

# Telling the Tin Horse Highway



Interpretation Plan for the Tin Horse Highway – draft for comment  
Prepared by Genevieve Farrelly  
Shire of Kulin  
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*Forward: 'Telling the Tin Horse Highway', is an initiative that will help locals and visitors to Kulin alike, learn more about the unique inspirations, characters and events of the Wheatbelt's most quirky tourist attraction – the **Tin Horse Highway**.*

## **SECTION 1**

### **1.1 Vision for the Tin Horse Highway**

The overall vision for the Tin Horse Highway is that it will become the precursor for visitation to the region and in the future will be packaged with other products and experiences.

The vision is supported by the following objectives:

- Share the story – through sharing the story of the tin horses, visitors will gain an appreciation of why the horses are in situ, where they came from and the inspirations behind them.
- Encourage visitors heading to and from Wave Rock to come via the Tin Horse Highway and through Kulin
- Encourage visitors coming through Kulin to stop in town
- Allow visitors and residence to experience the Tin Horse Highway and its story in a safe, friendly environment.
- Preserve the horses and their stories for future generations
- Provide a manageable and successful tourism experience
- Maintain the 'Tin Horse Highway' as a 'point of difference' for the region

### **1.2 Background**

Kulin has a long and interesting history of horse racing which dates back to the early 1920s and 1930s. With these races so much a part of the Kulin district, in 1995 the Kulin Bush Races Committee re-established a local race meet. The annual Kulin Bush Races are now the key event on the Kulin community calendar and a significant attraction for the region.

The establishment of the Kulin Bush Races in 1995 also saw the birth of one of the Wheatbelt's most unique and popular tourist attractions - the 'Tin Horse Highway'. The tin horses were originally built by local farmers and erected in paddocks en route to the Kulin Bush Races Track (Kulin – Lake Grace Rd) to promote the annual Kulin Bush Races; this route became commonly known as the Tin Horse Highway (THH). The tin horses are made from bits and pieces found lying around a farm and capture the humorous side of farming and Wheatbelt lifestyle.

Through out the years tin horses have also appeared on other roads in the Kulin Shire and in town, creating attractions through out the region. Currently there are over 60 tin horses displayed on the THH, in the town site and along the roads to Kulin, all of which contribute to the THH story. An annual competition is also held in conjunction with the Kulin Bush Races to create a tin horse.

The THH arose from community creativity and was an authentic local response but has since become an attraction in its own right and a popular 'alternative' route for visitors on their way to iconic Wave Rock. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are in excess of 50 vehicles per day visiting the THH, and range from the traditional 'Grey Nomads', families on vacation, and people merely using the route passing through to their next destination. However, presently there is no interpretation of the THH, leaving visitors with little understanding about why the horses are in situ, their significance, history and why the location is special.

The Kulin community has, for a long time, identified the desire to further develop, enhance the THH experience but has been limited by resources and capacity. Tourism WA's Tourism Development Priorities for Australia's Golden Outback 2010-2015 acknowledges the THH as one of the Wheatbelt's most popular self drive trails. The THH is part of one of the state's key tourism routes, Pathways to Wave Rock.

The Kulin Shire has recently received grant funding to assist in developing interpretation for the Tin Horse Highway to share its stories and enhance the visitor experience. And whilst the grant allows the Shire of Kulin to provide technical support, through a dedicated project officer for a two year period, it is vital that community ownership of the 'Tin Horse Highway' remains at the forefront of the project. The Tin Horse Highway was something that arose from community creativity and was an authentic local response. This is the best type of tourism product and it is important that it remains that way. Community ownership and support for the Tin Horse Highway is a vital element to this project if the Tin Horse Highway is going to 'grow' further as an attraction for the Kulin region.

### 1.3 Defining Interpretation

There are many definitions of 'interpretation'. In essence, interpretation is the way in which the story/stories and significance of an object, place or even something intangible like an "event" or cultural tradition can be presented, understood and communicated. It is about identifying and transmitting meaning, creating understanding, communicating and sharing ideas and feelings, instilling a sense of discovery and even participation and then using meaningful, appropriate and creative ways in which to present all this.<sup>1</sup>

Interpretation can and should conjure a vast range of emotional responses from enjoyment and pleasure to contemplation and even melancholy, but most importantly needs to allow for participation at a personal level or as part of a community. Interpretation is an informal way of learning that seeks to influence people's social and cultural capital and behaviour, while encouraging thinking and practices that are economically rewarding, environmentally sound and socially responsible.<sup>2</sup>

*By understanding, people will value it. By valuing it, people will want to care for it.  
By caring for it, people will enjoy it, and enjoyment increases the thirst for understanding.*

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to the following for specific definitions: National Trust of Australia (WA), *Interpretation Planning Guidelines*, March 2000; NSW Heritage Office, Heritage Information Series, *Interpreting Heritage Places and Items Guidelines*, August 2005; National Trust of Australia (WA) and Museums Australia (WA), *Sharing Our Stories: Guidelines for Heritage Interpretation (2007)*,

<sup>2</sup> Information from Centre for Interpretation Studies, Perth College, University of Highlands and the Islands, Scotland, [www.perth.ac.uk](http://www.perth.ac.uk).

