

FINDINGS PAPER

Byron Shire Events Strategy 2024-2028

Prepared by Linda Tillman and Jayne Jennings (July 2023)



Jingi Walla - Welcome

Acknowledgement

Byron Shire Council acknowledges the Bundjalung of Byron Bay – Arakwal people, Widjibal people and Minjungbal people as the traditional owners of the area now known as the Byron Shire. Council acknowledges the important work of the Arakwal Corporation, Tweed Byron Local Area Land Council, Jali Land Council and Ngilingah Local Area Land Council in our local community in protecting cultural heritage. Council also acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island People who now reside within the Shire.

The traditional owners of the Byron Shire have a rich history of culture and heritage and creative expression through music, dance and visual arts. Byron Shire Council encourages event organisers to engage with the local Bundjalung people to find a culturally appropriate way of continuing this cultural heritage.

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1.0 Introduction

This Findings Paper has been developed to provide a platform for discussions on the critical elements of a Byron Shire Events Strategy. Specifically, the Paper seeks to:

1. Reflect the views and expertise of event stakeholders on the challenges and opportunities facing small to medium sized event attraction, growth and development in the Shire
2. Outline the aspirations, overarching principles and key pillars for best practice events.

Feedback gathered to date and directly to this Findings Paper will inform the development of the Events Strategy. The Byron Shire Events Strategy will:

- Outline the types of events that will achieve the best economic, social and environmental outcomes for Byron Shire now and in the future
- Identify the resources and initiatives needed to ensure event success
- Provide Byron Shire Council (Council) with a strategic framework to guide decision making on event support that maximises economic and social outcomes, optimises Council resources and increases the sustainability of local events.

The Strategy will fulfill actions in the draft Arts and Cultural Action Plan, the Community Strategic Plan 2032 and will align with the Business Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy being developed concurrently.

Council's key aims for events in Byron Shire underpin this Findings Paper:

- To improve efficiencies in regulatory and compliance processes related to event production, making them easier to navigate, as well as maximising Council staff time and input into best practice event management.
- To promote the value of events to the overall 'fabric of community' and garner support and acceptance for best practice events in the Shire.
- To attract and support events that strengthen the Byron Shire identity and economy with low impact on the local environment and community.
- To support and enable event organisers to embed best practice models into their events (e.g., waste and environmental management, community consultation, site infrastructure, corporate social responsibility), moving towards zero net emissions and zero waste to landfill and a circular economy for all events.

For the purpose of the Events Strategy, the focus is on small to medium tourism (leisure, sports and business events) and community events. (Small to medium events are defined in 4.1 below.

2.0 Local stakeholder driven

One-to-one discussions and focus group workshops have and will continue to be held with a range of stakeholders in the development of the Events Strategy including Council staff, event organisers, venues, tourism and community representatives and state tourism bodies. The stakeholder engagement plan has taken into account the considerable consultation undertaken over recent years, including Council’s draft Arts and Cultural Action Plan 2023-2036). Existing reports and engagement notes have been drawn on as relevant. (See Attachment 1 for a list of those stakeholders that have participated in consultation forums to date.)

This Findings Paper is a key element of the conversation with local event stakeholders about the aspirations for events in the Byron Shire over the next five years. The key milestones in developing the Events Strategy include:



What we heard

From initial engagement, event stakeholders shared the types of events they see as appropriate for the Shire, the role they want Council to play in events and what they want events to deliver for the Shire.

Types of events	Role of Council	Event deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events that improve the shire’s liveability and community wellbeing Recognition of the different character and identity of the Shire’s towns and villages First Nations representation in events Events that create local jobs and skill development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of roles and responsibilities of Council in events – to clarify boundaries of Council’s involvement Leadership through a transparent event decision making framework and events policy Streamlined event compliance process including approvals through other agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activation of local businesses through events Byron brand leveraged by events Recognition of event organisers that are delivering community outcomes such as a locally certified event Growing volunteer base Foster grass roots arts, encouraging new

Types of events	Role of Council	Event deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events that showcase, amplify and support the artistic and creative industries. • Inclusive and accessible events • Family friendly and intergenerational events • Affordable and participatory events • Prioritise local events over external events- local first 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well organised and coordinated events calendar • Targeted support for events • Providing an understanding of the economic and social benefits of events • Education about and enabling of environmental sustainability of events • Information sharing and workshops to help events maximise their potential • Networking opportunities that encourage collaboration across events • Management and maintenance of Council owned and managed venues and sites for identified uses and ensuring fit for purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thinking from within community • Nurture local artists and creatives through involvement in events and festivals • Reduce seasonality to improve the sustainability of the events sector across the year • Effective use of event venues and spaces

The initial engagement, alongside a desktop review, also identified the current strengths, challenges and opportunities associated with events in the Shire.

	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
EVENTS PORTFOLIO	Breadth and quality of events offered across the shire	Uncertainty of ongoing viability, with events reaching a tipping point as they grow and/or struggling to cover costs, and committee fatigue and burnout	Focus on building the viability and long-term sustainability of local home-grown events

	Strengths	Challenges	Opportunities
COMPLIANCE	Event approval process, with a concierge approach offering a single point of initial contact for event organisers	<p>Potential for time delays and uncertainty due to complexity of navigating different land tenure and multiple approvals process</p> <p>Event organisers can underestimate time required for the processing of their application for event approval, limiting ability for Council staff to respond with enough time for event organisers to plan their next steps.</p>	<p>Streamlined permitting process with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online portal of information, checklists and resources - Single point of contact to manage relationship across different areas of Councils and inter-agency collaboration and decision making - Pre-approved event sites - Standard Traffic Guidance plan prepared for pre-approved sites
EVENTS COORDINATION	Upcoming events listed on multiple web and social media platforms including, Byron Shire Council Byronbay.com, visitnsw.com and DestinationNorthCoastNSW.com	Limited event coordination and forward planning with conflicting events within the Shire that are aimed at same audience	Centralised event planning calendar for event organisers and networking opportunities to encourage collaboration across event organisers to assist with event planning and activations
SITES AND VENUES	<p>Many spaces and venues including sporting fields and smaller indoor venues like halls, community centres, theatres, with the potential to be developed into fit for purpose event spaces</p> <p>Council and Crown Lands currently</p>	<p>Lack of fit for purpose venues matched with the needs of the right fit events</p> <p>Demand for sensitive sites and prime locations such as Main Beach and Denning Park with decision making occurring on event use in absence of standard decision-making framework for</p>	<p>Identified fit for purpose venues</p> <p>Update the existing policy on the use of sensitive areas and prime locations for public events</p> <p>An event infrastructure development plan to ensure the build of high-quality fit for purpose venues and upgrades to</p>

