

# THE WHITSUNDAY REGION MAJOR FESTIVAL & EVENTS ATTRACTION STRATEGY 2019-2023

Whitsunday Regional Council  
August 2019



Australian Government

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE**



## ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) is a proud sponsor of events and festivals and recognises the role they play in showcasing the region to potential visitors and the value they contribute to economic development.

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* represents an expression of Council's commitment to further develop the region's festival and events offering and sets out a vision, strategic priorities, goals, objectives and actions to nurture and stimulate growth. The Strategy also seeks to increase the profile and capacity of the Whitsundays by identifying the types of major events that maximise the essence of the Whitsundays both now and in the future, and which have the potential to stimulate powerful outcomes for the region.

The Strategy also provides a framework for Council to determine funding and other assistance to events, based on a clear set of objectives and criteria, and includes a five-year action plan with clear deliverables and timings.

The framework and supporting material developed to facilitate effective capture and reporting of event information and outcomes, including obligations for event funding recipients will enable post event analysis to more accurately assess the risk-return benefits aligned to economic, community and regional exposure values.

The Strategy is supported by detailed background research and an extensive stakeholder consultation process.

**Festivals and Events are an important driver in continuing to develop the Whitsunday Region's economy: they attract guests, spectators and participants, they encourage increased spend, repeat visitation and create jobs. Events are also an important contributor to community wellbeing by providing an opportunity for social inclusion and connectedness, reinforce the region's identity and enhancing civic pride.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* aims to build on successes of existing events and attract new events that will further associate and promote the Region as a competitive, capable and viable major events destination.

Events play a key role in fostering regional tourism and economic development. Tourism contributes \$524 million to the Whitsunday Region economy and accounts for approximately 40% of all jobs. Events have the ability to increase tourism through creating new experiences and encouraging purposeful travel and increased length of stay.

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* serves to grow the capacity of existing major events, strengthen events with potential to become major events and develop new events, which will showcase the distinctiveness of the Whitsunday Region.

The Whitsunday Region needs to host events that will:

- [Support economic growth](#) by stimulating the visitor economy through increased visitation, participation and overall tourism spend.
- Promote the distinctiveness of the region by celebrating and [showcasing its unique competitive positioning](#).
- Create [activation and vibrancy throughout the year](#).
- [Foster community engagement](#) in event participation and attendance.
- Support and dovetail with existing National, State and regional tourism and event development and marketing strategies.

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* provides the roadmap to achieve this, by placing strategic priorities on:

- Event Support
- Event Funding
- Event Development
- Event Marketing
- Event Measurement.

## KEY PRIORITIES

- Seek to [establish new events and grow existing events](#) that showcase the unique qualities of the Whitsunday Region and support activity and provide a positive economic and reputational impact across the calendar year.
- Seek to [attract existing festivals and events that have the potential to be relocated to the Whitsunday Region](#), taking advantage of the region's unique attributes and offering event organisers an attractive and viable location for future ventures.
- [Develop an events funding structure and assessment process](#) that focusses on establishing and supporting those events that have the greatest capacity to increase in size and economic contribution (both financially and in every other respect) in five years following inauguration with seed funding for individual events for up to three years.
- [Identify and engage a primary regional resource](#) to support the events sector and coordinate the Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC) comprising representatives from Council, Tourism Whitsundays (TW), Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ), Bowen Tourism & Business and representatives from each of the chambers of commerce in the region and events industry experts. The purpose of this SCC will be to ensure that all the different sectors of the events community are engaged, and that future events success is well supported by all partners.
- Provide and [encourage opportunities for private sector investment](#) that contribute to the ability to attract, fund and grow the Festival and Events Calendar, thereby reducing the dependency on public sector funding.
- Develop a framework with relevant key performance indicators (KPI) to [measure the financial and economic impact of major festivals and events](#) in the Whitsunday Region and use the results to improve future performance.
- Explore ways in which major events can [increase the economic contribution to the regional economy](#).

## STRATEGY ON A PAGE

Vision				
<p><b>The Whitsunday Region is recognised as the home of great events that showcase its identity, strengthen its brand and stimulate positive ongoing sustainable impacts for the regional economy</b></p>				
Strategic Priorities				
Event Support	Event Funding	Event Development	Event Marketing	Event Measurement
Goals				
Develop a progressive, diverse and cohesive industry	Utilise an assessment tool & develop a funding model to build business cases for event funding	Create sustainable visitor inspired events in the Whitsunday Region	Strengthen the Whitsunday Region brand by building events around major tourism themes	Consistently measure event outcomes
Objectives				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and engage a primary regional resource to support the events sector</li> </ul> <p>Strengthen stakeholder relationships (local, industry and state agencies) through the formation of a Stakeholder Consultative Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise an event/ grants assessment tool to ensure all events receive a consistent review and assessment process prior to funding</li> <li>Develop an event funding structure that supports qualifying events with the potential to become self-funding within three years</li> <li>Develop tools and templates for preparing business cases to attract external funding for events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and support new events; ensure special one-off bid events and major events are not lost to other locations</li> <li>Create and maintain a diverse program of events which appeal to a broad audience and builds on the region's unique and hero experiences</li> <li>Ensure a whole of regional; approach to developing new and expanding existing events</li> <li>Develop an events attraction prospectus that promotes the Whitsunday Region as an attractive events destination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively promote events regionally and state-wide as appropriate, to encourage overnight visitor attendance and participation</li> <li>Encourage tourism packaging and offers to compliment major events</li> <li>Improve post-event reporting and monitoring to ensure strong ongoing participation and enjoyment</li> <li>Build new and foster existing relationships with local suppliers</li> </ul> <p>Optimise the economic return to the region from funding or sponsoring events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently evaluate and compare the core economic value of events held in the Whitsunday Region</li> <li>Develop social and environmental impact assessment templates for use by event organisers</li> <li>Develop event visitor survey template for use by event organisers</li> <li>Include event impact question(s) in Council's online Community Engagement Platform</li> </ul> <p>Deploy event measurement tools for each target event</p>

## WHY ARE FESTIVALS AND EVENTS IMPORTANT?

Festivals and Events play an important role in helping destinations achieve their long-term economic and social aspirations. From an economic development perspective, there are two main purposes of tourism related and commercial events. The first is to build financially successful and sustainable events that exceed participant (organisers and attendees) expectations, deliver a commercial outcome, and grow the visitor economy. Event profitability will ensure the sustainability of the sector and will assist in attracting new events to the region.

