

# Byron Shire Events Strategy 2035

DRAFT



**BYRON**  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL



## Jingi Walla - Welcome Acknowledgement

Byron Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Aboriginal Custodians and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and country.

We recognise and respect the Bundjalung of Byron Bay – Arakwal and the Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples native title rights and interests within the Shire.

Byron Shire Council also acknowledges the Tweed Byron, Jali and Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council's under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW 1983.

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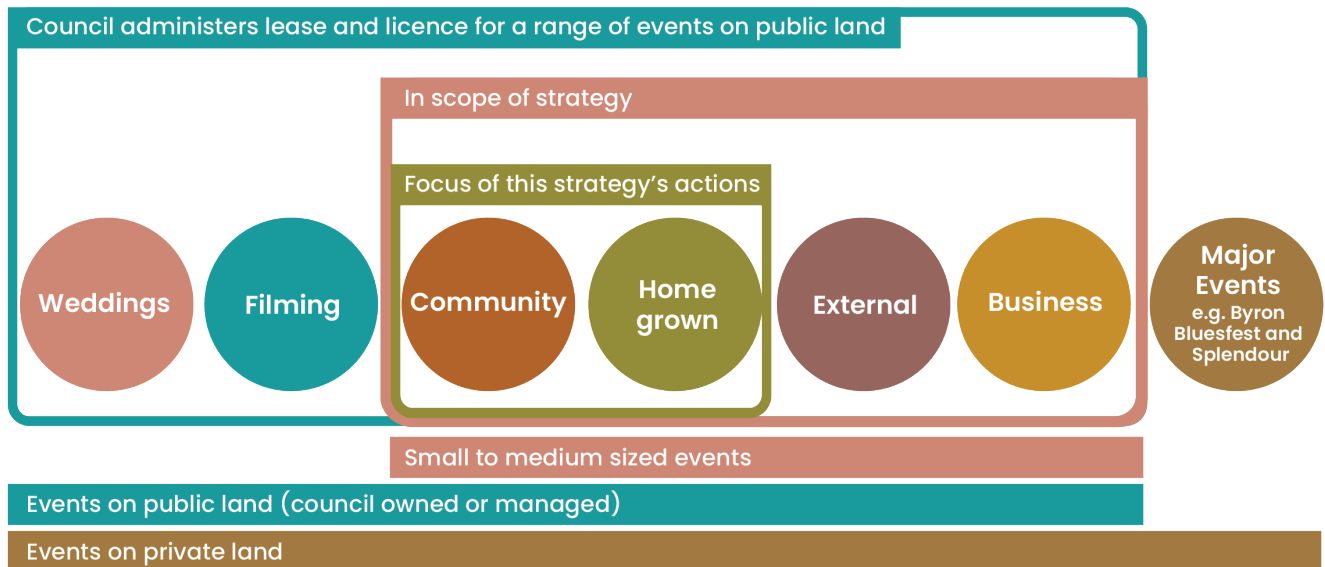
# Acronyms and Definitions

<b>Byron Shire</b>	The Byron Shire encompasses the traditional home of the Arakwal, Minjungbal and Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples of the Bundjalung Nation on the far north coast of NSW. The Shire is made up of major centres (including Mullumbimby, Bangalow, Ocean Shores and Byron Bay) and a variety of smaller towns and villages (including Brunswick Heads, Main Arm, Federal, Billinudgel, New Brighton, South Golden Beach, Suffolk Park, Sunrise and Ewingsdale).
<b>Small to medium events</b>	<p>This strategy is for small to medium sized events in Byron Shire. They have been defined as per attendee numbers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Small: 1,500-5,000 attendees</li><li>• Medium: 5,000-25,000 attendees</li></ul>
<b>Homegrown events</b>	Events that are locally owned and/or managed.
<b>NVS</b>	The survey, known as the National Visitor Survey, asks residents about their travel experiences both within Australia and overseas. It allows Tourism Research Australia to collect vital data to strengthen Australia's tourism industry.
<b>Visitor economy</b>	The wide range of industries that provide visitors with goods and services, both directly such as accommodation, cafes, restaurants, bars, transport providers, tour companies, and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical, and food production.
<b>An event</b>	A planned public happening which is available either free or ticketed to provide specific information or entertainment to a defined audience.
<b>A destination activity</b>	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.
<b>IP&amp;R Framework</b>	The NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework

# Executive Summary

The Byron Shire Events Strategy 2024-2028 gives clarity to Byron Shire Council (Council) on how best to enable small to medium events to deliver positive social, environmental and economic outcomes for the Shire.

Council currently administers leases and licences for a range of events on public land, with this strategy considering those events that are classified as small to medium events held on public or private land. Within this scope, the focus of the strategy is placed on homegrown community and destination events.



## Vision

**Byron Shire is a 'meeting place'.**

where people can come together to connect, share,  
grow, inspire and create positive change.

## Values

These values are what is expected of events to ensure the vision is achieved. They will guide the assessment and decision making on events seeking approval.

1. Make a positive difference to our culture and community
2. Call to and inspire visitors that share our values
3. Have a positive impact on our environment
4. Provide creative and economic opportunities to the local community
5. Enable visitors and locals to experience our diverse communities

## Key priorities

Five priorities for Council to enable and support small to medium events to flourish and maximise benefits for the local community and environment:

1. Identify and nurture events that align with our values.
2. Enable socially, environmentally and economically sustainable events.
3. Ensure infrastructure facilitates sustainable event growth and development.
4. Establish Byron Shire as an event friendly destination for small and medium events.
5. Maximise events' contribution to community wellbeing, the local environment and economy.

**Actions to deliver our key priorities are grouped under deliver, improve and grow:**

**Deliver:** Current council services that support the events industry

**Improve:** Actions that may require additional resources to improve processes and create new opportunities

**Grow:** Aspirational actions that require significant resourcing

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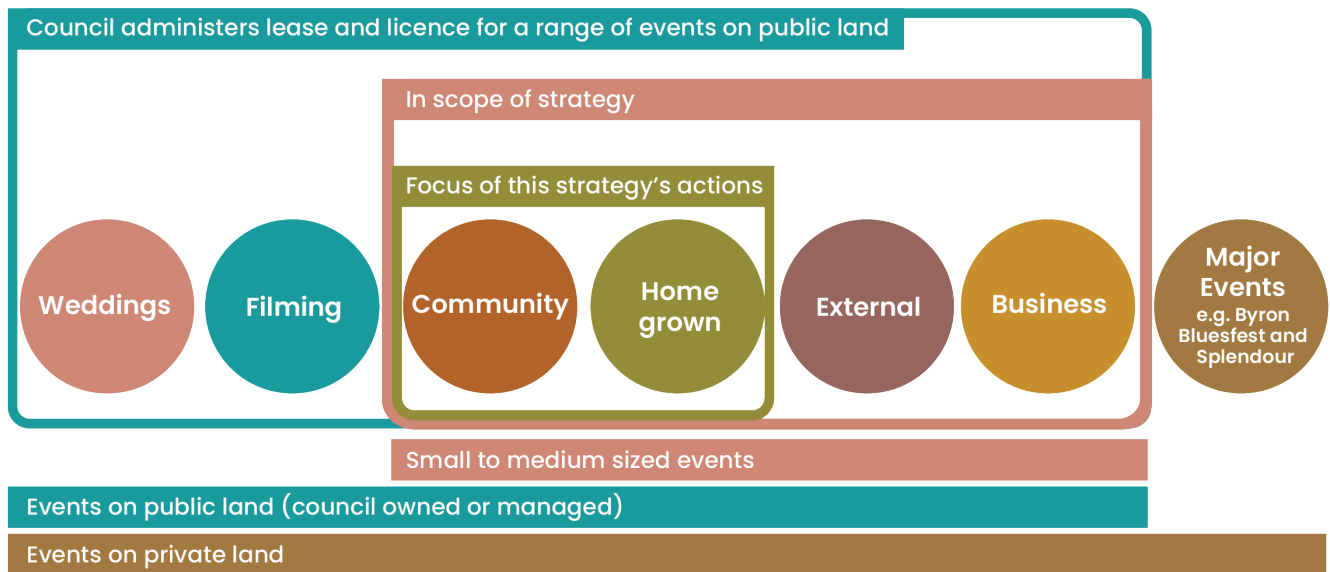
# Part A. Setting the scene

## 1. Purpose of this Strategy

Events are part of the fabric that makes Byron Shire loved by visitors and locals and help to define and share the Byron Shire story. Small to medium events in the Shire currently contribute an estimated \$36.4 million each year from visitor spend in the local economy alone<sup>1</sup> and foster community connectedness, vibrancy and wellbeing.