	developing new plans of management for coastal sites	events, resulting in uncertainty	existing venues are scheduled as needed to meet the requirements of right fit events
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	<p>Byron Shire Event Guide provides suggestions for delivering a sustainable event; and planned requirement for removal of single use plastics from events</p> <p>Council’s environmental sustainability advocacy and local organisations supporting events to avoid/minimise environmental impacts</p>	Sustainable event practices occurring in pockets, with no broad scale uptake due to costs of introducing initiatives such as wash stations and monitoring and transport of waste bins	<p>Environmental criteria and checklists incorporated into event permitting process</p> <p>Encourage local businesses to provide equipment and assets to support events to be more sustainable e.g., wash up station, team of bin fairies, public transport plans, etc</p>
BRAND BYRON	<p>Byron is a strong brand that attracts domestic and international visitors</p> <p>Each community has its own unique identity</p>	The brand for Byron Shire is unclear for some event organisers, making it difficult to know what events align and how they can leverage; with no clear link between the events and the brand or identity	Align the right fit events with the identity of the community to offer a rich and balanced calendar of events across the Shire
LEVERAGING TOURISM	Range of tourism experiences to attract visitor markets	<p>Seasonality reducing sustainability of local businesses</p> <p>Council not actively promoting tourism resulting in an adhoc approach of events</p>	Scheduling events at the right time and in the right location to achieve a balanced calendar of events across the year and the shire, and minimise seasonality

		<p>leveraging the tourism offering</p> <p>Limited event packaging with tourism experiences to encourage overnight stays and fill a gap in night-time activities</p>	<p>Packaging events with tourism experiences and tourism activations around events to increase yield and ensure maximum outcomes from events</p>
MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING	<p>Planned event data research project will provide an ‘event evaluation template’ for event organisers to assess the audience profile and impact of their event, provide support materials to event organisers to allow them to collect and analyse survey data and assist Council to assess the audiences of supported events</p>	<p>Current data collection is not capturing the economic and social impacts of events</p>	<p>Capture cost benefit analysis of events from triple bottom line perspective: social, environmental, and economic benefits and costs</p>
COMMUNITY DRIVEN OUTCOMES	<p>Strong sentiment amongst local home-grown event organisers (not for profit and commercial) to support the local community</p>	<p>Differential treatment in event permit and funding of not for profit and home-grown commercial events despite opportunity for both to deliver positive local outcomes</p>	<p>Event categorisation based on local outcomes delivered (not commercial vs community)</p> <p>Introduction of ‘Local Event’ stamp of recognition to differentiate local events from external</p>
EVENT RESOURCES (VOLUNTEERS AND EQUIPMENT)	<p>Passion and enthusiasm of local communities actively engaged in running events, with local residents volunteering</p>	<p>Limited volunteer pool and access to event infrastructure placing cost and time burden on volunteer event organisers</p>	<p>Register created to enable sharing of volunteers and infrastructure pool</p> <p>Training and support for volunteers</p>

3.0 Aspirations for Byron Shire Events

Based on the engagement conversations to date, five aspirations for Byron Shire events over the next five years have emerged:

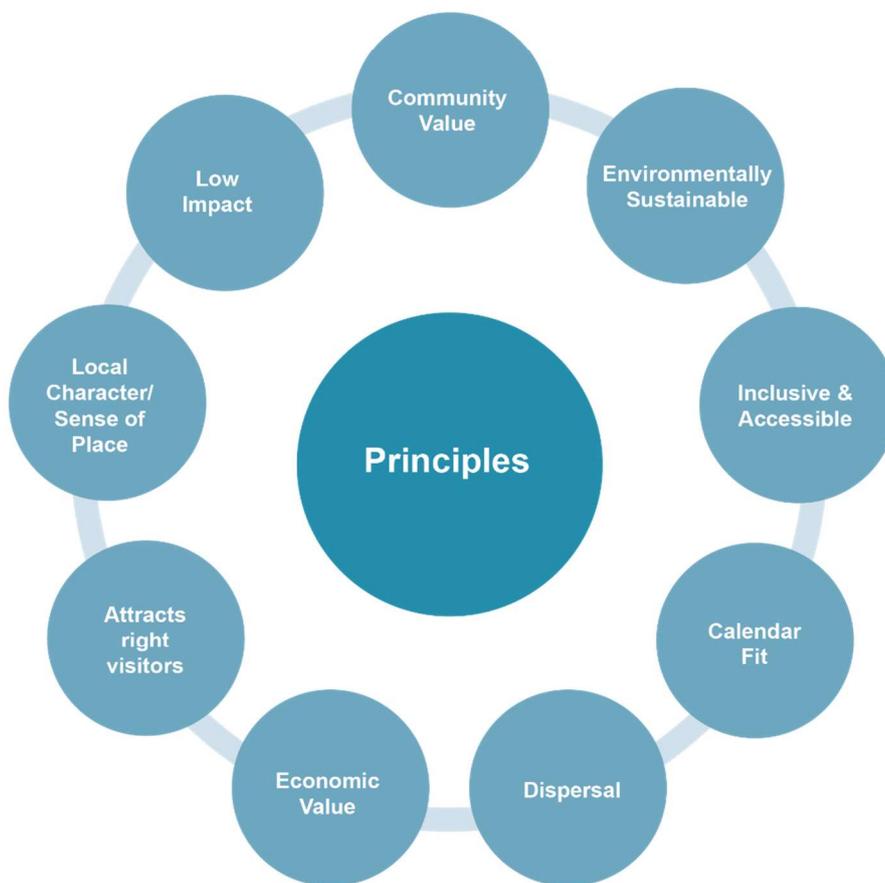
1. Identify and nurture the right size, fit and mix of events.
2. Foster socially, environmentally and economically sustainable events.
3. Establish Byron Shire as an event friendly destination for the right fit events.
4. Ensure infrastructure facilitates event growth and development.
5. Maximise events' contribution to community wellbeing and the local economy.

To achieve these aspirations, a strategic framework is proposed of the aspirations, and nine overarching principles that will guide the decision making for the right fit events for the shire, and five pillars of action areas.