Secondly, they assist in building reputation and awareness for the region, both external to stimulating awareness and intention to visit – and internal to the region – building community support and pride.

Specifically, events generate:

- **Direct and indirect economic benefits** which are achieved through increased visitation, accommodation and other spending at local businesses
- **Employment opportunities**, particularly in the hospitality and retail sectors and provides opportunities for skills development, capacity building and practical experience for volunteers
- **Destination branding** through promotion and advertising of the region through traditional and social media channels
- **An “always on” perception** for the destination in key target markets so that potential visitors are continuously reminded that the destination is active, a place where things are happening and a place that should be foremost when choosing a destination
- **Social wellbeing** through community participation, engagement and connections which in turn builds and raises cultural awareness and civic pride
- **Inspiration and enrichment** through exposure to new experiences, skills and knowledge, and;
- **Rationale for stimulating service and infrastructure upgrades** that can support future capacity building.

## KEY FOCUS OF THIS STRATEGY

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* is focused on attracting and assisting in developing tourism/ commercial major festivals and events that provide the region with a balanced calendar of events, increase visitation and tourism spend to support the wider economy. Development, support and attraction of events further drives increased awareness of the region as an events destination and contributes to delivering wider economic benefits. The drive to maximise sustainable commercial outcomes lies at the very heart of the Strategy.

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* has been developed to provide direction to support, develop and strengthen the size and capacity of the Whitsunday Region’s major festivals and events program over the next five years. Whilst a suggested timeframe for implementation of the Strategy has been proposed, this will be subject to available resources and funds.

In addition, acknowledging that Council aim to provide annual allocated funds to support strategic event development, the Strategy has identified twelve events, which could be eligible due to their potential to grow the Whitsunday Region into a competitive event destination. The events have been selected as a suggestion for year one of strategy delivery due to their ability to align with Councils objectives for strategic event development. Four of these events involve improving the sustainability of existing major events, a further four events will be developed so that they may be able to achieve self-funded status. The Strategy also identifies four new events or event concepts, which have capacity to showcase the uniqueness of the Whitsunday Region.

### Note:

*Events vary in scale and purpose ranging from a local and community focus and impact, to those that seek to attract an international audience and media coverage. The Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023 is focused on sustaining, developing and creating major events (i.e. high-profile events) with a national and international focus, promotion and audience. Local residents attending major events are an important element of an event’s success, but their economic contribution is significantly less when compared with non-resident event attendees.*

## DEFINITIONS

### **Major or special events**

Public events that attract both locals and visitors from outside the Whitsunday Region. They can generate significant economic, tourism, social, community and cultural benefits. These events may have a regional, state, national or international profile. Special events differ from major events in their tendency to be one-off opportunities which can showcase the region, for example international sporting events such as the Commonwealth Games.

### **Festival**

A series of events or programs linked around a theme or place. Festivals are important to a local audience as well as visitors. People can be drawn by a location, its context or a special interest or cultural experience.

### **Local and or community events**

Local public events organised for the community by local groups including not-for-profit, special interest or trader organisations. They can generate social, community and cultural benefits, and economic benefits. The majority of event attendees are typically local.

### **Civic events**

Events that are ceremonial, remembrance, advocacy or celebratory which recognise national days and events of significance. Examples include Australia Day, Citizenship ceremonies, ANZAC Day, NAIDOC Week, Remembrance Day. Civic events do not form part of this Event Strategy.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	II
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	VI
INTRODUCTION .....	1
ROLES IN DELIVERING MAJOR EVENTS .....	2
STRATEGIC CONTEXT .....	3
KEY STRENGTHS .....	5
KEY CHALLENGES .....	6
THE STRATEGY .....	9
REFERENCES .....	22

## INTRODUCTION

---

Events are a very important driver in developing the Whitsunday Region’s visitor economy. Major events attract visitors, stimulate economic activity and bring communities together.

The Whitsunday Region has exhibited a demonstrated ability to host and deliver high quality, authentic event experiences ranging from major world class events to international, national events and regional events. Whilst this is a strong foundation for future growth, more can be done to leverage these events to maximise their potential, stimulate long-term and sustainable benefits for the region, increase visitor numbers and drive economic growth.

The Strategy sets out a collective approach to stage consistently delivered high-quality events which showcase and celebrate the identity of the region. In doing so, the Whitsunday Region will fulfil its vision of becoming known as the home of great events by featuring a strong calendar of events comprising major bid events which will be supported by core homegrown and national and international events. Key targets are to develop, improve or attract up to twelve new events over the next five years to 2023.

With the support of a progressive, diverse and cohesive events industry, it is anticipated that the delivery of successful events across the calendar year will assist in job creation and build the region’s reputation as highly attractive and memorable events destination.

The Strategy is an expression of Council’s commitment to work collaboratively to develop the region’s events offering and sets out a structure, vision and objectives to achieve this.

The Strategy is focused on strengthening the Whitsunday Region’s existing major events scene and addressing gaps in the sector identified through stakeholder engagement. In order to develop a larger and more balanced portfolio of events it will be necessary to:

- [Create new events which will showcase the unique qualities of the Whitsunday Region](#) that align with key investment priorities and promotional/marketing messages and contribute to a rounded and well-developed events calendar.
- [Support established Signature Events to increase their capacity to add value to the Whitsunday Economy](#)
- [Invest in growing Major events and evolving Regional Events](#) with the vision for them to become Signature Events.
- [Bid for events with a proven record](#) in delivering specific economic benefits or delivering high-profile destination awareness.

The development of the event strategy framework and supporting material will facilitate effective capture and reporting of event information and outcomes, including obligations for event funding recipients will enable post event analysis to more accurately assess the risk-return benefits aligned to economic, community and regional exposure values.

The Strategy is informed by background research and stakeholder engagement undertaken in October and November 2018. Feedback regarding the current state of the events industry in the Whitsunday Region, together with opportunities and challenges facing future growth of the industry were sought through individual and group discussion with local stakeholders and state and national organisations including Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ), Tourism Australia (TA), and Qantas – who have an interest in major events.

## ROLES IN DELIVERING MAJOR EVENTS

### TOURISM EVENTS QUEENSLAND

Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government and the State's lead marketing, destination and experience development and major events agency. One of the primary functions of TEQ is to identify, attract, develop and promote major events for the State that: contribute to the Queensland economy; attract visitors to Queensland; enhance the profile of Queensland; and foster community pride in Queensland.