## 1.4 Interpreting the Tin Horse Highway

The need for a Tin Horse Highway Interpretation Plan has been identified to help further develop the product and to share the story of the tin horses in a safe visitor friendly environment and to preserve it for future generations.

The location of the THH makes it awkward to provide interpretation along the route. The Kulin – Lake Grace Road is a heavy haulage road and therefore a safety hazard exists between truck and tourist use. With many visitors seeking to take photos and observe the tin horses, it is critical to address the safety issue that exists. It may be dangerous to encourage visitors to stop as there are no formal pull off bays. Also due to the fact that many visitors can enjoy the THH without actually visiting the town of Kulin, it has been identified that interpretation is required to be located in the town of Kulin. This will attract and encourage visitation into the town and provide ongoing economic benefits to the local community.

After consultation with Tourism WA, it was identified that it would be beneficial to construct entry statements located at each end of the THH to define the location of the THH and encourage visitors to go into town and experience its stories. A site on Johnston Street adjacent to the public toilets and playground was identified by the Shire of Kulin where an interpretive shelter can be erected to tell the stories of the THH.

## SECTION 2

Themes are used to provide a focus and reflect the core idea or message which you want to share with a visitor.

### 2.1 Thematic Analysis of the Tin Horse Highway

The Central Wheatbelt Tourism Strategy 2009-2014 has identified the *Tin Horse Highway* as a unique attraction under the 'Growing on Grain' theme. This theme deals with 'Heritage and the built environment: The history of the development of the Wheatbelt', 'Wheatbelt lifestyle' and 'The history of current issues and interests relating to the growing and handling of grain'. The storylines also incorporate the changes in farming and Wheatbelt lifestyle over time.

Under the *Growing on Grain* key theme the division of the principal themes and their associated storylines into primary and secondary layers essentially reflects the conceptual notion of:

- Early Attempts: "who came"....."what they tried"....."success and failure"....."Who left"....."Who stayed"...and ..... "Who is still here"
- Developing the Wheatbelt: *Location of towns and settlement at sidings that gave rise to the location pattern of Wheatbelt towns today.....built heritage (such as wheat silos).....Community and Social life (the local 'railway' pub)*
- Life today - *local events such as shows and bush races and grain handling facilities*

A number of themes which may be appropriate for the stories relating to the THH have also been previously identified.

These include:

- Historical background of the Shire

- Life on a Wheatbelt farm
- Local indigenous stories
- The Kulin Bush Races – history and present day
- Local attractions within the Shire
- Wildflowers - although seasonal
- Local flora and fauna

## 2.2 Proposed Themes and Storylines for the Tin Horse Highway

Many overarching themes and stories have already been identified for the Tin Horse Highway. The challenge is to focus and identify the most relevant, engaging and practical themes for the Tin Horse Highway. A hierarchy of information combined with a variation in approach is critical to avoid visual clutter and information over-load for the visitor and the place. In some instances a theme or story can be identified by an image, a word, a sound, a projection or other sensory experience. The proposed themes have been developed following research and input from members of the Kulin community.

### **Key Theme – ‘Kulin Bush Races’**

The theme provides a context for the Tin Horse Highway and encapsulates the stories behind the Bush Races event.

Principal Themes	Storylines
Early races in the area	Picnic races at Jilakin Rock – 1920’s and 30’s Farming and situation at the time Horses as part of wheatbelt life: farming, transport, recreation, trade
Setting the scene - The Jilakin Race Track	Flora and Fauna of Jilakin Rock and surrounding areas Aboriginal stories and significance Granite formations and geology
Taking a gamble – Getting the Kulin Bush Races idea up and running	A race for recognition: Local community concerns and issues at the time and the need for an event to ‘put Kulin on the map’. Establishing the Bush Races - What needed to be done and who did it?
Running the Race	Early beginnings, planning and effort History of the Tin Horse Highway Inspiration behind using the Tin Horses to promote the Bush Races The effort and drive of the community
Keeping the Bush Races event on track	The annual event and effort The Bush Races through out the years – successes and evolution (such as numbers, horses, prize money, events and attractions etc) Community drive Rural pride The future of the Bush Races

**Key Theme – ‘Much more than metal’**

The theme aims to encompass the inspirations behind the actual tin horses themselves. It will aim to give the visitor an insight and appreciation of who, what, when and how the Tin Horses have been created and the ‘real’ meaning behind the quirky, clever sculptures and their makers.

Principal Themes	Storylines
Constructing the steeds	What goes into making a tin horse Materials used Installation - farms and property Construction – skills, time, planning, money, effort The Tin Horse Competition
The talent behind the tin	Meet the minds behind the artworks who are the artists local stories and identities Skills – current employment, training, other artworks/projects
Meaning behind the master pieces	Inspiration behind individual artworks The people and characters which they aim to interpret The messages they aim to convey

**Key theme – ‘An attraction in their own right’**

The theme aims to draw on the way in which the tin horses have become a popular and unique tourism attraction in their own right and the story behind it. It also aims to highlight the local community attraction to the tin horses and the competition, spirit and humour of the community who has built them.