ASPIRATIONS FOR BYRON SHIRE EVENTS

1	2	3	4	5
Identify and nurture the right size, fit and mix of events	Foster socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable events	Establish Byron Shire as an event friendly destination for the right fit events	Ensure infrastructure facilitates event growth and development	Maximise events' contribution to community wellbeing and the local economy

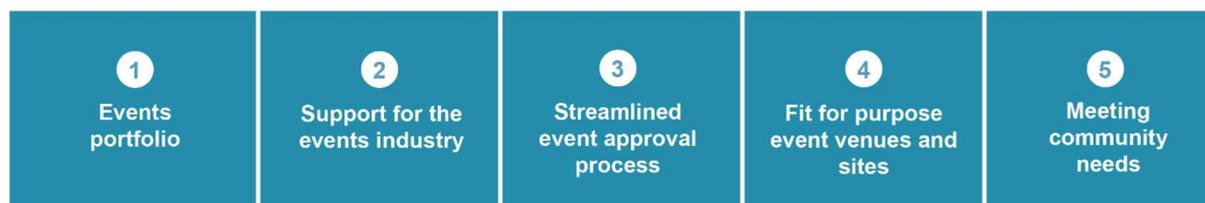
Overarching principles for determining the right fit events for Byron Shire



Key pillars for a balanced portfolio of events and thriving home grown events industry

1	2	3	4	5
Events portfolio	Support for the events industry	Streamlined event approval process	Fit for purpose event venues and sites	Meeting community needs

4.0 The Key Pillars



4.1 Pillar 1: Events portfolio

This pillar explores a pragmatic and transparent assessment framework to enable Council to proactively assess and determine the right fit events, how those events should be supported, and the outcomes sought from that assistance.

The intention of the event assessment framework is to ensure event resources are allocated adequately and strategically to support and leverage events that satisfy the overarching event principles, and event categories for Byron Shire.

RATIONALE

One of Council’s key aims for events is to attract and support events that strengthen the Byron Shire identity and economy with a low impact on the local environment and community. The intention with the Events Strategy is to create a balanced portfolio of events across arts/culture/leisure, sports and business that deliver on this aim, while also contributing to community wellbeing, pride, connection and participation across all demographics.

Event Principles

Potential overarching principles for determining the right fit events for Byron Shire are as follows:

Principle	Description
Low impact	<p>Events that have low impact upon the environmental, landscape and cultural values of a site, and surrounding areas or other users.</p> <p>Events that demonstrate they have considered impacts on the local community such as noise, traffic, waste, etc, and have mitigation strategies in place.</p>
Character/identity/sense of place	<p>Events that align to (and activate) the destination brand and unique identity and character of each community:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunswick Heads – simple pleasures, family friendly (evolved from a fishing town) • Mullumbimby – creativity, spiritual, home of Spaghetti Circus & National Circus Festival • Bangalow – boutique, agriculture, retail & hospitality • Byron Bay – entrepreneurs, nature, well-being, beaches • Rural Communities & Villages – farmers markets, fresh produce, permaculture, regenerative farming <p>The destination brand reflects the following elements of Byron Shire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity of the people, Aboriginal living culture, places and lifestyle in the Byron Shire. • Rich ancient, and biodiverse land and seascape. • Abundant health and well-being choices. • Vibrant music, arts and crafts, festivals, markets, spiritual and creative communities. • Adventures on and in the air, land and water. • Eclectic villages. • Home grown produce and farmers markets: our way of life. • Green consciousness and aspirations. • An active and caring community. “That’s why we love Byron Shire with all our heart and soul.”
<p>Community and cultural value</p>	<p>Events that connect community and enable community expression.</p> <p>Events that the community is proud of and that offer positive value for residents of all ages.</p> <p>Events that enable First Nations representation.</p> <p>Events that enhance the indigenous, heritage, artistic and cultural diversity of Byron Shire.</p> <p>Events that have a local first policy and are delivered by local organisations (not for profit or commercial).</p> <p>Events that support local artists and artisans and stimulate creative communities.</p>

<p>Economic value</p>	<p>Events that deliver economic outcomes through opportunities for local businesses, community groups; consistency of income for events supply chain.</p> <p>Events that activate local businesses and the night time economy.</p>
<p>Environmentally sustainable</p>	<p>Events that respect the environment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of active and public transport • Sustainable purchasing • Proactive resource recovery • Emissions reductions and offsets • Education/engagement of attendees and suppliers in sustainable behaviours • Conservation of waterway health <p>Events should have an environmental policy in place which includes actions around how they will support the priorities of Council and the local community.</p>
<p>Attracts the right type of visitor to Byron Shire</p>	<p>Events that attract the right type of visitor to Byron Shire (based on the markets identified in the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy).</p> <p><i>Byron Shire welcomes visitors and supports a visitor economy that cares for and respects our residents, creates low-impact visitor experiences, protects our natural environment, celebrates our cultural diversity and shares our social values".</i></p> <p><i>"A Council-led strategy for Byron Shire would endeavour to change the visitor mix, manage visitor behaviour and attract visitors who respect our community and environment, stay longer, are low impact, and want to explore various towns and villages within the Shire. These are the visitors we want to attract; those who share our community values".¹</i></p>
<p>Calendar fit</p>	<p>Events that fill gaps during off-peak and shoulder season.</p> <p>April – September and also mid-week will have biggest impact to the visitor economy and not displace the leisure market.</p>

¹ Draft Byron Shire Sustainable Visitation Strategy 2020-2030

	Events that disperse visitation over a longer period i.e., multi day events.
Disperses visitors across the Byron Shire	<p>Events that are hosted in quieter areas of the Byron Shire will reduce pressure on high visitation destinations.</p> <p>Events that fill a geographic gap in the annual calendar of events and achieve a geographic spread of visitation and economic impact across the Byron Shire.</p>
Inclusive and accessible	Events that are held in accessible venues and provide for social inclusion, such as events that use an accessible location and have a social inclusion policy in place.

Event categories

Definitions:

An event: a planned public happening which is available either free or ticketed to provide specific information or entertainment to a defined audience.

A destination activity: those activities that occur within a tourism destination and undertaken either in public or private settings, e.g., attractions, experiences, activations around an event, or private activities such as weddings and filming.

Filming and weddings will be assessed differently to events, with separate protocols to be followed. The aspirations for these activities will be addressed in the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy.

There are many different categories and types of events which can often make it challenging for a Council to understand which they should support and enable. To support the event principles outlined above, the following small – medium event categories have been recommended as the best fit for Byron Shire. Major events are noted in the table below only to show the full suite of events.