The Events Unit of TEQ is tasked with delivering a world-class calendar of events for Queensland, guided by the *TEQ Events Strategy 2025* which is focused on attracting events which deliver maximum return on investment and are clearly aligned with TEQ's overarching objectives to contribute to the Queensland economy; attract visitors to Queensland; enhance Queensland's profile; and foster community pride.

TEQ supports major events across the state by:

- Promoting events taking place in destinations to national and international markets.
- Funding regional events via two detailed and prescribed events funding programs.
- Working in partnership with multiple stakeholders, including regional tourism organisations and event organisers, to ensure that the value of events is maximised.

### WHITSUNDAY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Whitsunday Regional Council (WRC) currently assumes many roles in delivering events namely: leading, organising, sponsoring, partnering, producing, promoting, approving, licensing, liaison and venue owner. Whilst it is anticipated that these roles will continue into the foreseeable future, dedicated resources will be required to take the Whitsunday Region to a new level as a major events destination.

WRC supports major leisure and community events by:

- Advocating and championing events for the region.
- Investing in events organised by others through targeted funding programs.
- Working with event organisers, businesses, community groups, and individuals to ensure compliance, support events and create new opportunities.
- Championing event initiatives and their benefits to stakeholders by using Council's marketing and communications resources (in conjunction with TW) to promote and generate audiences.

### TOURISM WHITSUNDAYS

Tourism Whitsundays (TW) is recognised by WRC and TEQ as the official Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and peak industry body responsible for driving growth in the Whitsunday Region's visitor economy and in leading the promotion of the destination.

TW provides support to major leisure and business events which either contribute to visitation or work towards increasing visitation to the destination, dispersal and length of stay. TW also supports and works with several events across the region by assisting organisers with marketing plans, reviewing funding applications and providing event mentoring.

TW supports major events by:

- Promotion in the current Whitsunday Region Visitor Guide Events Calendar and TW's consumer newsletters (database in excess of 20,000)
- Including major event listings in media and trade news updates.
- Including upcoming events on social media platforms.
- Issuing joint press releases to leisure media databases.
- Providing support with Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) event listings.
- Creating packages to sell on the TW website.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The events industry in the Whitsunday Region has a major role to play in shaping and delivering the objectives set out in the *Whitsundays Destination Tourism Plan 2014-2020* (DTP) and *WRC Economic Development Strategy 2017-2021* (EDS). Events and festivals which build and authentically showcase the unique heritage, food and nature offerings of the region play an important role in activating spaces and places, encourage visitor dispersal, and increase destination awareness and brand promotion (particularly in international markets).

The tourism industry is unanimously recognised as a key driver of the Whitsunday Region's local economy. Tourism is worth \$524 million to the local economy and is region's largest employer, accounting for approximately 40% of jobs, and is the second-largest contributor to gross regional product (behind mining).

Despite the impacts of Cyclone Debbie in late March 2017, the Whitsunday Region has nevertheless been on an upward trajectory with visitation growing at an average rate of 6.2% per annum over the last three years.

The Whitsunday Region events sector has an important strategic role to play in delivering the vision for tourism set out by all levels of government.

At a State level the *TEQ Events Strategy 2025* provides a platform to realise TEQ's vision of inspiring consumers to visit Queensland to experience the best events in Australia. Specifically, the Strategy supports events that generate local economic activity and development in the host destination; attract external visitation to the destination; drive social and community outcomes for the host destination; and, enhance the profile and appeal of the host destination.

From a regional perspective, the *Greater Whitsunday Alliance Regional Economic Development Strategy* (which includes WRC, Isaac Regional Council and Mackay Regional Council) has identified the importance of events in supporting the prosperity of the region and as such, has stated its intention to attract and grow world-class events and supporting infrastructure in the Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday region (GW3, 2018).

At a local level, the DTP and the EDS identify the importance of events in building capacity and strengthening the year-round tourism offering to support and contribute to sustained economic growth across the region.



## SIGNATURE EVENTS

Signature Events are events which feature on the Event Calendar annually and are integrally associated with the destination brand. These events are compelling to non-local markets, have high expenditure potential and provide the destination with a competitive advantage. They are associated with the destination's identity and help raise its profile both nationally and internationally (depending on the type of event).

Examples of Signature Events, the majority being sporting events include:

- Audi Hamilton Island Race Week
- Airlie Beach Race Week Festival of Sailing
- Airlie Beach Festival of Music
- Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival (bi-annual)

## MAJOR EVENTS

Major Events are typically of limited scale build civic pride, foster creativity and innovation, highlight unique qualities of the destination, including heritage, environment and/or geography and build a sense of place. These events typically do not receive the level and longevity of funding needed to evolve into Signature Events. Scaled up through product development and product packaging, Major events have the potential to deliver significant economic, socio-cultural and market development impacts.

Examples of Major Events in the Whitsunday Region include:

- Airlie Beach Running Festival
- Airlie Beach Triathlon
- Bowen River Rodeo, Campdraft and Bush Sports
- Professional Golfers Association (PGA) Professionals Championship National Final

## REGIONAL EVENTS

Annual Regional Events showcase the special attributes of a destination. Whitsunday Regional Events tend to attract most attendees from within the region and a lesser amount from neighbouring regions (e.g. Isaac, Mackay and Townsville), but still generate significant media coverage (state and/or local).

Examples of Regional Events in the Whitsunday Region include:

- Bowen Cup Race Day
- Bowen Offshore Superboats
- Great Australian Bites
- Great Whitsunday Trail
- Hamilton Island Endurance Series
- Hamilton Island Whitehaven Beach Ocean Swim
- Whitsunday Reef Festival

## KEY STRENGTHS

---

**From an events perspective the Whitsunday Region possesses the following key strengths:**

- Highly desirable tourism destination with several Australian icons such as 74 islands, the Great Barrier Reef, Whitehaven Beach and Heart Reef all located in The Whitsundays.
- Well-known as a marine events destination within Australia.
- “Whitsundays” is an international brand.
- Favourable climate for outdoor events with several venue options available to host events or sub-events as part of a major event.
- Unique events e.g. Bowen River Rodeo in Collinsville which is part of the Queensland and national rodeo competition circuits and the longest-running rodeo in the State.
- Understated importance of food provenance and recognition as Australia’s largest winter growing region for fruit and vegetables. Potential to develop into an opportunity, particularly for more iconic items such as Bowen mangoes.
- Growing population base and increasing economic diversification.
- Established and newer, successful events e.g. Clipper Carnival in January 2018.
- Viable market and appetite for events with proven ability by operators to offer unique tours and holiday experiences to visitors both pre- and post-events.
- Good event services e.g. audio systems and pyrotechnic specialists.
- Good marketing and communications channels.
- Active investment in increasing accessibility to the region – particularly air access.
- Strong and active Council support and involvement pre and post events including parking, traffic management and garbage removal.
- Council are actively (& currently) committed building new & additional venues to support a growing event market
- Council provide both cash and in-kind contributions to organisers to support event growth
- Strong community participation and support of events.