Principal Themes	Storylines
Construction through competition	The competition between farmers to make the best horses The competition between East and West to make the biggest horse
Connection to community	Who looks after them Community pride, humour and ‘ownership’ Who enjoys them - the demographic of people who have come to see them (may be able to include some of their comments – available on websites which promote it) The Tin Horse Highway annual competition
Far off the highway – places where the Tin Horse Highway has been featured and found	Magazine/newspaper articles Tourism Awards Fictional stories and poems inspired by the horses Art and craft inspired by the tin horses.

### **General theme – ‘Growing on grain’**

This broader theme helps to provide context for the Kulin Community, the Bush Races and the Tin Horse Highway. The theme deals with ‘Heritage and the built environment: The history of the development of the Wheatbelt’, ‘Wheatbelt lifestyle’ and ‘The history of current issues and interests relating to the growing and handling of grain’. The storylines also incorporate the changes in farming and Wheatbelt lifestyle over time.

Principal Themes	Storylines
Early attempts	<i>“who came”.....“what they tried”.....“success and failure”.....“Who left”.....“Who stayed”...and .....“Who is still here” Who was here before – Aboriginal connections</i>
Developing the Kulin area	growing up on the land Meaning of the word ‘Kulin’
Life in Kulin as we know it today	community events community values other attractions in the area life on a Wheatbelt farm the future

## **SECTION 3**

### **3.1 Considerations and Challenges**

The ‘Tin Horse Highway’ arose from community creativity and was an authentic local response. It was something that started as a bit of fun and friendly local rivalry but has since become an iconic tourist attraction for the Kulin area. The Kulin community has, for a long time, identified the desire to further develop, enhance and market the Tin Horse Highway experience. With the looming increase in profile for the THH through the grant funded interpretation project and subsequent marketing activities, some important considerations exist. If the THH experience is going to be the precursor for visitation to the region then these decisions need to be made with community input and ownership into the process.

#### **3.1.1 Defining the Tin Horse Highway**

##### **Situation:**

Presently there are some differing opinions on where the Tin Horse Highway starts and finishes. Some members of the community feel that the THH is the 16 kilometre road from Kulin town out to the Jilakin Race track where as others see it also including the road which goes west from Kulin towards Corrigin. Other opinions feel that it is all the roads which have tin horses on them, including those in town.



From an interpretation point of view, the location of the Tin Horse Highway is irrelevant. This is because interpretation deals with telling the stories of an object or place to generate enjoyment and interest. In an interpretation context, all tin horses and their associated stories contribute to and tell the story of the 'Tin Horse Highway'. From a marketing, management and visitor experience perspective, defining where the Tin Horse Highway is a crucial factor for enhancing the 'Tin Horse Highway' and avoiding a confusing and potentially negative visitor experience.

To ensure that the best possible solution can be reached, it is crucial to take into account the core aims of the project:

- Provide a manageable and successful tourism experience
- Maintain the 'Tin Horse Highway' as a 'point of difference' for the region
- Encourage visitors coming through Kulin and stop in town
- Encourage visitors heading to and from Wave Rock to come via the Tin Horse Highway and through Kulin
- Share the story of the Tin Horses in a safe, visitor friendly environment
- Preserve the tin horses and their stories for future generations

It is also vital to take into account some key considerations:

- Of the 64 Tin Horses which are currently located in the Kulin area, 47 are on the Kulin – Lake Grace Road, 7 are in town and 10 are west of Kulin Town on the Corrigin – Kulin Road.
- Tin horses on the Kulin-Corrigin Road (and other roads in the district) provide immense value to the THH story and experience and attract many tourists.
- Most of the tin horses which line the roads of Kulin were built by local farmers and community members and therefore the 'ownership' of the Tin Horse Highway and the tin horses is that of individuals and the community.
- Community ownership and support is a vital element to this project if the Tin Horse Highway is going to 'grow' as an attraction in the region.
- Anecdotal evidence suggests that whilst visitors who *only* take the Kulin-Corrigin Road enjoy the tin horses along this route, they often end up disappointed by the seemingly small number of tin horses on the anticipated Tin Horse *'Highway'*.

#### **Recommendations:**

It makes good tourism sense that the location of the 'Tin Horse Highway' is defined in such a manner that it removes confusion and provides the best possible experience. It is also recognised that all tin horses located on all roads in the Kulin Shire and in town, provide immense value to the THH story and experience and attract many tourists. Therefore it is important that all tin horses be part of the Tin Horse Highway experience in a way which removes confusion about its location but continues to promote them as an attraction.

#### **Recommendations:**

Develop a formal self drive tourist route from the Brookton Highway –Kulin turn off to Wave Rock, via Kulin and the 'Tin Horse Highway'.

As there are no set standards or guidelines for developing and labelling something as a 'tourist route' or 'tourist drive', this is something which can be established at will. Australia's Golden Outback (the recognized marketing organization for the Wheatbelt area under the umbrella of Tourism Western Australia) has indicated that this would be a very positive move for the region and would be extremely supportive of such a development.