Destination events	Local home-grown events	External events	Business events	Community events & Farmers markets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are aligned with, and activate, the Byron 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are owned and managed by a local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are owned and managed by an external 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are aligned to the industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> connect community and generate pride

<p>Shire brand and local community identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> held in shoulder or low season with the objective of attracting overnight visitation locally owned and managed attract the right type of visitor market/s appeal to community, but are primarily about tourism outcomes 5,000 – 15,000 attendees on any one day of the event 	<p>organisation or not-for-profit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are aligned with the Byron Shire brand and local community identity community focused - connect community and generate pride; as well as attract visitors and their spend in the community 5,000 – 15,000 attendees on any one day of the event 	<p>event company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are aligned with the Byron Shire brand and local community identity 	<p>within Byron Shire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mid-week events typically hosted by private venues small attendance but high yield opportunity to encourage extended leisure time or repeat visitation in low and shoulder seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events that are owned and managed by a local not for profit or Council up to 5,000 attendees on any one day of the event
<p>Examples: Bangalow Billycart Derby, Sample Food Festival, National</p>	<p>Examples: Byron Writers Festival, Byron Music Festival, Soul Street NYE, Byron Surf</p>	<p>Examples: Byron Triathlon, AFL9s Invitational, Aboriginal Rugby League</p>	<p>Examples: business events, incentive groups</p>	<p>Examples: Farmers Markets, Winter Whales Ocean Swim Classic, NAIDOC Week,</p>

Circus Festival, former Mullum Music Festival	Festival, A Day in the Bay, Brunswick Valley Woodchop, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Australian Open, Byron Lighthouse Run	Knockout Carnival, Tuff Nutterz		Matsuri Byron Bay
Major events				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can be owned/managed by local or external company or NFP • these events can be one off or recurring • 15,000+ attendees on any one day of the event 				
Examples: Byron Bluesfest, Splendour in the Grass, Falls Festival				

Types of events

Within each of the categories outlined above, there is an opportunity to have a mix of the following different types of events.

Cultural and leisure events

These events play an important role in forming and celebrating the identity of a destination and its community. Homegrown arts and cultural events can establish or build a point of difference from other destinations compared with external events that are held in multiple locations.

Events such as Bangalow Billy Cart Derby and Byron Writers Festival are important in differentiating the Byron Shire, increasing vibrancy and liveability, and strategically positioning Byron Shire in the minds of travellers. Cultural events also give leisure visitors more reasons to travel to and stay and add value to business and sport event visitors either through additional activities or the energy they create in the region.

The Byron Shire is full of arts, cultural and creative organisations and individuals that should be tapped into for such events.

Sport and recreation events

Events that fit the personality of Byron Shire and promote positive interactions with the natural environment (i.e., nature-based triathlons, boutique hinterland adventures, and eco-sporting events) are ideal.

Byron Shire has the Cavanbah Centre and many great sporting venues that can be used to host sporting events.

Business events

Business events can attract high-yield guests year-round and open opportunities for return leisure visits. The direct expenditure per business event is around \$74,000 on average, with \$820 spent per delegate on average.²

There is opportunity for Byron Shire to gain greater benefit from this market that attracts high yield and low impact attendees often visiting mid-week. A focus on attracting those business events that add value to existing industries such as agriculture, medical, wellness, food production, innovation/entrepreneurial will go a long way in positioning the region.

Events calendar

Once the portfolio of events is determined, there will be a need for the coordination and maintenance of a centralised event planning calendar in collaboration with event organisers.

A forward planning calendar has three key functions:

1. Support event organisers on setting dates and preventing clashes. Event organisers to plan their timing to avoid date clashes.
2. Informing businesses of opportunities to leverage and maximise outcomes from events. With the knowledge of upcoming events, event organisers can link with complementary events and work with tourism operators to package accommodation and experiences around their event, maximising economic outcomes.
3. Promote to local residents and family and friends (the VFF market). The forward calendar is an important resource to share with local residents who are valuable advocates for encouraging visits from VFF.

RATIONALE

The event planning calendar will assist event organisers with their scheduling to avoid date clashes and associated capacity issues and enable the Shire to maximise outcomes from events.

Creating the calendar together with event organisers would enable event organisers to come together, share ideas and support each. Collaboration with others currently happens on an ad hoc basis, limiting the potential that 'group synergy' can bring to the local event sector.

² Business Events Council of Australia: Value of Business Events to Australia – FY19 high-level update

SEASONAL EVENTS CALENDAR CASE STUDY: COOLAMON, NSW

Coolamon is a rural agricultural village of 2,200 residents, 30-minutes' drive from Wagga Wagga with its population of 64,000. A seasonal calendar of events has been a vital tool in increasing visitor numbers to, and the overall visitor economy of, Coolamon.

The Council's Community Development Officer sends a call out to event coordinators, community groups and relevant businesses via a Mailchimp template e-newsletter, and via Council and school newsletters every three months to collect details on upcoming events.

Event managers are encouraged to participate for the following free marketing opportunities:

- A listing on the Visit Coolamon Shire website
- A listing in the events calendar brochure, which is distributed throughout the shire and region, and is available for download from the website
- A mention in the Visit Coolamon Shire e-newsletter which is circulated to the tourism database
- Promotion on the Visit Coolamon Shire blog
- A listing on the regional tourism app, SeeRiverina
- Promotion across Visit Coolamon Shire's social media channels

Event managers upload information on their event via a Google form on the region's tourism website. The form automatically populates an event listing on the website, and on a spreadsheet which is used to develop the calendar's brochure. While the free event listings on the Australia Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) could be used to populate the event information, Coolamon has experienced good uptake on their simple form. The Community Development Officer or event committees upload to ATDW larger events likely to attract significant out-of-region visitation.

The types of events added to the calendar include concerts, markets, live music, theatre productions, special meal events (e.g. long lunches), events for public holidays such as ANZAC Day or Mothers' Day, agricultural shows, car shows, fun runs, photography competitions, art exhibitions, race days, open days, festivals, street parties, comedy nights, participatory sports competitions (cycling, triathlon), trivia nights, and more.

Each season the events are promoted with Visit Coolamon branding (brochure and social media graphics). The word is spread via a radio ad, brochure distribution (VICs, and major nearby attractions, restaurants, libraries and medical centres), and social media (Facebook events, and organic and paid posts). The Community Development Officer also attends events where possible to capture social media content. Locals are kept informed of what is coming up and encouraged to invite family and friends to visit for events. This has meant the calendar is an effective VFR marketing tool. The calendar also