## KEY CHALLENGES

---

**The strategic challenges currently facing the Whitsunday Region include:**

- Reasonably sparse regional catchment for drive market
- Difficult to have point of difference to neighbouring regional catchment
- Insufficiently leveraging or building on island resorts events and drawcard benefits. Lack of available funding and access to other funding sources - currently too much reliance upon Council and repeat sponsors.
- Events are not currently profitable/sustainable and therefore require ongoing financial support.
- Regional unity – improving but room to improve further.
- Lack of resources (people and money) to fund, attract, organise, market, run and measure events.
- Some existing events could provide better experiences and deliver greater economic value
- Limited internationally branded and operated hotels and limited supply of luxury accommodation on the mainland.
- Lack of mobile and portable infrastructure within the region (e.g., generators, porta-loos, porta-showers, porta-kitchens, floodlights, tents).
- Lack of large scale, high-quality caterers.
- No professional conference organisers (PCO) or destination management companies (DMC) located in the region.
- There is no over-arching event coordination for the region focused on achieving the dual goal of both growing events (and the visitor economy) and achieve business and community support and participation.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

---

The strengths of the Whitsunday Region's event sector outweigh the challenges. Stakeholder consultation revealed a collective vision to confidently and passionately champion the development and promotion of the major event sector growth opportunities through:

- Strengthening the annual calendar of major events by improving existing and developing new events.
- Increasing the economic benefit of events by attracting events with high participation levels from visitors external to the region, such as sporting, food and other experiential events that appeal to growing markets such as Millennials
- Growing the funds available for sponsorships by engaging with existing partners, key stakeholders and the private sector.
- Building capability in the major events sector.
- Monitoring and reviewing the Strategy with the sector.

These opportunities call for the need to balance future event development and success through a formal measurement system, within a cohesive framework. As an outcome of an audit process, the current Whitsunday event development opportunities that best align with the Regions' strategic event development objectives have been identified. This list is intended as a guide for 2019 and to be reviewed annually to ensure resources are focused on event opportunities with the greatest potential to add value to the regional economy.

Establishing a strong major events portfolio cannot be achieved within existing funding levels. The Whitsunday Region will require a cross-collaborative approach in order to capture new funding sources regionally, nationally and internationally, assess which events to support and to grow the resource pool for future events.

Key Focus Areas	Opportunities	Event Categories	Key Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a cohesive event support and coordination function to direct the future growth.</li> <li>• Develop an events funding structure that assesses and supports events with the greatest chance of success and self-sustainability.</li> <li>• Support a mix of events that encompass sports, arts, culture, lifestyle, community and business events.</li> <li>• Create an even spread of events throughout the year with an emphasis on shoulder seasons (supported by a clear calendar).</li> <li>• Showcase the uniqueness of Whitsunday and build on the region's hero experiences.</li> <li>• Continuously inject new life into the event calendar by promoting newly created events whilst maintaining regular, successful events.</li> <li>• Increase geographical spread of events across the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a balanced portfolio of events that build on distinctive Whitsunday's tourism themes and hero experiences.</li> <li>• Grow and diversify funding and partnership collaboration for major events.</li> <li>• Bid for new events.</li> <li>• Increase promotion and networking opportunities.</li> <li>• Increase event coordination, development &amp; investment opportunities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grow &amp; Extend</b></p> <p>Existing events that have a demonstrated ability for generating high levels of attendance and visitation. These events have established a profile of success typically are already viewed as being successful, and Council's support is intended to support extended reach (either by extending the length of the event or adding an additional element to grow and extend, allowing the events to reach greater levels of success, sustainability and contribution to the visitor economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an event support and coordination function that will achieve both the goal of growing events (and the visitor economy) and achieve business and community support and participation.</li> <li>• Increase direct and indirect economic outputs for tourism and related businesses.</li> <li>• Increase employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Increase identity and brand recognition.</li> <li>• Increase reputation as a high-quality and highly diverse events destination.</li> <li>• Increase media and awareness.</li> <li>• Increase social cohesion and connectedness.</li> <li>• Increase sustainability of events.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Develop</b></p> <p>Existing events that may be newer additions to the event calendar or have typically been viewed as more locally / regional inclusive, but have the capacity, with support, to develop into larger events that appeal to a wider audience and attract a higher level of visitation, stay and spend from outside the region.</p>	
		<p><b>New</b></p> <p>New events encompass those that may be either newly conceived 'first time' events, or existing, successful, out of region events that display the potential for relocation or replication. Regardless of status, new events must demonstrate the potential for fulfilling an identified market gap, capitalise on the uniqueness of the region, or leverage an existing event to increase and/or extend visitation, stay and spend.</p>	

# THE STRATEGY

---

## VISION

The Whitsunday Region is recognised as the home of great events that showcase its identity, strengthen its brand and stimulate positive ongoing sustainable impacts for local and regional economies.

The rise of the experience economy and the desire for experiences and active participation will be a key motivator and driver for visitor inspired events in the Whitsunday Region. The Strategic goals provide a clear direction to build the Whitsunday Region’s reputation of delivering high-quality events, whilst positively impacting on the regional economy, visitor number, profile and brand of the region.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & GOALS

<b>Event Support</b>	Develop a progressive, diverse and cohesive industry.
<b>Event Funding</b>	Build a self-funding event funding model and tools to build business cases for external funding of events.
<b>Event Development</b>	Create sustainable visitor inspired events in the Whitsunday Region.
<b>Event Marketing</b>	Strengthen the Whitsunday Region brand by building events around major tourism themes and executing on quality and authenticity.
<b>Event Measurement</b>	Consistently measure event outcomes.

## WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Successful delivery of the Strategy will result in the following:

- The Whitsunday Region will be recognised as a home of great events in North Queensland, having successfully grown its event calendar by improving upon or attracting up to twelve new major events to the region over the next five years.
- There is a balanced calendar of festivals and events spanning international, national and regional events and one-off global bid events that encourage visitation and provide year-round economic benefits.
- Events will showcase the Whitsunday Region’s stunning coastline, tropical hinterland and authentic local experiences and will provide clear reasons for visitors to visit the region, either as first-time or repeat visitors.
- Events will increase awareness of the Whitsunday Region brand and intention to visit.
- The events industry will drive increased economic benefits to the local and State economy, increase employment opportunities and stimulate increased investment in infrastructure that will benefit the entire region.
- Events will be sustainable and not require seed-funding beyond three years.
- The events sector will be strongly supported by a collaborative structure with clear leadership roles and responsibilities.
- WRC, TW and its partners and stakeholders will have a track record of delivering success, measured by predetermined benchmarks and key performance indicators (KPI) at all levels of events from major bid events, through to international and home-grown events.
- Events will generate increased civic pride as measured through community sentiment surveys.

## EVENT SUPPORT

### Rationale

WRC has multiple roles in relation to events in the Whitsunday Region: attracting, partnering, funding, sponsoring, producing, promoting, approving, licensing and liaison. These roles are expected to continue into the future; however, resources are finite. Stakeholder consultation identified the need for a coordinated approach to event capacity building and attraction in the Whitsunday Region to achieve growth in events/ visitor economy and business and community support and participation.

The primary role of WRC contributing to region-wide event building and coordination with existing stakeholders is best as achieved through the Identification and engagement of a primary regional resource to support the events sector and the formation/ coordination of a the Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC) comprising representatives from Council, Tourism Whitsundays (TW), Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) and representatives from each of the chambers of commerce in the region and events industry experts. The purpose of this SCC will be to ensure that all the different sectors of the events community are engaged, and that future events success is well supported by all partners.

### Key Roles & Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are considered essential to effectively deliver and facilitate a thriving events series of regional events.

- **Event Attraction and Development:** Involves bidding for state, national and international events; conceiving, creating and developing events; selling commercial sponsorship; attracting support, building the 'community' or network that will build and deliver the event and ensure it is sustainable. This role is sometimes taken on by local government, external funded agencies, or a combination of the two in a coordinated, collaborative approach. Possession of, or access to experience at the national level in event bidding (and winning) and a track record of successful Sponsorship negotiations is ideally required
- **Event Organisation and Co-ordination/Delivery:** Involves the detailed work involved in organising events e.g. venues, logistics, ticketing, staffing, volunteers, entertainment. There are many potential participants involving a variety of different parties in collaboration as needed by each unique event (e.g. events proponents, professional event organisers). The identified resource may

provide these skills and/or may involve Professional Events Organisers (PCO's), sporting or arts organisations or volunteer committees.

- **Event Support:** Involves the event logistics required in order to successfully stage an event and includes elements such as traffic control, crowd control, events infrastructure (toilets, water, electricity), event clean-up, temporary civic infrastructure, safety and emergency services. This is often the work of Councils and State Government agencies and is a proven strength of WRC.
- **Event Marketing:** Involves the promotion and marketing of events to attract visitation via sales activities, marketing, public relations, media management, promotion of ticket sales. Event marketing functions also involve leveraging events to build destination awareness, intention to visit and brand awareness. This role is usually undertaken by specialist events marketing organisations and/or destination marketing organisations such as TW, with support from TEQ and TA as required.

### Key Priorities

- Identify and engage a primary regional resource to support the events sector and coordinate the Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC) comprising representatives from Council, Tourism Whitsundays (TW), Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) and representatives from each of the chambers of commerce in the region and events industry experts.
- Develop an events funding structure and assessment process focussing on establishing and supporting events that have the greatest capacity to become sustainable (both financially and in every other respect) in five years following inauguration with seed funding for individual events for up to three years. Priority strategic growth events to be supported to be reviewed/audited annually.
- Assign roles and responsibilities to each representative within the region's events structure in line with the pre-agreed plan, its milestones and KPIs.

### Key Objectives

- Establish, fund and resource capability within WRC to manage the regional events structure and implement the Strategy.
- Strengthen stakeholder relationships (local, industry and state agencies).

**EVENT STRUCTURE: *Develop a progressive, diverse and cohesive industry***

Objective	Actions	Outcome	Partners	Performance Measures
Identify and engage a primary regional resource to support the events sector and coordinate the Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit required events coordination resource</li> <li>Define key roles and responsibilities for WRC involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment of events coordination resource</li> <li>Formation of Stakeholder Consultative Committee (SCC)</li> <li>Develop an engagement MOU with Stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW, TEQ</li> <li>Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Event Organisers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fully operational Events Unit</li> <li>Annual reporting on KPIs</li> </ul>
Develop a staged investment strategy and identify sources of funding to ensure sufficient funds are available to resource this strategy and required actions effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop ideas and consult best practice and develop a staged investment strategy which will facilitate the growth of major events in the Whitsunday Region.</li> <li>Explore options to source investment to funding on-going events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of an investment strategy which is endorsed by WRC</li> <li>Annual allocation of funds to be arranged with Council to support strategic event growth for identified events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>SCC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track feedback and use testimonials from event organisers to secure future funding.</li> </ul>
Strengthen stakeholder relationships (local, industry and state agencies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in organisation/ hosting of networking events and workshops to inform and communicate relevant event-industry information to different audiences.</li> <li>Activity work with potential event organisers to identify their needs and conduct familiarisations.</li> <li>Build partnerships with surrounding regions to leverage event opportunities where elements of the event can be hosted in the Whitsunday Region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host regular (e.g. quarterly) events.</li> <li>Develop and distribute a feedback questionnaire to assess engagement levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>Tourism operators</li> <li>Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs)</li> <li>Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of events, workshops hosted by/ participated in by WRC</li> <li>Number of communication touchpoints (e.g. newsletters, Facebook, Instagram, etc) with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>Results of stakeholder sentiment surveys and activity response to and address any areas of concern.</li> </ul>

## EVENT FUNDING

### Rationale

Funding is critical to creating new and developing existing events. The responsibility of who is ultimately responsible for funding major events is a highly contentious issue amongst a number of destinations who are seeking to grow their major events industry. Competition for event funding is also a matter faced by well-established events destinations.

