

# Goulburn Post

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## A frank look at Goulburn

THE draft IRIS Economic Development Plan report on the Goulburn Mulwaree council area is fairly frank in its assessment of the region.

And in our eyes, it's \$60,000 well spent.

While the area has many bright spots, primarily our location and logistical and warehouse potential, the council area has a long way to go to overcome its "key tourism challenges" and attract more visitors to the region.

The list is lengthy, but includes the need for more interesting and engaging attractions, appropriate signage and poor or inconsistent opening hours access to visitor attractions.

The report also makes for interesting reading when it lists three main reasons why some development proposals and relocations are lost; our "perceived lack of water, the reluctance of current business employees to move to Goulburn Mulwaree, and the lack of government funding (particularly incentives and subsidies)".

"One of the key issues holding back the further development of tourism in the area is a severe lack of industry cooperation and collaboration. Successful tourism regions invariably have strong industry networks, and implement cooperative marketing initiatives.

"The separate roles of the Goulburn Chamber of Commerce and Goulburn District Tourism should be reviewed as both serve substantially the same member base and have similar aims."

The report nailed it on the head here; there are too many groups or individuals in our town pulling in opposite directions. We need to focus, as a city, on the same goals and move towards them.

And for a start, to attract these visitors and potential businesses, Goulburn needs to drastically improve its self-promotion.

While Goulburn's population may be buoyed by the odd "tree-changer" moving into the area, the gain is offset by the mass exodus of our youth to Canberra, Wollongong and Sydney.

Dr Ivan Wilden-Constantin's comments in the November 21 edition of the *Goulburn Post* have certainly been validated by this report.

"Many of the local youth feel that Goulburn Mulwaree has nothing to offer them, with no access to work or training, and a lack of engaging activities to cater for their needs. This issue is of a high priority, because, if a large proportion of the local youth continue to leave the region and not come back in the future, Goulburn Mulwaree's economic future will be in jeopardy as current workers move into retirement," the report says.

We can only hope that the appropriate people look at this report, and take heed of its advice. After all, \$60,000 is a lot of money to ignore.