The Byron Shire Events Strategy 2025-2035 gives clarity to Byron Shire Council (Council) on how best to enable small to medium events to deliver positive social, environmental and economic outcomes for the Shire. Council is committed to safeguarding and fostering what makes Byron Shire unique.

Council currently administers leases and licences for a range of events on public land, with this strategy considering those events that are classified as small to medium events held on public or private land. Within this scope, the focus of the strategy is placed on homegrown community and destination events.



There are two things about this Shire that attracts festivals and events – our people and the spirit of the land. People want to experience the Byron Shire culture, community and ‘vibe’. However, there is also something more inherent about this area and its gatherings, which points toward a great responsibility for all of us.

Byron Bay, for the Bundjalung people, was Cavanbah - the Meeting Place. Ever since human settlement, this area played host to visitors dancing, sharing culture and stories, feasting, learning and teaching. The local guardians of the land welcomed them; and they ensured gatherings remained powerful, well managed and respectful.

<sup>1</sup> Indicative figures based on 2022 event data, sourced from Lucid Economics



While the Strategy acknowledges the breadth of events provided in the Shire, major events (such as Bluesfest, Splendour and Falls Festival) are not included. The Strategy focuses on encouraging and enabling small and medium events as described within the strategy.



## 2. Informing the Strategy

### 2.1 Engagement





## 2.2 Local Alignment

### Byron Shire is unique

Byron Shire’s unique characteristics are a drawcard for events and their visitors. Events have the opportunity to showcase and enhance the unique character of the area and the outcomes for the local community and environment when they are well planned and managed.



## First Nations country

People from the Bundjalung Nation are the traditional owners for the local area. For coastal lands and waters south of the Brunswick River and inland to around Mullumbimby, Native Title rights and interests are held by Bundjalung of Byron Bay Aboriginal Corporation (Arakwal), who also jointly manage the Arakwal National Park. West of Mullumbimby, Native Title rights and interests are recognised and held by Widjabul Wia-bal Gurrumbil Aboriginal Corporation, with other native title claims to parts of the Shire yet to be determined. Tweed Byron, Jali and Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Councils also hold land and provide services in the Shire under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW 1983.

Current State	Opportunities & Challenges
<p>The traditional owners of the Byron Shire have a rich history of culture and heritage and creative expression through music, dance and visual arts. Being in and part of Country keeps the Aboriginal people connected to their culture and ancestors and they have a duty to look after Country.</p>	<p>Event organisers have an opportunity to engage with the local Aboriginal people to find a culturally appropriate way of continuing this cultural heritage and adopting caring for country in their events.</p>

## Towards net zero

The Council, as noted in the Community Strategic Plan, is committed to nurturing and enhancing the natural environment. The Council's Towards Zero Integrated Waste Strategy and associated circular economy principles embrace the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Global

Sustainable Tourism Council’s destination criteria to help destinations contribute towards the SDG, have informed the development of this Events Strategy, in particular, the events assessment criteria.

Current State	Opportunities & Challenges
<p>Council is actioning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net Zero Emissions Strategy and Action Plan for Council Operations 2025</li> <li>• Towards Zero Integrated Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy 2019-2029</li> <li>• Single-use Packaging and Materials Policy</li> </ul>	<p>Event organisers have an opportunity to identify ways to infuse sustainability into every aspect of their event and ways to make a positive impact on the environment through waste minimisation, carbon emissions management and embracing sustainable practices.</p>

## Resilience to change and disruption

Byron Shire Council’s Climate Risk Assessment and Adaptation Plan identifies the most significant increased risks to Byron Shire from climate change as being flooding, coastal storm surges, extreme heat and increased fire weather. These risks are likely to continue to impact the viability and long-term sustainability of events. The visitor economy and events were significantly impacted by the measures implemented during COVID-19 pandemic and are vulnerable to economic instability at global through to national and local levels.

Current State	Opportunities & Challenges
<p>These impacts, together with a tightening of the economy are resulting in growing costs and risks for event organisers. Outdoor events across the country have been impacted by pandemics and natural disasters and operating models revised.</p>	<p>Small to medium sized events require flexible and resilient operating models to respond to change and disruptions.</p>

## Housing and staff shortage

Housing in Byron Shire is very expensive, up to 1.6 times the median price in regional NSW (keeping in mind median income levels are below the state average). Residential vacancy rates are also low, averaging between 0.5% and 3.5% across the Shire in recent years. Short term rental accommodation (STRA) is reducing housing availability for permanent rentals.<sup>2</sup>

The lack of housing stock has a flow on impact to sourcing workers, when the Shire is already suffering from a shortage. The unemployment rate is near an all-time low (seen pre-COVID) while job advertisements in the broader NSW North Coast region are at an all-time high. 70% of employers in New South Wales are reporting difficulties in hiring staff.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lucid Economics, 2023

<sup>3</sup> Lucid Economics, 2023

Current State	Opportunities & Challenges
Byron Shire Council's Residential Strategy provides a long-term approach to the delivery of diverse housing to meet the needs of the Byron Shire community, both now and in the future.	Building capability within the community to help address resource gaps for event organisers.

## 2.3 Policy Alignment

The Events Strategy has been developed within the context of a suite of national, state and regional plans and aligns with the aspirations and strategies of those relevant to events in the Shire.

### National and state policy

The Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, Revive has five pillars, which outline the Government's strategic objectives for arts in Australia. The NSW Government's Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Policy seeks to align with Revive and sets out a vision for a bigger and broader culture in NSW. Revive's five pillars aim to provide a clear framework for inclusive, accessible, sustainable and locally inspired arts and culture<sup>4</sup>.