There is often a perception or expectation that a significant proportion of funding responsibility rests with local government. This is neither practicable nor reasonable given the finite funds available. In the case of the Whitsunday Region, there exists the potential of support events via multiple funding partners through TW, TEQ, TA and airlines, as well as WRC.

In a perfect world, there is a high level of agreement amongst stakeholders that events should be run profitably and that the profits should be reinvested back into the events. Although contrary to how events have been run previously, stakeholders in the Whitsunday Region consider ticketed events as the best option to make events profitable. It is therefore recommended that only new/ expanded events which have potential to operate on a profitable basis and which have potential to become self-funding within three years are included in the Strategy.

Development and application of the Event Assessment Tool will assist in making initial determinations as to which events are most likely to have the best opportunities of achieving self-funding status.

Some events will nonetheless require large amounts of seed funds from Local, State and Federal agencies to get established. It is therefore important that the Whitsunday Region event support and coordination resource has access to the skills and proven experience required to attract grant funding and to raise sponsorship.

### Key Priorities

- Activate opportunities for private sector investment through sponsorship, in-kind support and contribution to event infrastructure to grow available funding for major events and reduce the dependency on public sector funding.
- Ensure major event investment and sponsorship opportunities are credible, commercial and attractive to the private sector in the national competitive context
- Build and leverage international partnerships (such as relationships with international sailing organisations) to attract future investment.

### Key Objectives

- Develop an event/ grants assessment tool to ensure all events receive a consistent review and assessment process prior to funding.
- Annually review all events to identify those that best align with strategic growth objectives.
- Develop an event funding structure that supports the resource requirements of the regional events support and coordination function in the delivery of the Strategy and required event funding.
- Develop tools and templates for preparing business cases to attract external funding for events.

**EVENT FUNDING: *Build a self-funding event funding model and tools to build business cases for external funding of events***

Objective	Actions	Outcome	Partners	Performance Measures
Develop an event/ grants assessment tool to ensure all events receive a consistent review and assessment process prior to funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research what other jurisdictions use to assess event funding applications.</li> <li>• Develop funding assessment criteria.</li> <li>• Develop annual audit and priority event recommendation process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event funding assessment criteria.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WRC</li> <li>• TEQ</li> <li>• Other state STOs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event funding criteria developed.</li> </ul>
Develop an event funding structure that has the potential to contribute to seed funding from events once they become self-funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, propose and test a self-funding event seed fund.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-funding events funding model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WRC</li> <li>• Events stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable event seed funding model developed.</li> <li>• Event funding becomes self-funding after five years.</li> </ul>
Develop tools and templates for preparing business cases to attract external funding for events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research the information that external event funding bodies require.</li> <li>• Develop tools that allow the efficient and effective preparation of event funding business cases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient and effective business case development tool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WRC</li> <li>• Event funding bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tools and templates for preparing business case developed.</li> </ul>

## EVENT DEVELOPMENT

### Rationale

New major events should ideally reflect and celebrate what is distinctive about the region if they are to build a strong profile and sustain community engagement. The Whitsunday Region has a strong portfolio of events however opportunities exist to grow existing events, develop fresh ones and create scale and momentum by working with partners in new and innovative ways. Equally it is important that new/refreshed events take account of visitor and consumer market trends in order to maximise their appeal, maximise economic benefits.

In order to develop a larger and more balanced portfolio of events, going forward it will be necessary to:

- Create new events which will showcase the unique qualities of the Whitsunday Region (in line with key investment priorities and promotional/marketing messages) and fill calendar gaps.
- Support established Signature Events and add value to these events so that they can better deliver outcomes for the region.
- Invest in Major Events or Major Regional Events that can meet the impact criteria for becoming Signature Events;
- Bid for events with a proven record in delivering specific economic targets or delivering high-profile destination awareness.
- Where appropriate, examine the opportunities for bundling smaller events under an umbrella (theme, geographic or time), which gives these events the ability to create a greater impact and benefit from economies of scale.

### Key Priorities

- Increase the spread of events over the year, including the shoulder seasons.
- Attract/develop/expand events that align to the key tourism and experience themes of the Whitsunday Region.
- Attract events that are recognised on the international stage and particularly in key visitor and trade target markets.
- Increase focus on creating highly engaging experiences for attendees at all touchpoints during major events i.e. during pre-event planning, event attendance and post-event sharing stages. This will encourage attendees to be active participants in the event, rather than observers.
- Ensure that venues and other infrastructure (e.g. accommodation, transport, etc.) are fit for purpose and provide high-quality event experiences.

### Key Objectives

- Develop and support new events; ensure special one-off bid events and major events are not lost to other locations
- Create and maintain a diverse program of events which appeal to a broad audience and builds on the region's unique and hero experiences
- Ensure a whole of regional; approach to developing new and expanding existing events
- Develop an events attraction prospectus that promotes the Whitsunday Region as an attractive events destination

**EVENT DEVELOPMENT: *Create sustainable visitor inspired events in the Whitsunday Region***

Objective	Actions	Outcome	Partners	Performance Measures
Develop and support new events; ensure special one-off bid events and major events are not lost to other locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, target and continue to attract new events to the Whitsunday Region.</li> <li>Ensure event attraction considers shoulder periods and economic returns.</li> <li>Work with event organisers to influence timing of new events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> <li>TEQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of new or expanded events delivered each year.</li> </ul>
Create and maintain a diverse program of events which appeal to a broad audience and builds on the region's unique and hero experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and apply a priority matrix to assess which events have potential to deliver the best return on funding. The matrix could include a scoring system which weights reputational impact and economic impact.</li> <li>Review funding commitments to ensure events remain relevant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event matrix used and applied.</li> <li>Increased funding for new and existing events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of events subjected to the event priority matrix.</li> <li>Number of events receiving funding (including monetary amounts).</li> </ul>
Ensure a whole of regional; approach to developing new and expanding existing events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute to a regional approach to event development which complements the objectives of the WRC EDS and DTP.</li> <li>Assess the relevance and strategic fit of events to overall destination and economic development objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with TEQ and other relevant agencies to promote major events in the Whitsunday Region.</li> <li>Regular liaison with all towns in the region and in adjoining council areas (Mackay and Isaac).</li> <li>Increased promotion of major events in the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> <li>TEQ</li> <li>Mackay Regional Council</li> <li>Isaac Regional Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback surveys to assess the relevance and diversity of events.</li> </ul>
Develop an events attraction prospectus that promotes the Whitsunday Region as an attractive events destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an events attraction prospectus which showcases the Whitsunday Region's capabilities and value proposition as a major events destination.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create and distribute the event prospectus.</li> <li>Undertake annual event research (including market trends and health check results) to update the event prospectus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> <li>TEQ</li> <li>TA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of event attraction prospectus sent and record of feedback (positive or negative) in regard to hosting a future event in the Whitsunday Region.</li> </ul>