The name of the tourist route should be strongly linked to the Tin Horse Highway but should avoid using the word 'highway'. This so that the Tin Horse Highway remains a point of difference from other roads in the region. A name such as the 'Tin Horse Tourist Route' or Tin Horse Tourist Drive' would be appropriate.

For marketing and tourism purposes, the 'Tin Horse Highway' be defined as the stretch of road starting/finishing in the town of Kulin and starting/finishing at the Jilakin Rock Road (the turn off to the Kulin Bush Races Track). Entry statements and directional signage defines this stretch of road as the Tin Horse 'Highway'.

Interpretive initiatives developed for the Tin Horse Highway tell the stories of *all* the Tin Horses in the region, regardless of whether they are on the 'Tin Horse Highway' or not, and be promoted as an attraction of the 'tourist route/drive'.

Due to grant funding agreements, the first stage of the 'Tin Horse Tourist Route/Drive' should be to enhance the Tin Horse Highway visitor experience by developing an interpretation plan, interpretation shelter, entry statements and other identified interpretation products. It is recommended that directional signage for both the Tin Horse Tourist Route/Drive and the Tin Horse Highway be developed as part of the first stage.

All other sights in the Kulin region should be marketed as being on the 'Tin Horse Tourist Route/Drive' such Buckleys Breakaway, Jilakin Rock, Walk Trails in Town, Water Slide etc

Encourage the development of additional tourism experiences which complement the Tin Horse Highway as the key attraction for the region.

Benefits of developing a formal 'tourist route/drive' which encompasses a defined 'Tin Horse Highway':

- Will enhance the Tin Horse Highway by formalising its location and providing a clear and recognisable way of getting to it
- Will provide a great opportunity for including and marketing tin horses not on the defined Tin Horse Highway and enhance their ability to become an attraction and experience in their own right which is separate from the Tin Horse Highway but complements the overall experience.
- Will provide an umbrella for the Tin Horse Highway and other tourism experiences and attractions to be developed and packaged under a common, identifiable tourism product.
- Provide a sound marketing base for all attractions in the region.
- Allows for all businesses in the region to promote and align with the Tin Horse Tourist Route.
- Encourage other businesses to develop along a designated 'tourist route' – B&B's, farm tours etc which are not necessarily to do with the Tin Horse Highway but can be involved and aligned.
- Will continue to foster important community relationships and support.
- The West Kulin Whoppa site provides an appropriate place to tell the story of the competition between east and west Kulin and the race to build the biggest horse. By separating the West Kulin Whoppa and West Kulin tin horses from the 'Tin Horse Highway', provides a fantastic opportunity to enhance the Tin Horse Highway experience rather than adding to the confusion of where the 'Tin Horse Highway' is located.

**General recommendations:** For the definition of the Tin Horse Highway to be a successful tourism and marketing strategy, under the umbrella of the Tin Horse Tourist Route, the following associated recommendations must also be implemented in conjunction with the major recommendations above:

Tin horses not on the 'Tin Horse Highway' or Tin Horse Tourist Route but on other roads in the region which lead to Kulin, provide a great opportunity to assist in marketing and promotion. These horses could have signage attached to them (or located nearby) which points to and advertises the direction of the THH and tourist route.

### **3.1.2 Branding the Tin Horse Highway**

A tourism brand establishes a clear focus for marketing, communication, and development of the tourism experience. A brand is a competitive identity that makes a product or destination distinctive and different from all others. A brand refers to the essence, or core characteristics, of a product or destination, which comprises its personality. A brand is the fundamental building block from which all marketing communications and behaviour should flow.






#### **Situation:**

The Kulin Region currently has a number of brands and logos which are used through out the area to promote various aspects of the community (such as venues, sporting clubs, Kulin Shire) and the key tourism event, the Kulin Bush Races. However, at present there is no specific branding for the Tin Horse Highway (see table below).

In 2009, the Shire of Kulin investigated using the Tourism WA branding (with the sun and the blue splash) for the Tin Horse Highway. Some concepts for this branding were developed by TWA however a suitable version was never established. The idea behind adapting the Tourism WA brand to suit the THH was that the product would be aligned with a recognisable Tourist brand for WA.

Since this time, Tourism WA (TWA) have released new 'Experience Extraordinary' branding and are currently phasing out the 'blue splash –sun' branding which has become so varied that it is starting to lose its recognition. Discussions with Australia's Golden Outback (AGO) have indicated that the Tin Horse Highway and proposed Tin Horse Tourist Route should develop its own unique brand which would make it a much more recognisable than the brands which had adopted the TWA branding. AGO and TWA would still be available to provide support to market the product.