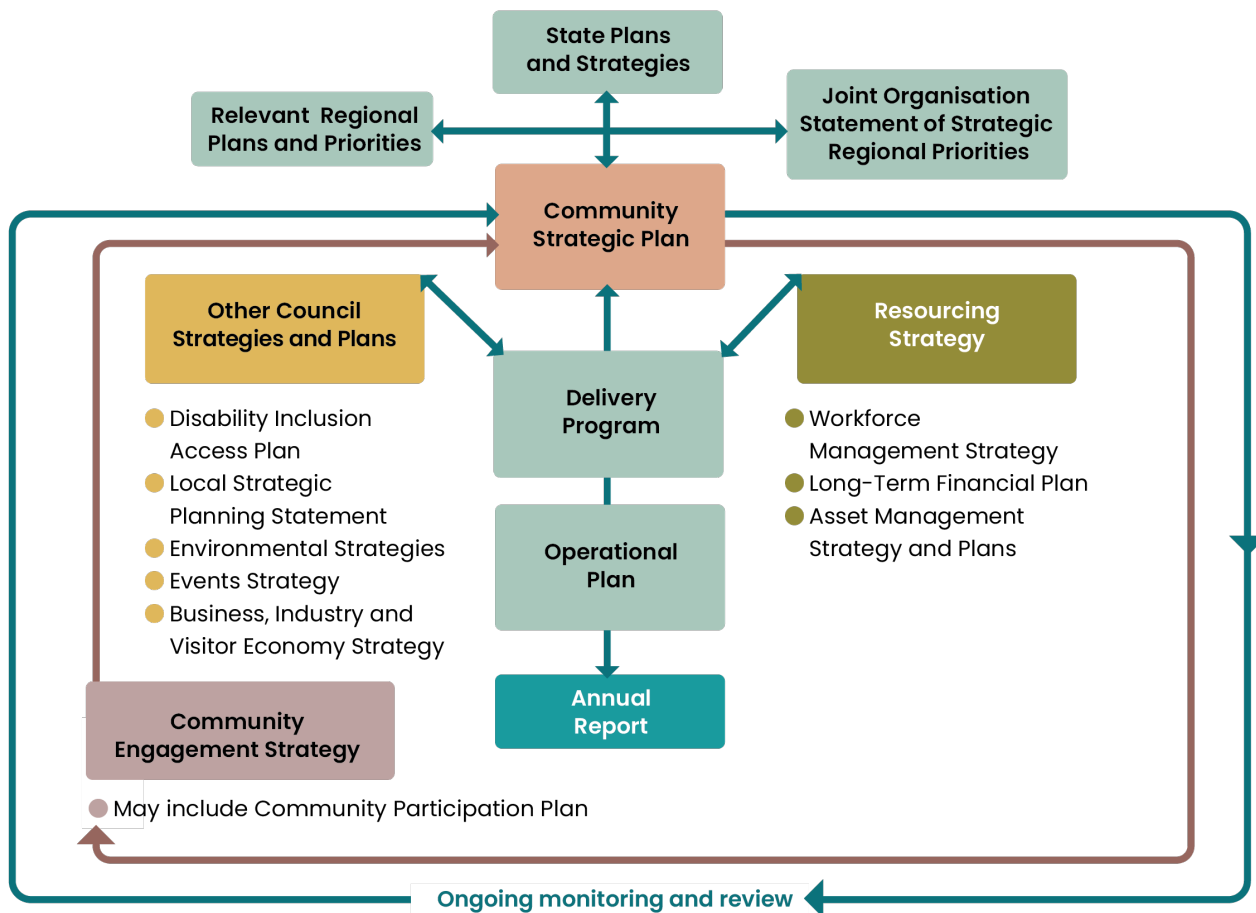
- Pillar 1: First Nations First
- Pillar 2: A Place for Every Story
- Pillar 3: Centrality of the Artist
- Pillar 4: Strong Cultural Infrastructure
- Pillar 5: Engaging the Audience

### Byron Shire strategic planning

#### Community Strategic Plan 2023

The NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework requires all councils to adopt a suite of strategic plans. These long-term plans ensure that community needs and priorities are responded to well into the future. Byron Shire Council has a suite of policies and strategies to help inform operations and decision making. The Events Strategy is one of the many supporting strategies and plans within the IP&R Framework.

<sup>4</sup> Read the policy here: <https://www.arts.gov.au/what-we-do/new-national-cultural-policy>



The Community Strategic Plan captures the community’s vision, aspirations, and expectations for the future. It identifies key social, economic, and environmental priorities and long-term strategies to achieve these goals over a 10 year period. The overarching community objectives are:

- Effective Leadership
- Inclusive Community
- Nurtured Environment
- Ethical Growth
- Connected Infrastructure

The Community Strategic Plan sets the vision and foundation for the Byron Shire Events Strategy. The Strategy has been developed following a Resolution of Council (22-288) and contributes to the achievement of the community objectives and the Delivery Program 2022-26 priorities:

- 2.1 Foster opportunities to express, celebrate and participate in arts and cultural activity
- 4.4 Foster sustainable visitation and manage the impacts of tourism on the shire.

The actions in this Strategy will be reflected in the annual Operational Plans.

### Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy

The Events Strategy has been developed in parallel with the Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy recognising events are an important contributor to the visitor economy. Regular collaboration occurred in framing each Strategy’s direction and content to ensure direct alignment.



## Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Events that are accessible and inclusive means everyone can participate and enjoy as equal members of the community. The Events Strategy seeks to embed access and inclusion into how events are developed, promoted and delivered in the Shire. The Strategy aligns with the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and its promotion of the ethos of inclusion. DIAP's specific actions for events include:

- Consider and accommodate a range of visible and invisible disabilities during public events, including physical access, low energy, hearing and vision related considerations.
- Consider and accommodate visible and invisible disability access requirements for Council events and processes such as community engagement
- Improve access to Council-owned buildings and public facilities and amenities.

## Arts and Culture Action Plan

The Events Strategy has been developed to dovetail with and support the implementation of the Byron Shire Arts and Culture Action Plan 2023-2028 across its four program areas:

- Arts and Cultural Infrastructure
- Public Art and Creative Activation of the Public Domain
- Enabling Arts and Cultural Activity (through grants, capacity building, advice and support)
- Supporting Festivals, Events and Screen Industry Activity.

The Action Plan's purpose is to guide and prioritise involvement and investment in arts and cultural activity for the next three years. The priorities for action include:

- Acknowledge and celebrate Aboriginal voices and stories, communities, cultural expression, and creativity.
- Support arts and cultural activity, participation, and creative experiences for the whole community.
- Foster a resilient creative sector committed to climate consciousness and ecological sustainability.
- Nurture, amplify and support our artistic and creative industries, makers, artists, and communities.



## Additional Plans and Strategies

The following plans and Council documents were also reviewed to ensure alignment with local and state priorities, and to ensure that the Strategy builds on work to date and successes achieved.

### State

- NSW Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan 2030
- State policy and legislation initiatives such as 'Bringing fun back to NSW'

### Regional

- North Coast NSW Destination Management Plan 2022-2030
- Northern Rivers Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018 -2022

### Byron Shire

- Event Guide 2020
- Draft Sustainable Visitation Strategy 2020-2030
- Tourism Resilience Discussion Paper 2020
- Byron Shire Development Control Plans and Plans of Management
- Byron Shire Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment and Action Plan 2017-2036



# 3. Roles of Council

Council is committed to enabling the Shire’s small to medium events to maximise their potential, directly and through partnerships with regional and state organisations and the local community. Successful implementation of this Strategy will require a whole of council approach to events, where teams within each directorate involved in events have a common understanding of the importance of and focus on enabling and supporting events.

Council’s roles correspond to phases of action, with ‘Deliver’ based on what council is already doing, through to the enhancement or refinement of current activity in the ‘Improve’ phase and onto ‘Grow’ when further resourcing and capacity is achieved.

- Regulator:** Enforcing laws applying to an event and seeking to streamline the approval process for events held on council owned or managed land.
- Enabler:** Assisting event organisers to navigate the event compliance process and deliver successful events.
- Custodian:** Managing the Council’s event sites and venues and partnering with the community and other tenure holders in managing the quality of the Shire’s natural environment.
- Facilitator:** Facilitating initiatives and activities to enhance the capability and viability of event organisers, and encouraging local Indigenous procurement and authentic participation.
- Advocate:** Seeking state and federal funding support to generate new opportunities and reduce barriers for event organisers, and creating awareness of events within the local community and visitor markets.