## EVENT MARKETING

### Rationale

Event marketing is perhaps the area of greatest potential but also one of the greatest challenges. Whilst most stakeholders consulted in preparation of this strategy indicated more funding was required to do more marketing, it is important that these marketing dollars are invested and spent wisely. At present, many events are being marketed in a relatively dated manner and to the local residents as opposed to intrastate or interstate audiences, which have far greater potential to grow the visitor economy and deliver significant economic benefit. Furthermore, there is some degree of inconsistency between State and local objectives for events, which is reflected in the way events are marketed and promoted.

### Key Priorities

- WRC, TW, TEQ and local chambers to work collaboratively to produce an Events Calendar, which is then hosted by all these organisations so that various stakeholders can find it in multiple locations
- Listed events should place focus on those that attract significant visitor numbers and have an economic benefit to the Whitsunday Region and wider area.
- Improving and extending the event experience, behind the scenes content, online platforms, learning, engagement and interactivity through social channels should be considered an integral part of all marketing and promotional activities going forward
- Utilise event marketing to promote the region utilising newly developed Destination Branding

### Key Objectives

- Create an online event toolkit to assist event organisers plan and promote events.
- Actively promote events regionally and state-wide as appropriate, to encourage attendance and participation.
- Encourage tourism packaging and offers to compliment major events and to extend length of stay.
- Improve post-event reporting and monitoring to ensure strong ongoing participation and enjoyment.
- Build new and foster existing relationships with local suppliers.
- Optimise the economic return to the region from funding or sponsoring events.

**EVENT MARKETING: *Strengthen the Whitsunday Region brand by building events around its major tourism themes and executing on quality and authenticity***

Objective	Actions	Outcome	Partners	Performance Measures
Create an online event information platform, comprising application form and accessibility to event planning resources provided by Tourism Whitsundays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a portal link through the current Council website that provides Events information and accessibility to the TW event toolkit.</li> <li>Develop easy to access and easy to use online events application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage best practice in the events sector.</li> <li>Introduce standardisation regarding planning, organising, hosting and evaluating events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>SCC</li> <li>TW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an online event portal access via current website</li> <li>Develop online events application.</li> </ul>
Actively promote events regionally and state-wide as appropriate, to encourage overnight visitor attendance and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to work with events sector to maintain an up-to-date events calendar on TW and WRC websites and through regular newsletters.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased exposure and awareness of events taking place in the region.</li> <li>Achieve reputational reward that complements the Whitsunday Region's brand values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TW</li> <li>TEQ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track national coverage (and international where appropriate) of Whitsunday Region events.</li> <li>Record number of media stories featuring a Whitsunday Region event.</li> </ul>
Encourage tourism packaging and offers to compliment major events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a series of "off the shelf" event and travel and accommodation itineraries and packages.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase event-driven overnight visitation through packaging and promotion of the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TW</li> <li>Tourism operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of event-driven visitor nights.</li> <li>Increased business confidence amongst tourism operators.</li> </ul>
Improve post-event reporting and monitoring to ensure strong ongoing participation and enjoyment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce annual report / health-check report detailing the economic and social benefits of events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual / health check report.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compilation and release of annual / health check report.</li> </ul>
Build new and foster existing relationships with local suppliers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build awareness with event organisers of local suppliers (including local food producers and artists).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on existing database of local suppliers, food producers, artists, venues, etc..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>Tourism operators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number (and currency) of local suppliers in database.</li> </ul>
Evaluate and subsequently prioritise/ optimise the economic return to the region from funding or sponsoring events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the economic contribution of all major events that receive funding over a determined level to assess the economic benefit of hosting events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understanding of the direct and indirect economic value of each event, as well as other key performance indicators for major events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact of all major events reported.</li> </ul>

## EVENT MEASUREMENT

### Rationale

Event measurement is the activity of measuring the financial and other economic benefits of the event and some of the otherwise less tangible but important outcomes. For example, value of media about the event and destination, growth in awareness for the event and the destination, geographic and demographic information about event attendees, spending behaviour of attendees, attendee intention to revisit. Event measurement is an essential part of acquitting funding from various levels of Government.

The economic benefits of events held in the Whitsunday Region are currently not necessarily well understood, neither before they happen nor after they have taken place. This is partly because of the way in which events have been funded, partly due to the way in which event evaluation and impact assessments are conducted, and partly to the way in which reporting is done.

Although event impact assessments in the Whitsunday Region have primarily taken stock of economic impact, this Strategy recognises the need for a more rounded assessment of the value and consequences of events. The standardised criteria to be developed will therefore take a comprehensive approach to assessing impact that considers local corporate objectives, social and community outcomes in addition to the direct economic effects. Information could also be secured to inform environmental ramifications/ considerations and additional infrastructure requirements.

Cost-effective tools are available to carry out full evaluations on all events. However, investment is required up front to minimise long run costs as well as commitment to a fixed survey format rather than a boutique instrument every time.

It is recommended that events receiving public sector funding should be required to undertake a basic level of economic assessment and reporting against the alignment with corporate and community goals, with progression to more advanced levels with subsequent rounds of funding.

### Key Priorities

- Develop a framework with relevant key performance indicators (KPI) to measure the financial and economic impact of major events in the Whitsunday Region. After initial benchmarking measures and reports are taken, targets for economic growth could then be set each year. Use results to benchmark against previous events and against similar events in other locations, and action on any negative deviations to improve future performance.
- Explore ways in which major events can increase their economic contribution to the regional economy.
- Measure community sentiment and satisfaction and action any areas of concern to ensure that the major events portfolio continues to make a positive contribution to individual community perceptions of their quality of life.
- Ensure major events include significant opportunities for the community to participate – this can take the form of volunteering, ambassadorship, participation or attendance.
- Measure and assess brand awareness and penetration levels in key visitor markets.

### Key Objectives

- Investigate a simple tool to consistently evaluate and compare the core economic value of events held in the Whitsunday Region.
- Develop social and environmental impact assessment templates for use by event organisers.
- Develop event visitor survey template for use by event organisers.
- Include event impact question(s) in Council's online Community Engagement Platform.
- Deploy event measurement tools for each target event.