The table below highlights the various brands which are currently used through out the Shire of Kulin:

	<p>Kulin Region: Modified versions are currently used by the Shire of Kulin, Kulin Bush Races Committee, Freebain Recreation Centre and various other sporting clubs, businesses and community groups in the Kulin Shire.</p>
	<p>Kulin Bush Races: currently used for marketing, promotion and collateral of the Kulin Bush Races. The design is also featured on the Kulin Town Entry Statements.</p>
	<p>Cartoon Tin Horse: Was created for Kulin tourism promotion of the Tin Horse Highway. Whilst this tin horse recreation has been great in representing some of the tin horses, it is quite limited in its application for branding and marketing purposes.</p>
	<p>Bush Races/Kulin brand: Was originally used for promotion and collateral for the Bush Races for Kulin Bush Races but is now currently used as the Shire of Kulin banner on website.</p>
	<p>Australia's Golden Outback and Tourism Western Australia: Currently used for broad Western Australian and Wheatbelt marketing which the Tin Horse Highway is apart off.</p>

**Recommendations:**

A unique brand be developed for the Tin Horse Highway and proposed Tin Horse Tourist Route. The brand should set the general direction for the interpretive product look and experience.

The brand should take into account the Kulin Region and Bush Races branding but have a distinct individual look.

A specialist branding company be contacted to develop a brand, logo, colour pallet and graphic elements style for the THH. This should be done concurrently to the interpretation planning and design to ensure that all media, signage, entry statements and additional collateral design have a unified look and style.

**3.1.3 Conserving the Tin Horses****a) Maintenance**

Maintenance of the tin horses is an integral part of the interpretation of the Tin Horse Highway and for further developing and marketing the Tin Horse Highway experience. Since this is the real attraction, there is limited value in having nice signage and interpretation telling visitors where the Tin Horse Highway is and the stories behind it if the horses are rusting and falling to pieces.

As previously recognised in this document, the Shire of Kulin has received grant funding which allows for a Tin Horse Highway Interpretation Project Officer to be employed for a two year period. So whilst the Shire of Kulin is contributing to the enhancement of the Tin Horse Highway through developing and implementing interpretive experiences it does not have the resources or capacity to also coordinate the maintenance of the tin horses. As the tin horses were/are built by community members, ownership and responsibility for the tin horses and their up-keep should ultimately lie with the Kulin community.

The load could be shared by having an annual community day to encourage all tin horse 'owners' and volunteers to fix up and paint the horses. An annual event such as this would allow for the required work to be done on the horses on an annual basis, ensure the task does not end up with one person and would also foster and encourage community participation (including those who have not built tin horses). The event could be tied into a Kulin community BBQ or event which recognises the contribution of its volunteers. Grant funding is available for such events.

**Recommendations:**

The Kulin community continue to maintain the tin horses with the support of the Shire of Kulin and Kulin Bush Races Committee where possible and appropriate.

Bush Races Committee considers contributing an monetary amount on annual basis for the maintenance of the Tin Horses (to help cover costs of paint etc)

The Shire of Kulin allocates an annual monetary amount for the maintenance of the Tin Horse Highway interpretive infrastructure and other associated costs (i.e. re-printing brochures, website management, signs etc).

The Shire of Kulin provides assistance and support of the Tin Horse Highway maintenance through:

- Assistance with legislative and technical requirements
- Seek community/volunteer grants to assist with tin horse maintenance in partnership with the Kulin Bush Races Committee and the Kulin community

### **b) Security and Vandalism**

Over the years there have been some issues with Tin Horses getting stolen and/or vandalised. Fortunately in the past, these occurrences have been limited to fairly isolated events. However, with the Tin Horse Highway experience and profile set to be enhanced, there is unfortunately potential for anti-social events such as this to increase.

#### **Recommendation:**

Any new tin horses developed should be designed to limit the occurrence of theft and /or vandalism such as being able to be anchored to the ground or suitable point. It should also be encouraged that existing horses be given these measures to discourage anti-social behaviour.

### **3.1.5 Tin Horse Competition and Bush Races**

**Situation:** The Kulin Bush Races Committee currently manages the annual Tin Horse Competition. The competition is advertised in the months leading up to the Bush Races and are then judged on the Bush Races weekend. In the past there has been very generous prize money offered for the winning steed.

#### **Recommendations:**

All new tin horses should be encouraged to be placed on to the Tin Horse Highway.

The Bush Races Committee continues to be the lead organisation for the Tin Horse Competition with input from the Shire of Kulin when required or appropriate.

### **3.1.6 Kulin Resource Centre**

**Situation:** The Kulin Resource Centre incorporates the Community Resource Centre, Library and Health Centre and offers a range of community services from vehicle licensing and registration to internet access and publication printing. The Kulin Resource Centre is also currently the primary contact for visitors seeking tourist information about the Tin Horse Highway and other sites of interest in the region. It houses a photographic display on attractions in the region and also sells some simple souvenirs such as post cards and wrapping paper.

Staff at the Resource Centre feel that it is functioning adequately as a Visitor Information Centre but believe that some extra resources such as a list of attractions, maps of the area and surrounding areas (with un-sealed roads labelled), some extra souvenirs and some additional brochures would 'lift' the service they offer and create a more enjoyable experience whilst they are in the region.

This interpretation plan recommends a suite of Tin Horse Highway themed visitor resources which will greatly contribute to the Kulin Region experience, the assistance offered at the Kulin Resource Centre and help raise the profile of the Tin Horse Highway.