## Resourcing implementation

The Events Team within Council's Sustainable Environment and Economy Directorate are the lead on servicing requests from the event industry. The success of the Strategy will require the Events Team to be resourced and empowered in the decision making about which events to enable and support and in providing strategic advice to event organisers and other Council departments as needed.

In the implementation of the Strategy's actions, Council will continue to review existing resources and identify where additional capacity responsibilities are needed.



# 4. Events Snapshot

## 4.1 Current Event Activity<sup>5</sup>

Byron Shire hosts around

# 120

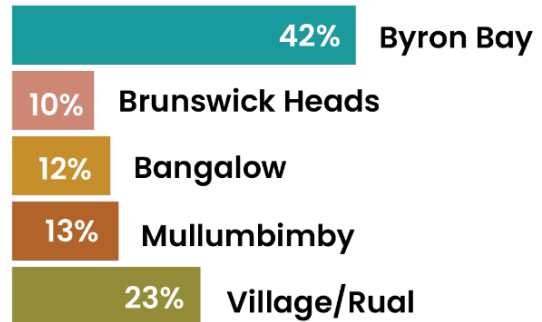
small-medium events per year



**90%**  
homegrown

**10%**  
external

Many events are currently held in Byron Bay:



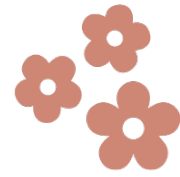
Small-medium events represent:

**60%** of attendance  
**50%** of visitors, and  
**44%** of visitors nights  
of all events in the Shire

Events are held in the following seasons:



**25%**



**34%**



**18%**



**23%**

Most events identified are delivered by **volunteer** community groups



Many events have been delivered for local residents and not specifically attract people from out of the Shire to visit.

<sup>5</sup> The event activity data has come from the event audit that was compiled with support from Byron Shire Council Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy 2023

## 4.2 Visitation

### Visitors to the Byron Shire



**1.7 million**  
visitors



**3.0 million**  
visitor nights



**739 million<sup>12</sup>**  
visitor expenditure

### Byron Shire festivals and events visitors<sup>6</sup>



**120,000+**  
annual attendance



**85,000**  
visitors



**154,000**  
visitor nights



**70%** visitors  
**30%** local  
residents



**57%**  
domestic  
overnight visitors



**29%**  
daytrip  
visitors



**36.8 million**  
visitor expenditure



**168 jobs created**  
as a result of event  
visitor expenditure

**11.4 million**  
contribution to direct gross regional product

<sup>6</sup> Indicative figures based on 2022 event data, sourced from Lucid Economics. Annual attendance, visitor numbers and nights are based on small to medium sized events representing 60% of attendance, 50% of visitors and 44% of visitor nights of all Byron Shire events.



## 4.3 Competitive Strengths

Byron Shire residents are passionate about what makes their home unique:

- Laid-back sub-tropical vibe, with a surfing lifestyle and history of hippies and sea changers, overlaid by creatives, foodies and designers
- Rich mix of artistic and creative, health and wellness, retail, tourism and hospitality industries
- A lifestyle and internationally recognised brand with an energy and attitude that draws visitors, new residents and businesses
- World class cultural event producers such as Byron Writers Festival, Byron School of Art, Spaghetti Circus and Brunswick Picture House, and the major music festivals.
- A community committed to caring for and having a positive impact on the environment
- Leading Aboriginal artists, performers and storytellers
- Collection of beaches, hinterland, and unique and eclectic villages
- Ancient and biodiverse land and seascapes
- Proximity to national and international airports and south east Queensland visitor market.

It is these elements that have created a unique landscape for the events and the associated arts and creative industries, setting the Shire apart from other event destinations in Australia.

## 4.4 Gaps Analysis

Based on stakeholder engagement and a desktop review a snapshot of the Shire's current capability in enabling and maximising the social, environmental and economic outcomes from events identified:

### Currently Achieving

- Byron Shire hosts a diversity of events and festivals each year
- Council's Events Team is available to guide event organisers through regulatory processes
- Seed funding is available for events in the Shire
- Towards zero strategies and resource recovery policies are providing guidance for events on making a positive contribution to waste management.

### Gaps Identified

- Inefficiencies in the events approval process, with high Council staff workload and siloes internally and with external agencies
- Managing existing events and building capacity of local event organisers
- Strategic planning for established destination events to enhance their performance and build on the economic and social outcomes
- Limited collaboration between events
- Limited packaging of events with tourism accommodation and experiences to extend length of stay and spend locally
- Lack of clear understanding of the identity and image Byron Shire events can leverage and promote
- Lack of fit for purpose event venues, with limited venues designed with multi-events in mind
- Limited robust visitor data collection and ROI measurement across all Council funded events
- Limited volunteer pool and access to event infrastructure placing cost and time burden on volunteer event organisers
- Limited First Nations cultural representation in events
- 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
- Council event team have limited capacity and authority to strategically support events

### Risk/Impact

- Over extended human resources in Council
- Investment in events is spread thinly across many events, limiting support to help established events maximise their potential
- Uncertainty of ongoing viability, with events reaching a tipping point as they grow and/or struggling to cover costs, and committee fatigue and burnout with approval process
- Events not leveraged for maximum economic and social benefit
- Environmentally sensitive sites at risk of being 'over loved'
- Availability of community halls for events constrained by regular community bookings
- Events look to alternative host destinations and event-friendly councils

# Part B. The Strategy



## 5. Vision

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The vision for the Byron Shire community, as expressed in the Community Strategic Plan, is equally the vision for what events bring to the Shire over the next five years and beyond.

**Byron Shire is a ‘meeting place’.**

where people can come together to connect, share,  
grow, inspire and create positive change.

## 6. Values

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These values are what is expected of events to ensure the vision is achieved. They form the basis for Council’s assessment process when deciding on events to be approved on Council owned and managed land.

### 1. Make a positive difference to our culture and community

Events in the Shire connect, inspire and create positive change within our community in ways that are authentic, inclusive and celebrate Aboriginal voices and stories, and showcase cultural expression and creativity.

### 2. Call to and inspire visitors that share our values

Byron Shire has a diverse blend of events with a commonality of seeking visitors that respect the community’s needs and natural environmental and have a desire to give back.

### 3. Have a positive impact on our environment

Council, community, event organisers and visitors are custodians of Byron Shire’s stunning natural environment which is a core part of or backdrop to events, why the locals live here and why visitors travel to be here.

### 4. Provide creative and economic opportunities to the local community

Part of Byron Shire’s unique identity is the emerging and professional arts and creative industries that are involved or have an opportunity to be part of the delivery of a thriving program of events.

### 5. Enable visitors and locals to experience our diverse communities

Events allow the local communities to share Byron Shire’s eclectic villages and unique stories with visitors.



# 7. Key Priorities

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The key priorities for Council in enabling and supporting small to medium events to flourish and the local community and environment to benefit in tandem are:

1. Identify and nurture events that align with our values
2. Enable socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable events
3. Ensure infrastructure facilitates event growth and development
4. Establish Byron Shire as an event friendly destination for the small and medium events
5. Enhance events' contribution to community wellbeing, the local environment and economy

**Actions to deliver our key priorities are grouped under deliver, improve and grow:**

**Deliver:** Current council services that support the events industry

**Improve:** Actions that may require additional resources to improve processes and create new opportunities

**Grow:** Aspirational actions that require significant resourcing

## 7.1 Identify and nurture events that align with our values

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### Centralised Byron Shire events calendar

A centralised events planning calendar will be coordinated and managed in collaboration with event organisers. This forward planning calendar is an important tool to maximise outcomes from events: event organisers can check timing to avoid date clashes with other events, local businesses can plan activations and packages to leverage events, and local residents can share what's coming up with family and friends.