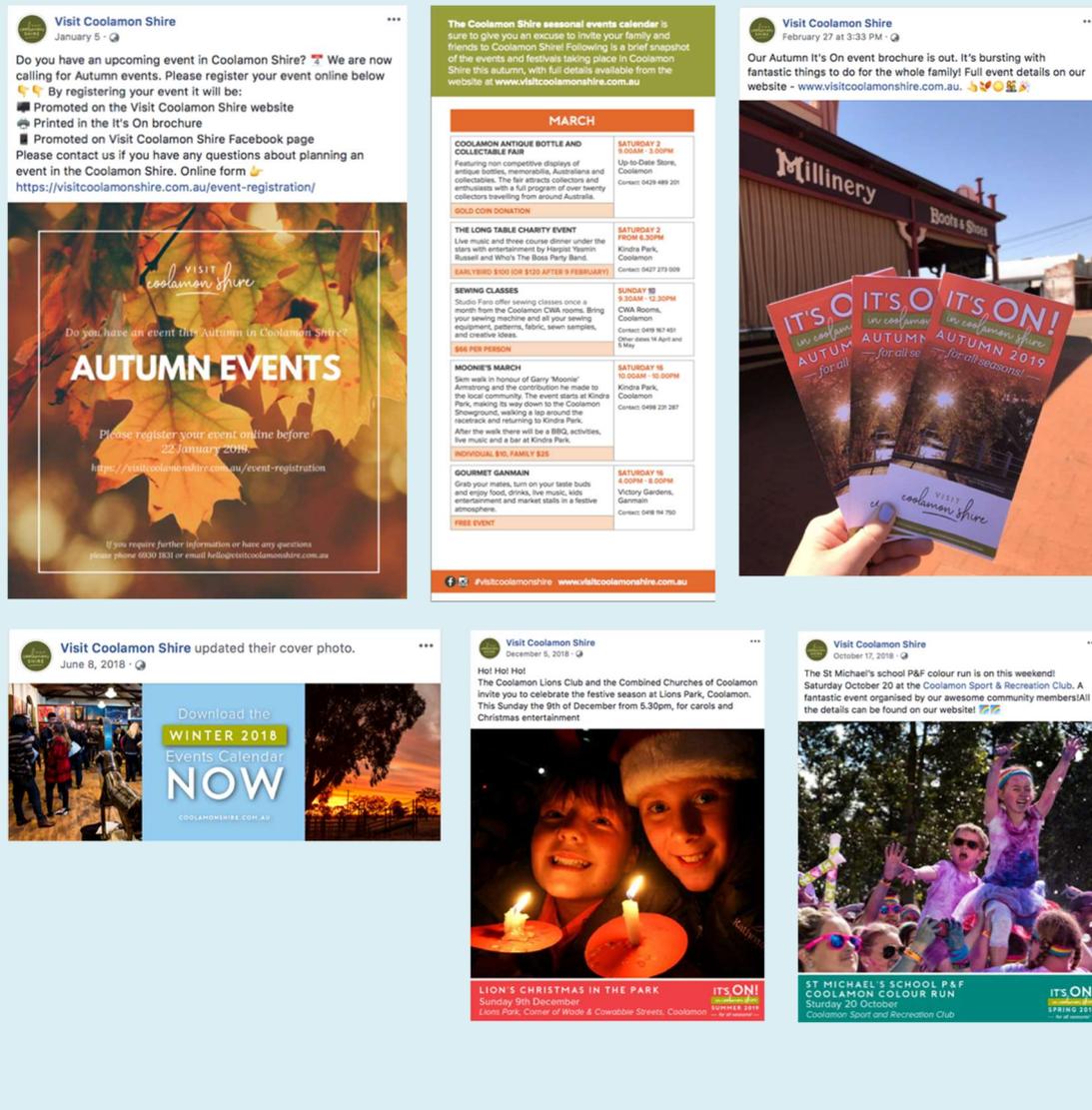
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helps community groups and businesses to forward plan and ensures event dates do not clash.

Council's event funding program provides financial assistance to promote events that will increase the number of out-of-town visitors, along with mentoring on marketing and event sustainability for their committees.

The region's events promoted through the seasonal calendar have had an impressive impact on visitation to Coolamon. Together with initiatives such as the introduction of an anchor attraction (a cheese factory/restaurant), the town has transformed, particularly on weekends, resulting in the opening of new main street businesses.

“The Seasonal Event Calendar has effectively marketed our local events to a wide target audience and been instrumental in attracting increased visitors to our town. It is a wonderful resource that encapsulates and communicates the vibrant culture of our region beautifully.” - Bron Hatty, Advance Ganmain.



4.2 Pillar 2: Support for the events industry

Targeted event support

This pillar proposes reviewing the current funding support and investigating introducing a targeted focus on selected events to help them achieve their full potential and ensure their long-term sustainability and viability.

Considerations to investigate include:

- Limiting eligibility to ‘destination events’ as per the event categories above.
- Requiring satisfactory demonstration of the event assessment criteria and achievement of the associated key performance indicators
- Financial support focused on enabling event organisers to access a paid coordinator and/or paid professionals to assist with aspects of event delivery. For example, an event may want to use this funding to engage a marketing expert to manage marketing and sponsorship, or they may want to hire someone to manage aspects such as risk/compliance, administration or they may want a creative director to help develop the event experience.
- In-kind support could include assistance in developing sustainability and accessibility plans.
- Reviewing the funding distribution: replacing the existing \$10,000 Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund with a new fund or extending the investment to offer two funds, with a mix of financial and in-kind support
- Additional internal resources required to manage the revised funding program.

Current Event Funding

Byron Shire Council’s Events and Festivals Sponsorship grant aims to support local events and festivals that address one of the following themes:

- Embedding sustainability practices into local events.
- Supporting new and emerging events to assist them in establishing themselves.
- Supporting events to recover from the impacts of the COVID pandemic and floods.

RATIONALE

Supporting events is an important function of the Council in fostering and delivering wellbeing, economic and social outcomes for the local community. A refreshed event sponsorship program focused on targeted investment offers the opportunity to improve event outcomes for Byron Shire.

There is an opportunity with these events to become a benchmark for other events in their planning and outcomes achieved.

Capacity and capability building

In addition to the funding support, it is important to ensure all local events have access to resources to assist them in developing and evolving to keep the offer compelling for target markets and grow financially sustainable events. These can include access to specialist knowledge and expertise, skilled and enthusiastic volunteers and to event equipment.

Educating and empowering event organisers about introducing practical initiatives to ensure their event is following best practice in environmental sustainability is a core element of capacity building and an important Council role.

Considerations to investigate include:

- Offering access to specialist advice services (on a fee basis)
- Encouraging event organisers to bring in outside artists for professional event development to enable the Shire to cross pollinate ideas with local organisers, build skills and knowledge and the talent base within the local community.
- Extending the current Events Guide into a practical online toolkit to assist and increase the knowledge of event organisers and event committees, for example with information including:
 - marketing (planning, media, budgeting, templates)
 - sponsorship (planning and securing templates)
 - event management (planning, contacts, templates)
 - approvals/compliance (contacts, templates, risk management)
 - register of community contacts, suppliers and volunteers
 - succession planning event evaluation framework and tools
 - event sustainability and accessibility guidelines and templates.
- Establishing a register of event equipment hirers
- Establishing a volunteer database
- Partnering with high schools, and tertiary institutions to maximise the opportunities provided to students by internships and volunteer roles in events.

