

# Draft Sustainable Visitation Strategy

## Summary of Public Feedback

The Draft Sustainable Visitation Strategy accompanied by the Tourism Resilience Discussion Paper, October 2020, was on public exhibition for a period of 45 days in October - December 2020.

Sixty-two (62) submissions were received of which twelve (12) submissions were specific to the multi use rail trail corridor and forty-one (41) submissions were specific to short term rental accommodation of which twenty-eight (28) were form letters.

Overall there was general support for the strategy's vision, core values and themes with some additional new themes: Planning for Natural Disasters, Pandemics and Financial Crisis and Environmental Sustainability - Natural Environment.

There was general support for the actions, though strong concern was expressed over funding uncertainty to effectively implement the actions. Together with the expectation that further consultation on their implementation will be provided for all of our community.

Some concern that the information is too generalised and applied to the whole shire when some issues may be different for our respective towns and villages. Support for the information be tailored to the particular characteristics and issues for each town/village.

The majority of those who raised the multi use rail corridor requested Council abandon this idea in favour of a rail trail network in line with neighbouring councils'.

The majority of those who raised Short Term Rental Accommodation requested no cap on number of days or locations due to significant economic and social impacts on businesses and staff employed.

As is the nature of our community for most things someone supported an alternate view was expressed.

Below is a summary of the key issues raised. A full copy of all submissions can be accessed via the Council report to the 24 June 2021 Meeting.

### Engagement Process

- Residents most affected need to be more involved
- engagement process adequate to develop the strategy
- look forward to future engagement on strategy implementation
- support the multiple ways to consult however engagement in some towns poor

### Funding

- concern funding gap to deliver the strategies actions
- no support/support for voluntary visitor contribution
- no support/support for tourism levy on all ratepayers
- increase business rates
- funding support sought for Brunswick Heads visitor information centre

## **Strategy format, data & scope**

- Length of Strategy too long
- Layout poor - difficult to find the 'strategies' or 'actions' in the document
- Strategy Byron Bay focused – need to clarify when using Byron Bay and Byron Shire
- Methodology informing the forecasting needs to be provided
- Outcome of accommodation and tourism product audits do not reflect all towns/villages
- Tours category should be added to audit
- Include additional local case studies
- How towns and villages are grouped in the demographic data needs to be revised
- Define who the community is in the context of 'shared community values'
- View that how 'Tourism Industry/ Industry' is defined is Byron Bay focussed
- Request to include further information on what existing chambers, tourism groups and destination boards are doing in Byron
- Level of visitation is too high and needs to be minimised
- Infrastructure can't support visitors
- Include the Principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development
- Acknowledge Principle 4 of the "Rio Declaration on Environment and Development" 1992, of which Australia is a signatory
- Support for using Global Sustainable Tourism Council's four areas for sustainable tourism
- Support finding a balance between economic activities with caring for the environment
- Include 'nothing goes to waste' campaign for tourists to use re-use containers and cutlery
- Support re-establishment of Byron Shire Tourism Advisory Committee

## **Theme 1 - Leadership and Destination Management**

- Support for strategies: Position Byron Shire as a leading sustainable and environmentally responsible tourism destination; Investigate alternate methods to secure additional revenue streams from government and visitors to support the implementation of the SVS.
- Support visitor environmental education

## **Theme 2 - Repositioning Byron Shire**

- Support for strategies: Create a communications and repositioning strategy to attract visitors with shared community values
- Expand eco-tourism and potential partnerships eg marine parks and DPI
- Include energy efficiency strategies and partnerships
- Decline of visitors to Brunswick Hds VIC not correct
- Brunswick Heads 'Simple Pleasures' branding campaign not mentioned

- Repositioning is not required for Brunswick Heads as Simple Pleasures campaign has been successful in attracting the right type of visitor
- 'Don't Spoil Us, We'll Spoil You' brand - redundant and doesn't speak to the destination, never fully implemented, is it still being used?
- List of industries to attract right visitor mix needs to be reconsidered to consider each towns/villages needs eg. old fashioned family holidays and intergenerational mix important for Brunswick Heads

### **Theme 3 - Culture**

- Support for strategies: Protect and enhance the indigenous, heritage, artistic and cultural diversity of Byron Shire; Preserve the living culture and traditions of Byron
- Need to enforce compliance on illegal camping

### **Theme 4 - Events**

- Support for strategies: Improve the sustainability, coordination and management of festivals, business and leisure events, weddings and filming in Byron Shire
- Encourage events in low seasons
- Importance of many smaller community events should be noted
- Include new action to work with Brunswick Heads stakeholders to investigate low-key weddings at Torakina and other suitable outdoor locations
- Greater controls should be placed on size and number of events
- Large events unsustainable - increase water demands, pressure for dams and impact on sewage treatment plants
- Increase in films and impact on community including road closures, accommodation

### **Theme 5 - Transport Infrastructure and Open Space**

- More detail required including adding specific towns/villages; public transport services limited between towns/villages and airports; solar train; exploring other public transport options eg. Green Frog; long term parking options for day visitors in Brunswick Heads; revise paid parking information; include park and ride investigations
- Provide free parking for residents
- Improve cycleways and signage
- Encourage cycling and walking activities
- Should note growth in interest during Covid 19 in active tourism and recreation, including surf tourism, cycling and walking
- Multi Use Byron Shire Rail Corridor
- Council should not be involved in the railway business
- Multi Use Rail Corridor plan is flawed/wont happen soon/should be progressed quickly
- No funds for light rail
- Align with neighbouring council's Northern Rivers Rail Trail

### **Theme 6 - Planning for Visitor Accommodation**

- Existing approved accommodation, infrastructure, parking and limited highway exits will not be able to cater for expected growth in visitor numbers

- Include new action to explore additional visitor accommodation options which suit the individual towns/villages market segments where required
- Provide low cost camping areas
- Short Term Rental Accommodation
- eliminate short term holiday accommodation from residential areas and Body corporate accommodation
- don't limit STRA locations
- reduce days/year 'v' no cap on number of days ie. 365days
- significant economic and social impacts on businesses and staff employed if cap on number of days
- no limitations and apply NSW Government's Code of Conduct
- only allow if the owner/agent lives on site
- ensure compliance
- generalisation needs to be qualified - most STRA properties in Brunswick Heads managed by real estate with no studies to suggest there are issues
- findings from Sth Cross Uni work should only be applied to participating towns/villages
- under positive impacts add 'benefits to the local economy from the multiplier effect'
- negative impacts should not be generalised and should exclude Brunswick Heads
- include action to undertake an audit of garden flats to ensure they are not used as STRA
- eliminating STRA will not solve affordable housing issue