**Recommendations:**

In the long term, the Shire of Kulin investigate the feasibility of creating a dedicated Tin Horse Tourist Route Visitor Centre. Such a need may arise as the Tin Horse Highway is further developed and visitation to Kulin town and the region increases.

**3.2 Interpretation Policies**

The proceeding interpretation policies have developed out of the key themes and storylines identified for the Tin Horse Highway in conjunction with the feedback received from local community groups, community members and Shire of Kulin staff. The policies support the Vision for the Tin Horse Highway and form the basis of the Interpretation strategies recommended below.

1. The interpretation of the *Tin Horse Highway* should be focused on attracting visitors to Kulin as well as improving the visitor experience generally in the region.
2. The *Tin Horse Highway* should provide an all-year-round and universally accessible visitor service and experience.
3. Installation of any emblematic or representational forms (such as murals, sculptures) as well as visitor facilities (such as seating, pathways) be highly selective and kept to a minimum to avoid visual and intellectual clutter.
4. That interpretation of the *Tin Horse Highway* is supported by businesses and community activities, learning experiences and other appropriate programs.
5. The *Tin Horse Highway* should be brought more alive through interactive tools, strategies and contemporary technology products
6. Interpretation should not encourage visitors to stop on the side of the road or distract them whilst driving (unless in the future a specific amenity is provided for them to do so).
7. All interpretation of the *Tin Horse Highway* should encourage visitors to stop in town.
8. Interpretation should convey the idea that the *Tin Horse Highway* is dynamic and changing.
9. Interpretation should avoid an overload of expensive, static interpretive experiences (such as signage) which will date quickly in interpretive relevance. Therefore, interpretive signage used should focus more on the overall Tin Horse Highway story rather than on individual horses (unless appropriate).
10. Whilst it may not be feasible to provide interpretive media in a range of languages, interpretive initiatives should still aim stimulate children/families/non-English speakers/cultural tourists/commercial visitors to understand more the *Tin Horse Highway* stories. This may be achieved through sound, colour, mood, pictures/images and interactive experiences.

## **SECTION 4**

### **4.1 Tin Horse Highway Interpretative Tool kit**

This interpretation strategy recommends a number of initiatives for the Tin Horse Highway to be implemented in a staged manner. The initiatives aim to reflect the vision for the Tin Horse Highway and account for the challenges identified. The initiatives will work to encourage enquiry to provide enjoyable and memorable experiences. The initiatives also aim to be interactive and long lasting in terms of their relevance to the stories. Interpretation should avoid using lots of static displays. This is due to the fact that the Tin Horse Highway is changing and dynamic with new horses being added each year and some being take away. In some cases signage will be appropriate, particularly in the interpretation of the history of the Tin Horse Highway and Bush Races.

The strategy identifies work that can be done based on existing information as well as areas that will need further design and development either through in-house resources or the commissioning of appropriate consultants. Images included in this section are for the purpose of illustrating the ideas and notions being presented as recommendations and are not to be taken as fixed design outcomes.

Note: An 'Audio Driving Tour' for the Tin Horse Highway was suggested as an option for telling the stories and providing interpretation. This has been investigated but deemed inappropriate for this situation, due to safety concerns of encouraging people to stop on the side of the road. An audio commentary would be much more appropriate in a location such as an interpretive space, interpretive facility or other public space.

#### *Tin Horse Highway Interpretive Facility and Surrounds*

The interpretive facility (and surrounding garden) will tell the stories of the Tin Horse Highway, giving visitors a greater understanding of why the horses are in situ and the meaning behind them. The shelter and area will attract and encourage visitation into the town and provide ongoing economic benefits to the local community. Other interpretive elements such as embedded footpath interpretation and picnic facilities with interpretation in the surrounding garden also provide a great opportunity for complementing and truly enhancing the site.

##### *A) Interpretive Facility:*

The Interpretive facility will tell the stories of the Tin Horse Highway and provide a fantastic attraction and rest point for visitors in town. With one of the key aims for this project being to encourage visitors coming through Kulin to stop in town, the interpretive facility will play the key role in achieving this. The facility will need to be unique and attractive, hold peoples attention and make a break in a visitor's journey worth while. In its initial brief, the Kulin Shire had identified that it wanted to investigate a visitor information shelter structure type however following investigations; it is recommended that the Shire explore constructing an interpretive facility which is not as complex as an interpretive centre but has more of a visitor centre feel than a shelter or gazebo. The complexity of this shelter will be obviously determined by cost.

A site on Johnston Street adjacent to the public toilets and playground was identified by the Shire of Kulin where an interpretive shelter could be erected however, this will need to be reviewed in light of the recently planned heavy haulage freight route and extension of the main street (High Street) which is expected to be constructed in 2012/2013 financial year. Careful planning of a 'tourist precinct' will be undertaken to ensure that visitors are still directed into



town. The precinct will incorporate the land in-between Johnston Street and the new haulage route (existing railway alignment) which extends from the Kulin Community Resource Centre to the car park on the south west side of the proposed fuel facility.