RATIONALE

The commitment and passion of event organisers and volunteers are drivers of event success. Developing skills and sustaining enthusiasm, particularly amongst volunteer-driven events, will ensure Byron Shire delivers quality events all year round. Developing and evolving events over time is critical to keep the offer compelling for target markets and to grow financially sustainable events. This pillar also supports and delivers on the Draft Arts and Culture Action Plan's action: 4.03 Support event organisers through information and workshops on planning, accessibility, grant writing and sustainability.

The Shire has the opportunity to foster capacity building that encourages new thinking and innovation in the events offered, and strengthen the local identity and competitive strengths such as the Climate Conversations initiative with local artists and community. By improving event organisers performance, Byron Shire has the potential to be a leader in sustainable and environmentally responsible events.

An important component of the supply chain for events is equipment hire providers. Equipment hire can be a costly component of event delivery, particularly if local suppliers are unable to meet needs. Local solutions help to ensure economic value is retained in region, support event sustainability and employment opportunities.

A pool of ready volunteers can support the viability of events and enhance community connections. There is an opportunity to take a shire-wide proactive approach to connecting events with equipment and volunteer resources. A coordinated and professional approach to volunteering is also likely to appeal to education institutes and support the development of long-term relationships to secure regular intakes of student volunteers.

4.3 Pillar 3: Streamlined event approval process

This pillar responds to the engagement commentary about events permitting, with considerations to further streamline the Council's event approval process.

There is an opportunity to expand on the information provided in the Events Guide to inform and educate event organisers on the different pathways and processes required for event approval. Information recommended includes the following.

- Event organisers planning checklist and timeline on the steps the organiser needs to go through in planning the event, and the items they need to supply to Council at various stages.
- Overview of event venues and spaces with detailed information on all available venues, infrastructure, the types of events they are suitable for, associated fees and charges, and the booking process.
- Overview of the role of Council in events, the support available and key contacts.
- Event funding opportunities.
- Database of support services, equipment hire, volunteer recruitment agencies, etc.

RATIONALE

Engagement with event organisers highlighted a need to identify additional ways to remove compliance and red tape barriers and address pain points. The further streamlining and automation of the event approval process would remove the frustration and uncertainty that exists amongst the event industry and internally for Council departments.

STREAMLINED APPROVAL PROCESS CASE STUDY: FRASER COAST, QLD

Fraser Coast Regional Council streamlined their event approval process by providing:

- Clear information for event organisers on their website: on approvals, venues, funding opportunities
- Resources to support event organisers such as an event management guide and templates
- Online forms for booking venues and applying for approval with automation for internal processes

However, Fraser Coast does not provide a simple way for event organisers who are unfamiliar with the region's parks and event venues to identify which venues might suit the event's needs. Currently it is not easy for event organisers to understand the different features of the event venues and sites and determine the best fit for their event.

A further opportunity is to automate and streamline the current concierge process provided by the Council's Events Team. Potential approaches to investigate include:

- Providing a single online entry point to Council with comprehensive information resources and checklists to determine the appropriate approval pathways for events based on specific triggers (e.g., public or private land, pre-approved site or not etc)
- Based on the information provided to Council online, the Events Team coordinate the internal processes for the event organiser in a timely manner to give adequate planning time for the event organisers
- Establishing an events interagency group or utilising the existing agency group for the Local Transport Committee, to create a network of relevant agencies such as Police, Transport, Emergency Services, and across land tenures. The purpose of the group would be to meet monthly to consider the upcoming events, and raise any concerns to be addressed with the Events Team in advance.

4.4 Pillar 4: Fit for purpose event venues and sites

Pre-approved sites

This pillar proposes introducing pre-approved sites and venues that are identified as ‘fit for purpose’ for specified types and sizes of events. Fit for purpose are those venues and sites with infrastructure that will enable event growth and development as appropriate, with streamlined event planning and approvals. These venues and sites would be allocated on a first served basis for the right fit events.

Approaches to explore in establishing pre-approved sites and venues:

- Considering the needs of the right fit events as outlined in section 4.1 above.
- Matching the events determined as the right fit (based on the event principles and categories) with the current sites available.
- Identifying any gaps in infrastructure or limitations in usage.
- Exploring existing sites such as North Byron Parklands (Splendour and Falls) and Byron Events Farm (Bluesfest) and approved Byron hinterland spaces as ‘blank canvas venues’ for large scale business events.
- Taking into account the recent Local Environmental Plan amendment to permit events such as low impact performance of live music or arts on Council land at the Cavanbah Centre without the need for a Development Application. (Event organisers will still be required to apply to Council for use of the site.)
- Working with an external professional (consultant planner) to undertake the process of applying for pre-approved, multi-year development applications (where required).
- Developing supporting traffic management plans, waste management plans, and relevant conditions that ensure that they are only used for appropriate events and do not have negative impacts on community or other uses.
- Seeking Open Spaces input, including infrastructure development planning outlining the event infrastructure requirements, including upgrades to existing venues to meet the requirements of the events portfolio.
- Updating the existing policy on the use of sensitive areas for public events (see below for more details).

RATIONALE

The introduction of pre-approved sites will support quicker approvals and response times to event operators and help to streamline the administration and internal processes for Council departments. Potentially spreading the use of Council-owned venues more evenly will also address wear and tear as a result of the concentrated foot traffic of events.

This pillar aligns with the Draft Arts and Cultural Action Plan’s program area of Arts and Culture Infrastructure: Identify needs and gaps for hard and soft arts and cultural infrastructure; and the specific action *1.06 Seek funding to review cultural infrastructure and explore opportunities for Council-owned community buildings to be maximised as creative spaces available for operations, production and presentation.*

Potential sites and venues to be considered for pre-approval status

The following are the sites and venues with the potential to be pre-approved for specific event categories, subject to any upgrades necessary to meet the requirements of the right fit events in those categories.