### Managing a balanced range of events

Council, through the use of a pragmatic and transparent assessment framework, will assess and determine the aligned events for the Shire, how those events should be supported and the outcomes sought from that assistance. Council will focus on managing a range of events across arts and culture, community, business and sport, with energy and efforts on local homegrown events that are unique to Byron Shire and are locally owned and managed.

Events will be assessed against criteria to determine those that will maximise social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Shire. The criteria will be weighed for each event category recognising different priorities between economic and social outcomes.

### Event categories

The following small to medium event categories have been identified as the right fit for Byron Shire.

Local homegrown community events	Local homegrown destination events	External events	Business events
<p><b>Minor: Less than 1,500 attendees</b>  <b>Small: 1,500- 5,000 attendees</b>  <b>Medium: 5,000-25,000 attendees</b></p>			
<p>These events are locally owned and add to the culture and liveability of the Byron Shire and have a focus on community engagement and enrichment. They include emerging and established events.</p>	<p>These events are locally owned and managed and bring to life the essence of Byron Shire. They connect community and generate pride; as well as attract visitors and their spend in the community. They include emerging and established events.</p>	<p>Events that are owned and managed by an external event company but still aligned to the values and local community identity. They are held in shoulder or low season with the objective of attracting overnight visitation.</p>	<p>These events are aligned to the industries within Byron Shire. They are typically high yield and hosted in private venues and are ideal to fill gaps in the calendar, particularly mid-week. They provide an important opportunity to showcase local industries and talent.</p>

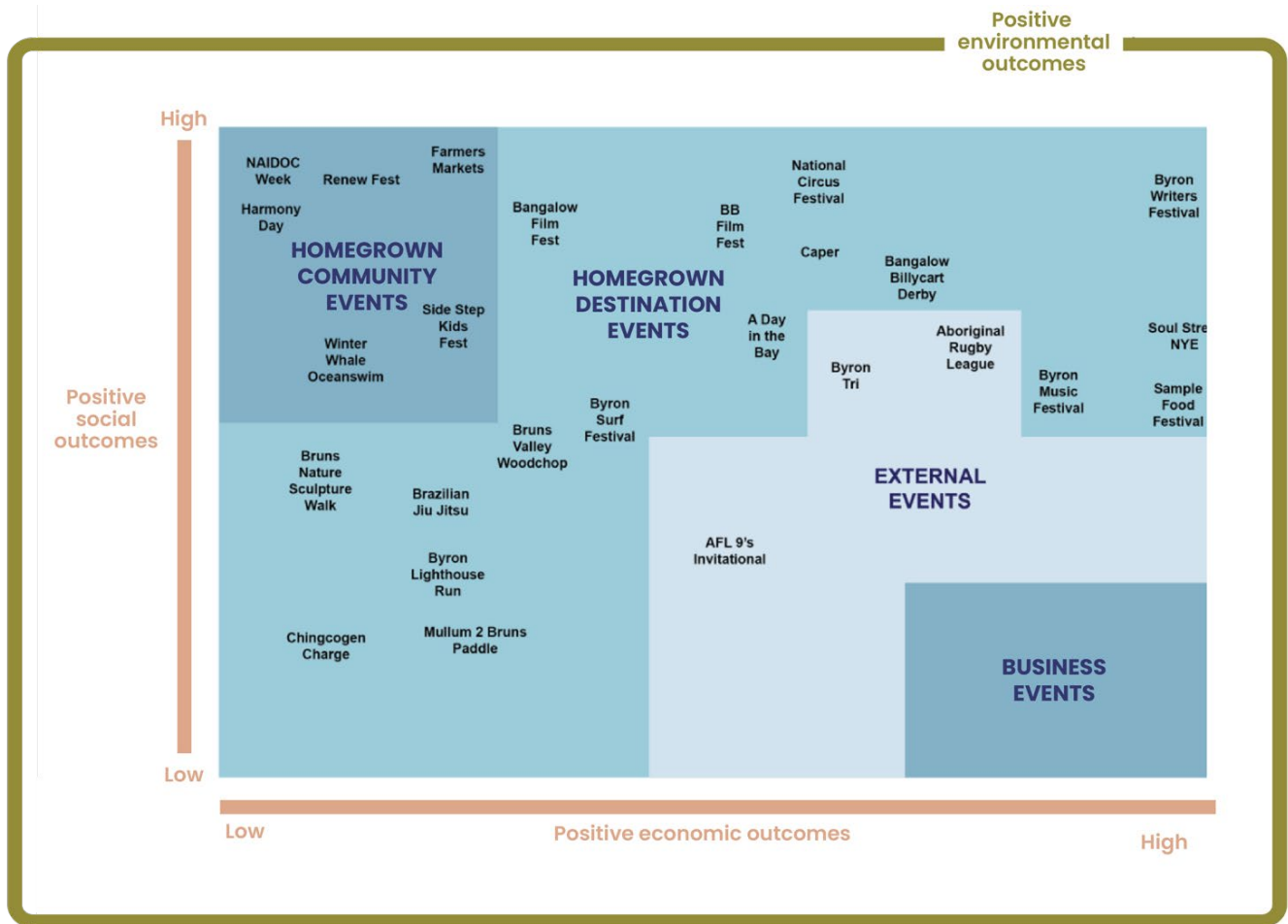
## Assessment criteria

Events seeking to be held in the Shire will be assessed against the following criteria. These criteria reflect the values within this Strategy and give Council a triple bottom line approach to measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes. The criteria enable flexibility in assessing events on an individual basis while also providing Council with a consistent and transparent tool for decision making.

Criteria	Attributes to assess criteria
<p><b>Positive social outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that attract visitors to Byron Shire that respect the local residents, culture and natural environment and share the community’s values.</li> <li>• Events that demonstrate they have considered impacts on the amenity of the local community such as noise, traffic, waste, and have mitigation strategies in place and may deliver a net positive impact.</li> <li>• Events that connect community and enable community expression.</li> <li>• Events that the community is proud of and that offer positive value for residents of all ages.</li> <li>• Events that enable First Nations representation.</li> <li>• Events that enhance the indigenous, heritage, artistic and cultural diversity of Byron Shire.</li> <li>• Events that are held in accessible venues or use an accessible location and have a policy and practices in place to welcome all.</li> <li>• Events that have a local first policy and are delivered by local organisations (not for profit or commercial).</li> <li>• Events that support local artists and artisans and stimulate creative communities.</li> </ul>

Criteria	Attributes to assess criteria
<b>Positive environmental outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that aspire to have no impact or positive impact upon the environmental landscape and values of a site, and surrounding areas, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Use of active and public transport</li> <li>○ Sustainable purchasing</li> <li>○ Proactive resource recovery</li> <li>○ Emissions reductions and offsets</li> <li>○ Education/engagement of attendees and suppliers in sustainable behaviours</li> <li>○ Water efficiency measures</li> <li>○ Conservation of waterway health</li> <li>○ Protection of biodiversity including habitat for local fauna and flora, minimising impacts on threatened species, including nesting areas, from noise and disturbance during events</li> <li>○ Proactively give back/enhance the natural environment e.g., through waste clean-up, restoration and regeneration activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Events that have an environmental policy in place which includes actions around how they will support the priorities of Council and the local community.</li> <li>• Events that inspire and empower attendees to change behaviour.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive economic outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events that inject money from outside the Byron Shire into the local economy</li> <li>• Events that address seasonality and fill gaps during off-peak and shoulder season.</li> <li>• April – September and also mid-week will have the biggest impact to the visitor economy and not displace visitors coming to Shire for leisure/holiday</li> <li>• Events that disperse visitation over a longer period i.e., multi day events.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Events that activate local businesses and the night time economy.</li> <li>• Events that align to (and activate) the unique identity and character of each community.</li> </ul>

The following diagram, using a sample of events from the current calendar, illustrates the different level of focus on economic and social drivers, and the desire for all events to achieve positive environmental outcomes.