**Recommendations:**

The facility be of an custom architectural design which interprets the quirky values of the Tin Horse Highway - incorporating elements of metal, colour and reflect the Tin Horse Highway 'brand'.

The interpretive facility be designed to support an arras of interpretive media such as signage, electronic media, interactive activities and show cases which could house a changing display of THH associated artefacts.

The main supporting features of the facility be available to attach or incorporate interpretive information. Some stand alone signage which forms part of the shelter but is not physically attached may be appropriate.

The facility should provide a range of interactive interpretive elements which will not date quickly in their relevance to the THH. Suggestions include:

- Tin horses which people can sit on/in and take photos of in a safe environment.
- Tin Horse 'game/challenge' which helps to tell the tin horse highway stories.
- Multimedia which lets people explore the individual tin horses
- Artefact display
- An audio visual documentary has also been recommended which could also be featured in the facility
- Vandalism and potential 'anti-social' behaviour of interactive interpretive elements will need to be considered.

The design of the shelter should consider vandalism and security. It may be appropriate to have lighting in the facility and a design which can be locked at night or when needed.

The location and design for the interpretive facility be integrated into plans for the new tourism precinct.

Below are some examples of more complex visitor/information shelter designs. Some elements of these may be appropriate to be considered for the Tin Horse Highway Interpretive facility.

USA: Steel (rusted) and structural glass.



Frankton Bus and Visitor Shelter, New Zealand



Maroochy Botanic Gardens, Visitor Shelter Sun Shine Coast



Mt Franklin Visitor's Shelter, South Australia.



*b) Interpretive Facility Surrounds:*

The surrounding area of the interpretive facility will provide great interpretive opportunity for complementing and truly enhancing the site and add another dimension to the visitor experience.

**Recommendations:**

Consider interpretive elements such as embedded signage into footpath and picnic facilities (tables, benches BBQ's etc). This will allow specific stories of the THH such a short quotes and anecdotes from tin horse makers, images and other information about the area (ie – picnic table can have some information about where else is good for picnics in the region). Everything can be used as an interpretive media such as rocks, chairs, curbs, car parks, street poles. Even something simple like setting old horse shoes onto the pavement provokes thought and supports the THH themes.

Below provides examples of how different signage and furniture can be used as a way of providing interpretation. Such concepts could be applied as a way of interpreting the Tin Horse Highway by using the area which surrounds the interpretive facility.

**Embedded interpretation**



**Signage**



**Furniture**



### Entry/Exit Statements

Entry/Exit Statements will create an attractive formal entry to the Tin Horse Highway and enhance its appeal as a major Wheatbelt tourist destination. The design of the signage should reflect the uniqueness of the Tin Horse Highway and direct visitors into town, highlighting that more information can be found at the interpretation facility. The signage may warn heavy haulage vehicles of the tourist nature and potential hazards which may exist on the roads. Two entry statements will need to be constructed: one in the vicinity of the Jilakin/Bush Races turn off and one in the town.

### **Recommendations:**

The entry/exist statements should reflect the quirky uniqueness of the Tin Horse Highway. This maybe through (but not limited too) materiality, colour, wording, font, shape. It is envisaged that the design will avoid replicating the Tin Horse structures but look more at the elements of what makes the Tin Horse highway so different, unique and quirky.

The Shire of Kulin engage a specialist company/contractor to undertake the design of the entry statements. It may also be appropriate for the contracted company/individual to undertake the branding and graphic design of the interpretation signage for the shelter. This will ensure consistency of product and help to develop some strong graphical elements for other products.

The statements be more 3D in nature rather than a 2D sign. This will ensure that the signage looks more like a tourism statements and not a directional road sign advertising a 'highway' in the true sense of the word.

The statements be designed in such a way that will allow for local trade's people to fabricate.

The location for the town entry statement should be incorporated into the new heavy haulage town bypass planning.



Examples of entry statements – it may be appropriate to apply some elements of these designs to the design of the Tin Horse Highway entry statements.

Take Home the Tin Horse Highway

Develop interpretive print media, some which can be given away as promotion and tourist information and some which can be sold as souvenirs. This will not only provide another interpretive dimension and promotional opportunities but can also help to recoup costs.

**Recommendations:**

*Develop a Tin Horse Highway Brochure and map:* Will provide visitors with lower level 'taste' of interpretive detail and essential information such as safety, location and a map. This can be used as a promotional brochure and available for download on the Shire of Kulin website.

*Develop a Tin Horse Highway Souvenir Booklet:* This would provide visitors with an in depth look at the Tin Horse Highway, its history, its makers and its future. The booklet would be a sellable souvenir and almost be a 'take away' product of the information presented in the shelter. In the future this could

become part of a publication series and sold as part of a package.

*Develop an annual Tin Horse Highway Interpretive Calender:* a simple yet effective way of sharing and promoting the THH everyday. The calendar would tell the stories of the Tin Horse Highway, the local people and stories. Each year's addition could feature different tin horses (including new ones).

