of opportunity

GAWB will enrich the visitor experience at Lake Awoonga with operators who can deliver innovative, high-quality services which reflect GAWB’s commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

This opportunity invites creative ideas to make the most of the lake’s natural beauty and enhance its appeal as a key recreational destination.

GAWB is especially eager to receive proposals which go beyond traditional offerings, encouraging businesses and entrepreneurs to think creatively about how the existing Kalinda building, boat house, and other facilities could be used. Whether it’s an exciting new recreational service or a unique commercial venture, GAWB is open to exploring fresh concepts which elevate the Lake Awoonga experience.

GAWB seeks proposals in the following areas:

Commercial or recreational ideas:

GAWB invites operators to propose unique, non-traditional uses for existing structures such as Kalinda and the boat house.

Potential ideas include a bait and tackle shop, museum, art gallery, water sports rental service, or other innovative ventures that enhance Lake Awoonga’s appeal as a recreational destination.

Operators are encouraged to think outside the box, offering concepts that contribute to the vibrancy and growth of Lake Awoonga, positioning it as a premier destination for both locals and tourists.

Food services:

Establishment and operation of a restaurant or café within the Kalinda building. The facility caters to a wide range of visitors, including families, tourists, and event-goers, and could incorporate outdoor dining options to take advantage of the natural surroundings.

Provision of catering for events held at Lake Awoonga, including community gatherings, private functions, and corporate events. The catering partner should be flexible and able to meet the diverse requirements of event organisers, ranging from casual to formal occasions.

Operation of mobile food vendors, such as food trucks, coffee trucks, and ice-cream trucks, on a regular rotating basis around various lake precincts. Vendors should offer diverse and high-quality food and beverage options that enhance the overall visitor experience.

This scope encourages creativity, offering a platform for operators to bring fresh, innovative services and experiences to Lake Awoonga. We welcome all proposals that contribute to the growth and appeal of this beautiful recreational destination.



Riverston Bay recreation area.

Kalinda Building

Boat House



GAWB welcomes and encourages interested parties to schedule a site visit to Lake Awoonga to explore the potential opportunities in more detail.

We are open to meeting with prospective operators to discuss their ideas, provide a tour of the facilities, and address any questions. These site visits offer valuable insights into the existing structures and the environment in which your business could operate. If you would like to arrange a site visit or meeting, please reach out using the contact details provided in this document on page 15.

GAWB will review all submissions and may invite shortlisted candidates for further discussions. Successful partners will be offered the opportunity to enter into a formal agreement with GAWB to deliver services which enhance the visitor experience at Lake Awoonga.

Thank you for your interest in operating at Lake Awoonga. We look forward to receiving your Expression of Interest.



Timeline for Expression of Interest (EOI) process

Phase 1: call for EOI

Issue Date: 20th November 2024

This phase marks the official launch of the EOI process, inviting interested parties to submit their proposals. We encourage businesses and entrepreneurs with innovative ideas for the Kalinda building, boat house and surrounding areas to participate. Whether it's a dining facility, retail space, activity hub, or something entirely unique, this is an exciting opportunity to shape the future of Lake Awoonga.

GAWB is willing to offer a short tour of the existing facilities at Lake Awoonga to interested parties. If this is of interest, please contact GAWB via landteam@gawb.qld.gov.au and a date can be arranged.

Phase 2: review submissions

Date: 5th December 2024

Once the EOI period closes, all submissions will undergo a thorough review process. During this phase, the GAWB team will evaluate proposals based on their alignment with our vision, creativity, feasibility, and contribution to the lake's broader ecological and recreational goals, as well as their integration with GAWB's recreation activity framework. This framework ensures a balanced approach to enhancing visitor experiences while preserving the environmental integrity of Lake Awoonga and supporting sustainable recreation opportunities.

Phase 3: formal Request for Proposal (RFP)

Date: 13th December 2024

After reviewing all EOIs, shortlisted candidates will be invited to participate in the formal Request for Proposal (RFP) process. This phase allows operators to submit comprehensive proposals, including detailed financials, operational timelines, and specifics about their planned services and activities. The RFP process provides an opportunity for vendors to outline their full operational approach, including how they will meet GAWB's goals for the site and contribute to its long-term success.

Phase 4: final decision

Date: 16th December 2024

In this phase, the final proposals are carefully assessed, and a decision will be made based on the potential operator's ability to enhance the Lake Awoonga experience. Selection criteria will include innovation, sustainability, and community impact.

Phase 5: contracts issued

Date: 13th January 2025

After the final decision, successful operators will be issued contracts, formalising their role in the development of Kalinda and surrounding facilities. This phase is the start of a collaborative partnership to bring new and exciting ventures to Lake Awoonga.



The Kalinda building is located at Riverston Bay recreation area.

Submission Process

**Submissions must be received by 5pm on Wednesday 4 December 2024.
All submissions should be directed to:**

Contact Person:

Jamie Petrie

Position:

Land and Catchment Manager

Address:

136 Goonoon Street, Gladstone, QLD 4677

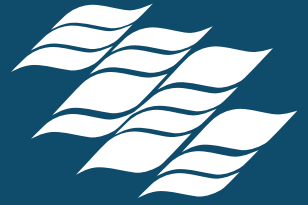
Email:

jpetrie@gawb.qld.gov.au

Phone:

07 4976 3070

Please ensure that all documents are clearly labelled with your business name and the EOI reference number.



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*EOI Reference Number
GAWB2025:
Lake Awoonga
Commercial Operator EOI*