## Actions

### Deliver

- Continue to support and provide guidance to event organisers in the delivery of their events.
- Support cultural events led by Aboriginal people, that celebrate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, stories, culture and expression.
- Support Destination North Coast to encourage more aligned business events.
- Strengthen collaboration to support festivals and events with tourism and other regional agencies and partners.

### Improve

- Continue to streamline the event application assessment process.
- Update the Event Guide and Events and Festival Sponsorship Fund application.
- Encourage and empower event organisers to meet the positive social, environmental and economic impact criteria.
- Promote the event calendar with event organisers, local businesses and residents.

### Grow

- Investigate options to collate event content into an accessible centralised event calendar and forward planning tool.

## 7.2 Enable socially, environmentally and economically sustainable events

### Event funding



Council acknowledges the importance of events in the community for the social and cultural benefits they deliver, and the value of monetary and/or in-kind support to enable an event to be developed and delivered in the Shire. In seeking support from Council's Events and Festival Sponsorship Fund, event organisers would need to demonstrate their ability to satisfy the event assessment criteria.

The following event funding support is recommended for the event categories. In the case of any local business/community driven funding being established to support events, it is advised that Council encourage administrators to apply the assessment criteria as per other funded events.

Local homegrown community events	Local homegrown destination events	External events	Business events
Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund Grant	Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund Grant	In-kind support only as appropriate	In-kind support only as appropriate
In-kind support	Local business/community driven funding		
	In-kind support		

## Foster partnerships with local businesses and community to support events

Council will continue to explore avenues to increase the availability of funding to support events in ways that enhance outcomes, with a focus on local homegrown events (community and destination). The Business, Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy notes independent funding mechanisms involving local business and community to more equitably fund future visitor economy industry development and infrastructure costs.

## Provide tailored support to enable events to maximise their potential

Event support, which is more than a funding transaction, has the potential to enable local event organisers to access assistance in remaining viable into the future such as with financial management, succession planning, and volunteer management. There is an opportunity to assist local homegrown events in amplifying outcomes for the Shire and enhancing their long-term viability through tailored support. Such support could include peer mentoring and strategic advice in areas such as commercial financial models, streamlining workloads, navigating growing risk, access and inclusion. The focus here is on local homegrown events due to their uniqueness to Byron Shire and their close connection to the place.

Potential additional funding avenues to be explore to support events include:

- Seek partnership support from state government to offer a tailored support program for local homegrown events that meet the event assessment criteria to a required level. The Unsung Heroes program delivered to events in 2023 is an example of how this level of support can be offered to events.
- Seek the support of major and external events to incorporate a \$1-\$2 levy on tickets, with monies allocated to a fund for local homegrown events.
- Identify opportunities for Council's existing Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund, Creative Public Spaces Small Grant, and Community Initiatives Program to extend the funding available through the tailored support program.
- Consider if the new recommended visitor economy funding streams can resource the tailored support for local homegrown events.

## Access to resources to enhance knowledge and skills

To support a thriving local event sector, Council recognises the importance for event organisers having access to practical information and training that caters to the range in maturity of events, from emerging to well established. A mix of online and in person delivery provides flexibility for event organisers, particularly volunteer based event committees. Opportunities for event organisers to come together for workshops and networking will foster collaboration, information sharing and ideas generation.

## Enable access to the required events equipment and services

With the distance from metropolitan centres, local solutions to sourcing event equipment and services are key to ensuring economic value is retained in region and supporting event sustainability and employment opportunities. With increased focus on meeting requirements for inclusion and environmental sustainability, a cooperative approach of resource sharing will assist local events to access infrastructure and services and ensure existing equipment is used efficiently. Council as an enabler of events, could look to support by managing a central register of suppliers for event organisers to access.

## Accessible infrastructure

Council is committed to ensuring people with disability can participate in the community. Events need to be accessible, inclusive and encourage participation of people with disability. Council's committed actions within the Byron Shire Disability Inclusion Action Plan include accommodating a range of visible and invisible disabilities during public events including physical access, low energy, hearing and vision related considerations

It is important for the Council event team to work with the Byron Shire Access Consultative Working Group to gain advice on venues and spaces.

Provision of infrastructure such as a mobile accessible restroom, vibrating vests, signage using universal accessibility symbols and including these in a pool of event equipment available for hire would enhance the accessibility of the Shire's events. Access to this equipment would increase the ability of small to medium events to incorporate specific infrastructure, and avoid duplication of effort and spend by event organisers.

## Actions

### Deliver

- Continue to deliver and explore opportunities with the State Government to expand the Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund.
- Continue to support event organisers through information and workshops.
- Continue to encourage local businesses and individuals to deliver initiatives to assist event organisers in enhancing their social and environmental performance.
- Continue to encourage event organisers to bring in outside artists and experts for professional event development.

### Improve

- Investigate options for an online centralised register of event equipment suppliers and service providers and share with event organisers.
- Seek grant funding and partner with industry and government to increase support to events.
- Strengthen knowledge sharing and the sharing economy through establishment of regular networking events.
- Foster collaboration between local event organisers and community-based equipment suppliers.
- Encourage locals with skills and knowledge in event development and delivery to support new and emerging events.

### Grow

- Liaise with major and external event organisers to investigate opportunities to improve support for local homegrown events.
- Explore options to rebrand local homegrown commercial events.
- Explore opportunity for investment in accessible and inclusive event equipment that can be used by events under a hire arrangement.
- Explore how the recommended new visitor economy funding streams in Business Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy can resource a tailored support program for local homegrown events

## 7.3 Ensure infrastructure facilitates sustainable event growth and development

### Fit for purpose event venues and sites

To be recognised as an event-friendly council and a supporter and enabler of events, development approval secured for relevant event venues and sites (for relevant events) will streamline the event approval pathway.

Following a high level audit and analysis of event venues and spaces across the Byron Shire. The list is a sample of key event venues. The recommended fit-for-purpose event venues to support events and their event suitability are noted below. Recognising that these venues and spaces have different owner manager categorisation it is important to note that the approval pathways for each will differ.

Event Venues & Spaces	Event Suitability
<b>Council land</b>	
Cavanbah Centre, Byron Bay	A Byron Shire multipurpose events precinct for small – medium sized cultural, sports and business events.
Byron Bay Memorial Recreation Ground Byron Bay	Opportunity to connect with Byron Youth Activity Centre and Jarjumirr Sandhills skate facility to create an event precinct to take the pressure off the Byron Foreshore as a requested space for events and festivals.
Railway Park precinct, Byron Bay	Local homegrown events and activations, with connections to CBD and private venues.
Memorial Park, Brunswick Heads	Local homegrown events and activations, with opportunity to connect with Banner Park for increased footprint.
<b>Council Land – S355 Committee</b>	
Bangalow Showgrounds	Local homegrown events such as markets and agricultural show, and ideal cultural festivals and events space.
<b>Crown Land – Mullumbimby Showground Trust</b>	
Mullumbimby Showground	Local homegrown events such as markets and agricultural show, and ideal cultural festivals and events space.