#### *Tin Horse Highway 'Tool Box'*

Keeping a well organised record of the information relating to a project is an essential part of interpretation – for both current and future projects. It is highly recommended that a 'Tool Box' be developed to document, collate and present authentic stories of the Tin Horses and their creators. It is suggested that a data base is set up to keep a record of the 'collection' of Tin Horse Highway artefacts, stories and photographs to help with future interpretation and to conserve Kulin Community cultural heritage. Such a data base can act as an interpretive tool itself by allowing visitors (and locals) to search for information about the Tin Horse Highway and the tin horses.

#### **Recommendation:**

A 'collections' database such as MOSAIC © be set up and kept updated to keep a record of the 'collection' of Tin Horse Highway artefacts, stories and photographs which are collected through out the Tin Horse Highway Interpretation Project.

The data base should be kept updated as an ongoing part of conserving the Tin Horse Highway Community Cultural Heritage

#### *Trot around our town – walking trails and self guided discoveries*

A series of walk trails in the town will encourage people who are stopping to further explore and utilize the town's facilities such as shops and food outlets. The trails should encourage people to visit other amenities such as the pool and water slide.

#### **Recommendations:**

Develop a series of themed self – guided walk trails around town which interpret Kulin's cultural heritage and the tin horses in town. The walk would highlight buildings, local characters and heritage through a number of techniques including embedded signage, interpretive panels and print media.

The walk trails be developed to provide 'adventure style' activities for children where they have to visit certain places in the town to get all the clues for a quiz. Something like a 'Tin Horse Passport' would encourage families to go to a number of the town's facilities and businesses where they would receive a stamp at each venue.

### Tech- up the Tin Horse Highway

There are many simple, inexpensive opportunities that can be undertaken to bring the Tin Horse Highway up-to-speed with technology and share its stories in an electronic, world wide forum. These recommendations allow for un-static interpretation and provide a base for additional information and other products to be added, changed or altered.

#### **Recommendations:**

*Website revival:* Up-grade information on Shire of Kulin website to include interpretive information (which will complement the promotional info). Ideas such as having changing Tin Horse 'artist' profile, feature stories and a way which visitors could up-load their favourite photographs of the THH and region would really add value. It is recommended that the entire Shire of Kulin website is upgraded to give it a more 'tourism' look and feel rather than its existing very corporate look. Tourism focused pages would also include the Tin Horse Highway branding.

*Audio Visual production:* Produce a 3-4 min audio visual production which can be used to help tell the stories of the THH but also be used as a promotional device. This could be available on the website, on display at the Visitor Information point in the Community Resource Centre and website and also in the interpretive facility. It could also be used when there are functions at the Freebain Recreation Centre.

*Tin Horse Facebook Page:* Develop a Facebook page for the THH– people can upload information and photos – a great way of promoting, capturing data and feedback.

*I-phone Ap:* Develop an I-phone app with interpretive information. This may appeal to a younger generation tourist (although a lot of 'Grey Nomads' can be quite up with their technology these days) interactive and have similar information to the print media – including audio

### Re-Eventing the Tin Horse Highway

Over time the Shire of Kulin and Kulin community introduce events that build on the authentic values of the Tin Horse Highway to expand visitors' experience of Kulin community culture. Suggested events include (but limited too):

- a) 'Tizzy up your Tin Horse' annual community event
- b) A series of Tin Horse Highway education activities which are linked to the Curriculum (not just for Kulin schools – use to attract other schools to the region)
- c) Explore new or alternative ways of running the Tin Horse Highway competition to make it an event in itself such as having it on at a different time to the Bush Races, enlisting a famous artist to create a tin horse (FOC),
- d) Develop art exhibitions which interpret the cultural and natural values of the Kulin region and the THH – both local and out-side artists be encouraged to display their works (venues would need to be investigated)
- e) Develop a Tin Horse Highway 'travelling exhibition' which can be hosted by galleries and museums in other regions.
- f) 'Horses for Courses' - investigate a range of THH inspired art workshops such as photography, creative writing, metal art, sculpture etc

### West Kulin Whoppa Experience

The West Kulin Whoppa and West Kulin tin horses provide a fantastic opportunity to enhance the Tin Horse Highway and Tin Horse Tourist Route experience. Whilst the general story of the competition between east and west Kulin and the race to build the biggest horse can be told at the Interpretation facility in town, it will be more effective and relevant to interpret the more complex/in-depth story at the site itself and will:

- Highlight the connection and context of the West Kulin Horses to the Tin Horse Highway with out confusing the location of the Tin Horse Highway.
- Act as a tool to encourage people to continue along the tin horse highway providing an introductory and taster to the rest of the THH experience and Tin Horse Tourist Route.
- The site provides an existing safe place for tourists to pull over
- The site provides a relevant place to introduce/complete the Tin Horse Highway experience and also draw on broader of themes of Kulin community spirit and values.

### **Recommendations:**

Develop the West Kulin Whoppa site as linked interpretive experience from the Tin Horse Highway. Use the site to interpret a more in-depth story of the tin horse rivalry between east and west Kulin.
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Use the site to encourage visitors to continue on into town and visit the Interpretation facility and then the Tin Horse Highway
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Market the West Kulin Whoppa sight as an attraction along the Tin Horse Tourist Route.
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