Space	Suitable event category/type
Apex Park, Byron Bay	If we followed the Noosa policy, it would be 4-6 legacy events only permitted (Destination, local-home grown and external events)
Dening Park, Byron Bay	Mass participation sporting events – triathlons, ocean swims, running event (Destination, local-home grown and external events)
Bay Lane Precinct in Byron Bay	Community events & markets
Byron Butler Street Reserve	Community events & markets
Cavanbah Centre, Byron Bay	Destination Events, local home-grown events, external events
Red Devil Park, Byron Bay	Destination Events, local home-grown events, external events
Memorial Park, Brunswick Heads (corner of Fawcett and Mona Lane)	Community events & markets
Banner Park, Brunswick Heads	Community events & markets
Heritage Park, Mullumbimby	Community events & markets
Terrace Park, Brunswick Heads	Community events & markets
Railway Park precinct, Byron Bay	Community events & markets
Sandhills Skate Park, Byron Bay	Community events & markets
Green Room at North Byron Farm site	External events, business events
North Byron Parklands	Community events & markets, destination events, local home-grown events, external events
Mullumbimby Showground	Community events & markets

Bangalow Showgrounds and A&I Hall	Community events & markets
<p>Additional Community Halls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mullumbimby Civic Memorial Hall • Brunswick Heads Memorial Hall • CWA Halls – Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby • Brunswick Valley Community Centre • Bangalow Heritage House • Durrumbul Hall • Kohinur Hall • Marvell Hall • Ocean Shores Community Centre • Drill Hall Mullumbimby • Scout and Guide Hall Mullumbimby • Scout Hall Byron Bay • South Golden Beach Hall • Suffolk Park Community Hall 	Community events

Updating the policy for events in sensitive areas

There is an opportunity to Byron Shire Council to work with NSW Crown Lands to review the Commercial Activities on Coastal and Riparian Crown Reserves Policy and ensure the Plan of Management developed defines the types of events permitted.

RATIONALE

The Shire has several sensitive sites and spaces that event organisers would like to activate with festivals and events. This includes sites such as Denning Park, Main Beach, Arakwal National Park and Cape Byron State Conservation Area which have a mix of environmental sensitivities, landscape and cultural values, and high community usage. Permitting festivals

and events on these sites is challenging and extremely time consuming, with long processes from multiple land tenures and governing bodies.

POLICY FOR SENSITIVE AREAS CASE STUDY: NOOSA SHIRE COUNCIL, QLD

Noosa Shire Council has an events policy for high-use areas, as well as a policy specifically for events on Noosa's popular Main Beach. Council is the trustee for Crown land and state reserves and therefore has control over the management of their use. These policies are publicly available on Council's website.

Councillors and Council staff developed a policy that puts the community first – community before commercial, and not-for-profit before for-profit.

The policy's development was driven by some blatantly commercial events that involved drinking alcohol on the beach and where rubbish was left on the beach, negatively impacting the community.

The policy sets a cap on sports and tourism events as well as not-for-profit community events on Main Beach to ensure the beach is not 'loved to death'. The cap is 7 tourism events and 8 community events.

“The Noosa Main Beach Events Policy responds to the increasing pressures being placed on this public space. It guides Council's approach to event applications to ensure community access to the beach is not unreasonably diminished and that an appropriate number of events are allowed that add value to the Noosa brand and provide economic and social benefits to the local community wherever possible.”

Currently the tourism and sporting events that have permission to use the beach are legacy events, such as the Noosa Tri, the Festival of Surfing, and Noosa Eat & Drink. When one ceases operations, that provides an opportunity for another event to take its place.

Council doesn't run an EOI process for those opportunities. Which event receives approval is driven by community need rather than commercial – an event that adds value to the community rather than a bar and dance party on the beach. Council reserves the right at its absolute discretion not to approve an event upon consideration of the potential impacts on the community and commercial businesses.

Some excerpts from the policy include:

- Events that require the beach or the water as the core element of event activities (e.g. events involving swimming or surfing) will be given precedence over events that could be staged elsewhere (e.g. food festivals and concerts).
- Events that are locally owned and operated are preferred over events run by operators based outside the Shire.
- Council will not support events that do not add value to the Noosa brand.

- Tourism events will not be approved in the school holiday periods or on long weekends.
- The event must not adversely impact the beach or the surrounding environment.

Additionally, due to weather events, Council cannot and does not guarantee there will be sand/beach available for use, and events must have a Plan B venue in the case of a storm washing away the beach.

The policy suggests a preferred alternative beach venue (Main Beach West) and an alternative nearby park venue that event organisers can use, particularly for cultural, food, and corporate events. However, events grow and change; for example, if an event impacts the beach for two weeks with bump in and bump out then the community will start to push back.

A separate permit system manages commercial activities on the beach such as selling drinks or hiring umbrellas. There are 9 five-year permits which go out for EOI. Filming on Council land also has a separate application.

4.5 Pillar 5: Meeting community needs

Community driven outcomes recognised

This pillar explores recognising and fostering all local event organisers that are delivering beneficial outcomes for the community. Engagement to date highlighted that both community and commercial event organisers are committed to making a positive impact, however commercial event organisers are subject to different standards and fees and can be regarded negatively by the community.

A consideration to explore is introducing a 'Local Event' stamp of recognition to differentiate local events from external providers, and to communicate the community outcomes generated by the events. This has the potential to build pride amongst local event organisers and to encourage positive relationships between the event organisers and local community.

The principles and event categorisation noted in 4.1 continue to put the community first when considering events in the Shire. The principle, Character/identity/sense of place, seeks to align events with the identity of the community to offer a rich and balanced calendar of events across the Shire. The event categorisation focuses on the local outcomes delivered measured by the principles rather than assessing as community vs commercial.

RATIONALE

Event organisers engaged talked of their passion for the community, giving back and making a difference. These local event organisers, regardless of community or commercial structures, are part of the dynamic cultural fabric of the community and important contributors to the local economy. There is potential to elevate community outcomes through recognition and encouragement of the efforts of both community and commercial event organisers.

Both community and commercial events play a key role in achieving this vision for Byron Shire, as noted in the Byron Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032. **Byron Shire is a 'meeting place' — Where people can come together to connect, share, grow, inspire, and create positive change.**³ Local event organisers are part of the cultural and creative fabric of the Shire. As noted in the Draft Arts and Culture Action Plan, the population of the Northern Rivers, and particularly Byron Shire, is strongly engaged with arts and culture and shows higher levels of engagement than other areas of regional Australia and even most metropolitan regions.⁴

Leveraging tourism

There are a number of tourism operators that work with business and sporting event organisers to increase the appeal of the Shire as the event host and to encourage event visitors to stay longer and result in more spend in the local economy. Through a managed

³ The Byron Shire Community Strategic Plan 2032

⁴ Report on Creative Industries Recovery Arts Northern Rivers / Pattern Makers 2022

approach to identifying and responding to these opportunities there is potential to increase the economic and social outcomes for the Shire.

A consideration to explore is identifying the most appropriate entity to plan and manage activations around events and pursue opportunities.