Crown Land – Reflections Holiday Park	
Banner Park, Brunswick Heads	Local homegrown events and activations, with opportunity to connect with Memorial Park for increased footprint.
Crown Land - Council managed	
Jarjumirr Park, Byron Bay	Skate park events and activations and opportunity to connect with Memorial Recreation Ground to create a precinct.
Denning Park and Clarkes Beach	Community markets and celebrations.  Ideal for mass participation sporting events – triathlons, ocean swims, running events.
Heritage Park, Mullumbimby	Local homegrown events and activations.
Privately owned & managed	
The Green Room/ Byron Events Farm site	A fit for purpose space ready to be used, with a DA in place for 100 small events and 2 medium events per year
North Byron Parklands	A fit for purpose space ready to be used, with a DA in place for three 'medium' event days for up to 25,000 patrons per day; five 'small' event days for up to 5,000 patrons per day; and two 'minor' day-long community events for up to 1,500 patrons.

New and revised Plans of Management will be required for Council-owned parks and Council-managed crown land sites, with events to be considered as per the recommendation for the fit-for-purpose event venues.

## Byron Shire community halls

Community halls are a valued asset for the local community and sought after for multiple uses including events. An understanding of each community's wishes for the use of their local community halls is needed to provide event organisers and local businesses with clarity as to which community halls are available for use and the type of event that is appropriate for that community.



## Byron Shire multipurpose events precinct

Engagement with community and event organisers highlighted the need for a fit for purpose, fully accessible, all weather multi-use event space for commercial and community cultural, sporting and business events.

To meet the diverse needs of the community and events such a space requires the flexibility to host major sporting events such as the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout, small to medium sized cultural events such as Byron Writers Festival, A Day in the Bay or a week-long circus festival with Spiegel tents; and mid-week conferences and seminars.

## Actions

### Improve

- Review and develop Plans of Managements for designated Community Land to enable use for events, where required.
- Undertake a detailed audit and mapping of Council owned and managed event venues.
- Develop documentation for Council-owned and managed venues to streamline the process for event organisers determining the best fit event.
- Collaborate with major event sites to identify opportunities for space to be made available for the use of community and homegrown events.
- Explore opportunities with community hall committees to maximise use of for Council-owned community buildings for events.
- Identify key Council-owned sites for events and create a streamlined approval process that may include pre-approved development application or licensing in place of development applications.

### Grow

- Work with NSW state government to address planning barriers that can impede event delivery.
- Foster new modes of collaboration with industry, government and philanthropic partners.

## 7.4 Ensure infrastructure facilitates sustainable event growth and development

### Increase efficiencies

Council's Events Team is dedicated to assisting event organisers navigate the events approval process as efficiently as possible. Communications internally across departments and with external agencies influence the efficiency with which event requests are addressed. A concierge approach with a single point of contact within the Council is an important enabler by guiding event organisers through the required pathway. A whole of council approach to events is core to this working well, where all directorates work together with the event concierge to create cross directorate processes that ensure a positive customer experience for event organisers.

Council will review internal communication processes across directorates to address any blockages or inefficiencies and where better linkages are needed to enable the event concierge to oversee the event application from start to completion.

Council will also consider drawing together an interagency group that comprises representatives from all directorates and external organisations that interact with events and event approvals. The purpose of this group would be to discuss event approvals, as well as venue development, how to leverage upcoming events, and learnings from recently held events.



### One stop online events hub and approval process

Providing clear, comprehensive information up front to event organisers together with a streamlined event approval process are core elements in enabling events across the Shire. This is particularly critical for new events who are unfamiliar with what is required and who in Council to contact.

There is an opportunity to update the current Byron Shire Event Guide, and move this content to an online format (event support hub) that is easier to access for event organisers. The critical information for event planning to be provided online includes details on venues, information on event approvals, checklists, templates, Council grants and sponsorship, and supporting resources.

To help streamline the approval process there is potential to include an automated online 'request to hold' function as an initial phase of the approval process, linking the event support hub with the event approval process in a one stop shop.

## Reduce red tape for event organisers

Additional mechanisms to reduce the administrative burden on event organisers, give greater certainty on event tenure and site use could include:

- Introducing multi-year approvals for existing events on Council freehold land
- Establishing blanket Development Applications for sites identified as appropriate for events that satisfy site specific requirements.
- Introducing Standard Traffic Guidance Plans for sites with blanket Development Applications
- When Plans of Management are reviewed or introduced for Council owned managed crown land sites, ensure they provide clarity about event use, if any, is authorised and the requirements for use

## Actions

### Deliver

- Update the Event Guide and move to an online format.
- Collaborate with industry and government to better support and leverage upcoming events.
- Continue to hold event debriefs with key events to learn from recently held events.

### Improve

- Investigate an online Events Hub.
- Investigate multiyear approvals for elements of reoccurring events.
- Investigate updating the existing Book a Venue webpage.

### Grow

- Review booking systems of council owned and managed sites and consider introducing a centralised booking system.
- Investigate an online automated event approval process for events.
- Investigate the establishment of a volunteer pool.

## 7.5 Maximise events' contribution to community wellbeing and the local environment and economy

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### Outcomes driven approach to event assessment

Event organisers, whether not for profit or commercial, are part of the dynamic cultural fabric of the community. They create benefits for the local community and economy, and can also deliver positive outcomes for the environment. Council is committed to supporting the delivery of accessible, inclusive and environmentally sustainable events for the local community and visitors. The assessment criteria enable all local events, regardless of whether they are commercial or not for profit, to be seen and treated equally for the benefits they deliver to the local community.

### Enabling positive environmental and social outcomes

Council is committed to nurturing and enhancing the natural environment and will continue to roll out education initiatives to support and empower local event organisers and their visitors to adopt circular economy practices and make a positive difference to the Shire's environment. Every event organiser,

business, community and individual have a part to play in reducing impacts on the environment and making a positive difference wherever possible.

Embedding consideration of the environment, accessibility and inclusion into event planning will be encouraged through the information resources provided to assist event organisers. The event assessment criteria provide a core mechanism designed to assist Council in fostering positive environmental, social and economic outcomes from events in the Shire.

## Leveraging the Visitor Economy to extend event outcomes

Encouraging the bundling of visitor experiences with events will enable event organisers and tourism operators to extend and enhance the event experience for locals and visitors and encourage visitors to increase their length of stay and spend in the local economy. A managed approach to identifying and responding to these opportunities, will increase the economic and social outcomes for the Shire.

## Measuring events contribution

A quadruple bottom line approach to assessing events and measuring their impacts balances economic, social, governance and environmental outcomes. Quadruple bottom line measures will be included in the acquittal process for events receiving event funding, with event organisers given specific metrics to help measure their event outcomes.

## Actions

### Deliver

- Continue to develop and communicate information on ways event organisers can maximise their positive social, environmental economic outcomes.
- Design and implement an evaluation template to be used as part of the event acquittal process by event organisers.

### Improve

- Encourage event organisers to connect with tourism operators and organisations Destination North Coast to maximise community outcomes.

