

Monday, 15 July 2019

Perth is no longer dullsville, but we could use an iconic attraction

Perth is moving away from its reputation of being isolated, and is viewed as being blessed with beautiful natural attractions, friendly and relaxed residents and great public transport – according to a new report that looks at how visitors and locals portray the region online.

Committee for Perth and The University of Western Australia have this week released their latest FACTBase Bulletin, which investigates electronic word of mouth and perceptions of Greater Perth on social media, review sites and discussion forums.

The bulletin found social media content about Greater Perth over the past 12 months, and discussion forum content over the past decade, is primarily positive or neutral, with 58 per cent of external residents being positively influenced in their view of the region after undertaking online research.

However, the report also found residents and former residents of Greater Perth are more likely to engage in negative discussions about the region online. Residents and former residents are also more likely to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Greater Perth, albeit sometimes in jest.

The FACTBase Bulletin is consistent with research recently released by Committee for Perth as part of its *Hashtag Perth* project that showed Perth's inferiority complex is potentially impacting on opportunities for growth and investment.

"Once again we find residents and leaders are downplaying Perth's attractions and benefits, perhaps out of self-deprecation or as a defense mechanism," said Committee for Perth CEO Marion Fulker.

"Fortunately, despite this, there is a large amount of positive discussion about Perth online – the natural environment, including parks, beaches and the sunny climate, and the accessibility to destinations in regional WA are viewed as key highlights."

The research shows visitors were also very positive about Kings Park; the Swan River; Perth Mint; the Bell Tower; Elizabeth Quay; St Mary's Cathedral; Scitech and the Art Gallery of WA, while weaknesses include a lack of unique or iconic attractions.

Mrs Fulker said the research demonstrates the opportunity for Perth to create an authentic, unique and distinct attraction, such as a World Centre for Indigenous Culture.

"With more than 60,000 years of continuous Noongar culture, we feel Perth is uniquely positioned to house an innovative, multifunctional and culturally relevant centre that recognises and celebrates indigenous culture," she said. "It is this sort of iconic and unique attraction that visitors to, and residents of Perth, are discussing online as missing from the region."

Committee for Perth will now hold a series of forums with its members, as well as business and community leaders in Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney, to discuss and reflect on the research and strategise how to reverse the negative sentiment of Perth residents.

END

Supporting Information

MEDIA CONTACT

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COMMITTEE FOR PERTH

The Committee for Perth is focused on making a positive difference to Perth's future.

Its members include local, national and international organisations, who set aside commercial gain, sectoral interests and personal perspectives to come together to be a united voice on the issues facing Perth.

FACTBase is Committee for Perth's collaborative, long-term research project with The University of Western Australia. It benchmarks the liveability of Perth and its global connectedness, by examining its economic, social, demographic and political character.

Since the first Bulletin was released in 2009, Committee for Perth has published more than 60 FACTBase Bulletins.

FACTBase BULLETIN #64 - KEY FINDINGS

- The research within this FACTBase Bulletin #64 is consistent with the findings of an independent research report recently released by Committee for Perth as part of its *Hashtag Perth* project. For a copy of that media release and report please email: tess@huntercomms.com.au
- Word of mouth (40%); Internet sources (blogs, online news, online booking and review websites) (38%); television programs (35%); and social media (28%) are the most common media through which external residents obtain information about Greater Perth.
- Visitor reviews highlight Kings Park and the Swan River as the most significant, unique attractions in the Perth CBD and Greater Perth. Visitor reviews of the Perth CBD and its attractions including the Perth Mint, the Bell Tower, Elizabeth Quay, St Mary's Cathedral, Scitech and the Art Gallery of WA are also very positive.
- Greater Perth's higher education institutions receive positive online student reviews.
- Most online forum contributors who identify themselves as residents or former residents provide positive and balanced commentary about Greater Perth, yet they are also more likely to make negative comments and act as trolls in online discussion threads about the region.
- Contributors from other Australian cities are more likely to be negative about Greater Perth than contributors from overseas.

- Some online commentary persists in presenting Perth CBD as dull and boring, however there is a shift towards positive perceptions specifically depicting the Perth CBD as revitalised. These perceptions are most frequently expressed by residents and former residents of Greater Perth.
- Weaknesses of the Perth CBD expressed online include a lack of unique/iconic attractions, generic retail experiences and a lack of vibrancy after office hours and on weekends.
- Online commentary about Greater Perth's location is shifting – from negative discourse about isolation/distance from eastern states capitals – to positive remarks about proximity/connectivity with Asia.