RATIONALE

Community and/or shire-wide activation during and around events provide opportunities to extend and enhance the event experience for locals and visitors and encourage visitors to increase their length of stay and spend locally. These activations can include pop-up activities near event sites or enroute to an event that align with the event theme and event specific deals offered by hospitality, retail, accommodation and attractions. There are specific opportunities around business events, with break out options of local tourism experiences pre and post events to extend the length of stay.

Byron Shire can also strategically leverage events in neighbouring local government areas, for example, local activations during Gold Coast's Bleach Festival. Encouraging local event organisers to undertake related activations, Byron Shire can capitalise on the interest in the event and attract the same target audience and build the Shire's own positioning in that area of interest (e.g., contemporary arts in the case of Bleach Festival).

Triple bottom line measurement of event impacts

There is an opportunity to explore a triple bottom line perspective to measuring event impacts. A triple bottom line approach balances economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Shire. This approach involves setting social, environmental and economic measures.

Consideration is required into incorporating triple bottom line measures into the acquittal process for events receiving event funding. The overarching principles for the right fit events would provide the framework for identifying the social, economic and environmental measures.

Potential measures to consider include:

- Community connections
- Opportunity for input by community, industry, networking groups and Chambers of Commerce groups
- How many participants from local community
- Showcasing local artists
- Offering spaces for local artists to perform
- Opportunities for diverse groups to participate
- Social capital
- Environmental improvements
- Circular economy measures (including waste/recycling, water, energy)
- Local suppliers used

- Providing information and education on Electric Vehicles, promoting EV charge facilities
- Promotion of cycling and cycleways, car and bike hire and sharing facilities
- Participation in Ecotourism Australia’s Strive for Sustainability Scorecard Program.

RATIONALE

Engagement suggested social and environmental benefits outweigh economic outcomes in the Shire. Triple bottom line measures would provide a means to capture the contribution of events back to the community. Such measures can be monitored over time to determine improvements or areas needing attention.

The triple bottom line measures would extend upon on the metrics provided by event organisers and introduce consistent data collection and measurement methodology. They would also inform a separate event assessment project Council is undertaking that involves:

1. Event evaluation – creating an event evaluation template for event organisers to use to assess the audience profile and impact and outcomes of their event and provide support materials to enable them to collect and analyse survey data
2. Event assessment research – assessing the events that Council funds in terms of their value and impact.

The project is on hold until the Event Strategy is complete to enable any additional event data and research needs to be considered.

ATTACHMENT 1: STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

The following are those stakeholders invited to participate in the conversations to date. Additional conversations heard with tourism industry stakeholders as part of the engagement for the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy, with some discussion about events, are not listed here.

STAKEHOLDERS	
Byron Shire Council	<p>ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE</p> <p>COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ndiaye • Cr Balson • Cr Westheimer • Cr Coorey (Alternate) <p>Community Representatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronwyn Bancroft • Jane Fuller • Lou Hodgson • Samantha Collyer • Jack Dods • Denise Napier • Gwyneth Broug • Laurel Cohn <p>Events & Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharyn French • Lisa Richards • Ari McElroy • Helen Motteram • Alice Meir • Jess Gilmore <p>BSC / Open Spaces / Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jim Roberts, Coordinator Open Space

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattie Ruck, Open Space Facilities Coordinator • Andy Erskine, Open Space Technical Officer • Darren McAllister, Project Officer Open Space & Facilities <p>BSC / Compliance – event approvals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tim Connors, Team Leader Environmental Health • Scott Brodie, Community Enforcement Lead Officer • Gray Blunden, Development Engineer • Judd Cornwall, Traffic & Transport Engineer <p>BSC / Culture & Community Services team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melitta Firth, Arts & Culture Officer • Cynthia McDermott, Community Project Officer • Rob Appo, Project Officer Aboriginal • Sarah Harvey, Lone Goat Gallery • Emily Fajerman, Community and civic events • Karen McKay, Council depot <p>BSC / Byron Bay Place Manager & Place Planner/s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire McGarry & Rachel Derbyshire, Place Manager Byron Bay • Andrew Fitzgibbon, Place Planning <p>BSC / Resource Recovery / Sustainability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danielle Hannigan, Resource Recovery • Julia Adams, Sustainability • Ianna Murray, Access Committee Working Group • Chloe Dowsett & Liz Caddick – Coast & Biodiversity
<p>Mullumbimby Event Organisers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewfest • Chincogan Charge • Ingenuity Sculpture Festival • Mullum Music Festival • National Circus Festival
<p>Byron Bay Event Organisers</p>	<p>Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Billion Rising, Day of the Dead • World Naked Bike Ride

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matsuri Byron Bay • Soul Street New Years Eve • Byron Multicultural <p>Commercial (homegrown)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byron Music Festival • Byron Surf Festival • Caper • A Day In The Bay • Byron Comedy Festival • Festival of the Stone • BB International Film Festival <p>Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BJJ Aust Opens • Byron Triathlon & Byron Lighthouse Run • NX Sports • Winter Whales Ocean Swim Classic • Ballina Byron Coastal Charity Walk • Northern Rivers Revolt Roller Derby • AFL9s Invitational • Byron Rugby 7s Byron Bay Lighthouse Run
<p>Business & Community Event Venues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Island Quarry & Mullum Railway Station • North Byron Parklands • Beach Café • Brunswick Picture House • Byron Events Farm
<p>Brunswick Heads Event Organisers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mullum2Brunns Paddle & Marine Rescue • Brunswick Visitor Info Centre • Brunswick SLSC • Brunswick Nature Sculpture Walk • Old & Gold • Brunswick Valley Woodchop

<p>Bangalow Event Organisers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bangalow Film Festival • Bangalow Billycart Derby • Sample Food Festival • Eat Street Foragers Market • Byron Writers Festival • Showground Manager
<p>Markets Focus Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byron & Bangalow Farmers Markets • Mullum & New Brighton Farmers Markets • Byron Markets • Brunswick Markets
<p>Byron Events Industry Association (BEIA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockinghorse Studios
<p>NSW National Parks / Cape Byron Marine Park Authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Parks & Wildlife Service • Cape Byron Marine Parks Authority • Bundjalung of Byron Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal) • Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council • Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council
<p>Destination Network / Destination North Coast</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Manager, Destination North Coast NSW • Business Events Executive, Destination North Coast Business Events
<p>Individual stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mullum Cares • Zero Emissions Byron • Cavanbah Centre • Northern Rivers Performing Arts • Margot Natoli Project Management Pty Ltd • Bewilderness • Byron Bay Coffee Festival

Your Feedback

We would welcome your thoughts about the aspirations and principles proposed in the Findings Paper. Please complete the [survey questions](#) by 10 September 2023.



**BYRON
SHIRE
COUNCIL**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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