# Part C. Activation Plan

## 8. Draft Events Strategy – Implementation Plan

Timeframe	Group	Council's Role
<p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>Short term:</b> 3 years</p> <p><b>Medium term:</b> 7 years</p> <p><b>Long term:</b> 7+ years</p>	<p><b>Deliver:</b> Current council services that support the events industry</p> <p><b>Improve:</b> Actions that may require additional resources to improve processes and create new opportunities</p> <p><b>Grow:</b> Aspirational actions that require significant resourcing</p>	<p><b>Regulator:</b> Enforcing laws applying to an event and seeking to streamline the approval process for events on council owned or managed land</p> <p><b>Enabler:</b> Assisting event organisers to navigate the event compliance process and deliver successful events</p> <p><b>Custodian:</b> Managing the Council's event sites and venues and partnering with the community and other tenure holders in managing the quality of the Shire's natural environment</p> <p><b>Facilitator:</b> Facilitating initiatives and activities to enhance the capability and viability of event organisers, and encouraging local Indigenous procurement and authentic participation</p> <p><b>Advocate:</b> Seeking state and federal funding support to generate new opportunities and reduce barriers for event organisers and creating awareness of events within the local community and visitor markets.</p>

## Priority 1: Identify and nurture events that align with our values

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
<b>Deliver</b>	1.1	Continue to support and provide guidance to event organisers in the delivery of their events. (Aligns with A&CAP action 4.01).	Ongoing	Enabler, Facilitator
	1.2	Support cultural events led by Aboriginal people, that celebrate and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, stories, culture and expression (Aligns with action 2.03 A&CAP).	Ongoing	Facilitator
	1.3	Support Destination North Coast to encourage more aligned business events.	Ongoing	Facilitator, Advocate
	1.4	Strengthen collaboration to support festivals and events with tourism and other regional agencies and partners including Destination North Coast, Arts Northern Rivers, and Business NSW Northern Rivers (Aligns with A&CAP action 3.06).	Ongoing	Facilitator, Advocate
<b>Improve</b>	1.5	Continue to streamline the event application assessment process (Aligns with A&CAP action 4.04).	Ongoing	Regulator
	1.6	Update the Event Guide and Events and Festival Sponsorship Fund application to align with the assessment criteria.	Short term	Enabler
	1.7	Encourage and empower event organisers to meet the positive social, environmental and economic impact criteria.	Short term	Enabler, Facilitator

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
	1.8	Promote the event calendar with event organisers, local businesses and residents through social media and e-newsletters 6 month in advance to assist with forward planning.	Ongoing	Enabler, Facilitator
<b>Grow</b>	1.9	Investigate options to collate event content into an accessible centralised event calendar and forward planning tool.	Medium term	Enabler, Facilitator

## Priority 2: Enable socially, environmentally and economically sustainable events

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
<b>Deliver</b>	2.1	Continue to deliver and explore opportunities with the State Government to expand the Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund, to further support events to deliver on the economic, social and environmental assessment criteria (aligns with A&CAP action 3.07).	Short term	Advocate
	2.2	Continue to support event organisers through information and workshops, with topics determined by local demand and opportunities. (Aligns with A&CAP action 4.03).	Short term	Facilitator
	2.3	Continue to encourage local businesses and individuals to deliver initiatives to assist event organisers in enhancing their social and environmental performance.	Short term	Facilitator



Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
	2.4	Continue to encourage event organisers to bring in outside artists and experts for professional event development to enable the Shire to cross pollinate ideas, share innovations with local organisers, build skills and knowledge and the talent base within the local community.	Ongoing	Facilitator
<b>Improve</b>	2.5	Investigate options for an online centralised register of event equipment suppliers and service providers and share with event organisers.	Medium term	Facilitator
	2.6	Seek grant funding and partner with industry and government to increase support to events.	Ongoing	Advocate
	2.7	Strengthen knowledge sharing and the sharing economy through establishment of regular networking events.	Ongoing	Facilitator
	2.8	Foster collaboration between local event organisers and community-based equipment suppliers in creating and maintaining event equipment pools and encouraging businesses/events to share equipment.	Medium term	Facilitator
	2.9	Encourage locals with skills and knowledge in event development and delivery to support new and emerging events in a mentoring capacity.	Medium term	Facilitator
<b>Grow</b>	2.10	Liaise with major and external event organisers to investigate opportunities to improve support for local homegrown events.	Medium term	Facilitator, Advocate
	2.11	Explore options to rebrand local homegrown commercial events to improve community perception.	Medium term	Advocate

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
	2.12	Explore opportunity for investment in accessible and inclusive event equipment that can be used by events under a hire arrangement, including such things as a mobile accessible restroom, vibrating vests, signage using universal accessibility symbols and other infrastructure as appropriate.	Medium term	Facilitator, Advocate
	2.13	Explore how the recommended new visitor economy funding streams in Business Industry and Visitor Economy Strategy can resource a tailored support program for local homegrown events.	Long term	Advocate

### Priority 3: Ensure infrastructure facilitates sustainable event growth and development

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
<b>Deliver</b>	3.1	Review and develop Plans of Managements for designated Community Land to enable use for events, where required.	Medium term	Regulator
	3.2	Undertake a detailed audit and mapping of Council owned and managed event venues.	Short term	Custodian
	3.3	Develop documentation for Council-owned and managed venues to streamline the process for event organisers determining the best fit event.	Short term	Enabler
	3.4	Collaborate with major event sites to identify opportunities for space to be made available for the use of community and homegrown events.	Medium term	Facilitator

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
	3.5	Explore opportunities with community hall committees to maximise use of Council-owned community buildings for events. (Aligns with A&CAP action 1.06).	Medium term	Facilitator, Custodian
	3.6	Identify key Council-owned sites for events and create a streamlined approval process that may include pre-approved development application or licensing in place of development applications (Aligns with A&CAP action 2.05 & 4.06).	Medium term	Enabler, Custodian
<b>Grow</b>	3.7	Work with NSW state government to address planning barriers that can impede event delivery (Aligns with A&CAP action 4.05).	Medium term	Enabler
	3.8	Foster new modes of collaboration with industry, government and philanthropic partners to progress new cultural infrastructure, flexible spaces and creative precincts in Byron Shire (A&CAP action 1.08).	Long term	Facilitator

## Priority 4: Establish Byron Shire as an event friendly destination for small and medium events

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
<b>Deliver</b>	4.1	Update the Event Guide and move to an online format.	Short term	Enabler
	4.2	Collaborate with industry and government to better support and leverage upcoming events.	Short term	Advocate

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
	4.3	Continue to hold event debriefs with key events to learn from recently held events.	Ongoing	Enabler
Improve	4.4	Investigate an online Events Hub that brings together relevant information as a one stop shop to assist event organisers in planning and delivering their event.	Medium term	Regulator, Enabler
	4.5	Investigate multiyear approvals for elements of reoccurring events such as the three-year Local Traffic Committee road closures.	Long term	Enabler
	4.6	Investigate updating the existing Book a Venue webpage to include all venues, parks and open spaces for small to medium events.	Long term	Custodian
Grow	4.7	Review booking systems of council owned and managed sites and investigate options for a centralised booking system to streamline and enhance the user experience.	Long term	Custodian, Enabler
	4.8	Investigate an online automated event approval process for events to enhance efficiencies and streamline the entire process from when an event registers through to approval and adding it to the calendar.	Long term	Enabler
	4.9	Investigate the establishment of a volunteer pool that involves coordinating a centralised database of volunteers for events, and offering capability building opportunities to upskill community volunteers and volunteer event organisers.	Long term	Facilitator

## Priority 5: Maximise events' contribution to community wellbeing and the local environment and economy

Group	No.	Actions	Timeframe	Role of Council
Deliver	5.1	Continue to develop and communicate information such as checklists, guidelines and case studies, on ways event organisers can maximise their positive social, environmental economic outcomes.	Medium term	Enabler
	5.2	Design and implement an evaluation template to be used as part of the event acquittal process by event organisers of Council supported events to assess the triple bottom line impact. Metrics to be based on the assessment criteria.	Medium term	Enabler
Improve	5.3	Encourage event organisers to connect with tourism operators and Destination North Coast to offer packages for event visitors and to encourage visitors to attend local events, to maximise community outcomes.	Ongoing	Facilitator





**BYRON**  
SHIRE  
COUNCIL

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