**EVENT MEASUREMENT: *Consistently measure event outcomes***

Objective	Actions	Outcome	Partners	Performance Measures
Investigate a simple tool to consistently evaluate and compare the core economic value of events held in the Whitsunday Region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research what other jurisdictions do to measure event outcomes and tailor to suit WRC desired measures and outcomes</li> <li>Consult with Whitsunday Region event stakeholders what they would like to see measured.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A simple to administer tool for measuring event outcomes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCC</li> <li>WRC</li> <li>TW</li> <li>TEQ</li> <li>Other state STOs</li> <li>Event stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable methodologies identified.</li> <li>List of desired key performance indicators (KPIs).</li> </ul>
Develop social and environmental impact assessment templates for use by event organisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on identified measurement requirements adapt an existing tool to suit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event assessment templates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event assessment tool and templates developed.</li> </ul>
Develop event visitor survey template for use by event organisers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on identified measurement requirements adapt an existing visitor survey to meet event assessment requirements.</li> <li>Develop guidelines and materials for using the tools including: training, paper based, online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor survey template and tools</li> <li>Training and usage guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitor survey template and tools developed.</li> </ul>
Include event impact question(s) in Council's online Community Engagement Platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop standard set of questions for events</li> <li>Deploy questions on the CEP post each event.</li> <li>Close questions and analyse responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online feedback on events.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCC</li> <li>WRC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions deployed within suitable time post event</li> <li>Analysed responses.</li> </ul>
Deploy event measurement tools for each target event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify suitable events for measurement.</li> <li>Deploy event measurement tools to event organisers and provide training where necessary.</li> <li>Collate results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event KPIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WRC</li> <li>Event organisers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Event measurement.</li> </ul>

An estimate of how successful an event is can be evaluated using a range of factors. These factors are important when considering whether to expand the event from a regional to a major event, or when submitting applications to secure funding to grow or sustain existing events.

**Economic Impact**

- Job Creation
- Skills Development
- Industry support & business development
- Business attraction and expansion
- Diversity of service providers (in- and out-of-region)
- Linkages to leisure and business tourism

**Social Impact**

- Improves the livability and social connections in WRC
- Expression of demographic and ethnic diversity
- Extent of growth in general interest of the theme
- Support community interaction, integration and cohesiveness

**Environmental Impact**

- Waste minimisation
- Water conservation
- Energy efficiency

**Alignment to WRC**

- Develops vibrancy within WRC
- Reinforces the Whitsundays brand
- Innovative, leading edge event
- Development of lifestyle and entertainment activity options for the local community
- Embraces WRC corporate initiatives and objectives

**Media Profile**

- Media interest
- Extent of media coverage
- Duration of media coverage
- Estimated value of media coverage
- Event reach to audiences from following geographies: Local, Regional, State, National, International

**Event Legacy**

- Recurrence in WRC
- Increase in interest, number of participants, general development in/of the event theme
- Infrastructure improvements
- Extent of committed financial support from stakeholders and sponsors
- Quality of event application

## RESOURCING

A clear sense of unity of purpose and structure is crucial to the successful delivery of the Strategy. Necessarily a diverse and complex range of stakeholders are involved in supporting and delivering events in the Whitsunday Region and the Strategy has been prepared based on their input. It is now important that the Strategy is acknowledged in shaping their own strategic and financial approach to major events and as such, use it as part of their own decision-making processes.

Resourcing to support the required actions and funding required to deliver the desired strategic outcomes is crucial to future success in proactively attracting events, as well as the application of guidelines to support funding of both existing and new events to ensure sustainability.

Partnerships are also viewed as being an essential and integral part of the Strategy and it is recognised that it will be impossible to achieve the vision without true partnership working across public, private and voluntary sectors.

## TIMING

The *Whitsunday Region Major Festivals and Events Attraction Strategy: 2019-2023* is a five-year strategy and is designed to deliver 8 to 12 events in a strong annual calendar. The pace and urgency of the extension and delivery of this strategy will be dictated by the resources dedicated to it, which will be largely determined by Council. Fewer resources will just take longer to deliver the required outcomes.

## IMPLEMENTATION & REVIEW

Implementation and delivery of the Strategy will be driven and executed by the Whitsunday Region Council, which will monitor success and manage any challenges that may arise. During the implementation of the Strategy, it is envisaged that stakeholders will be invited to meet regularly to build stronger relationships and improve information sharing within the sector. It will also use this engagement platform to regularly report on progress and involve the sector in the Strategy's five-year Action Plan.

## REFERENCES

- Able Point Marina (ABM) (2018a). *Clipper Carnival boosts Whitsunday Economy*. Accessed from: <https://abellpointmarina.com.au/marina-news/clipper-carnival-boosts-whitsunday-economy/>
- Able Point Marina (ABM) (2018b). *Queensland Rally Championships form Part of an Inaugural Whitsunday Festival of Motoring*. Accessed from: <https://abellpointmarina.com.au/marina-news/queensland-rally-championships-form-part-of-inaugural-whitsunday-festival-of-motoring/>
- Australian Cruise Association (ACA) (2018). *Annual Report: 2017/2018*.
- Eventbrite (2018). *The Experience Movement: Australians believe Events Inspire Positive Change in the World*.
- Global Wellness Institute (GWI) (2018). *Global Wellness Economy Monitor: October 2018*.
- Greater Whitsundays Alliance (GW3) (2018). *Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday Region Economic Development Strategy. 2018-2022. A Roadmap for Regional Prosperity*.
- Hotel Conversation (HC) (20108). *Hayman Island InterContinental Hotel opening July 2019*. Accessed from: <https://www.thehotelconversation.com.au/news/2018/09/18/hayman-island-intercontinental-hotel-opening-july-2019-and-appoints-mark-eletr>
- Open Table (2018). *Focusing on the Future of Food Tourism*. Accessed from: <https://openforbusiness.opentable.com.au/2018/05/08/focusing-on-the-future-of-food-tourism/>
- Mind Body Spirit Festival (MBS Festival) (2017). *MindBodySpirit Festival 2017 Festival Report*. Accessed from: [https://www.mbsfestival.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MBS\\_FestivalReport2017\\_6PP.pdf](https://www.mbsfestival.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/MBS_FestivalReport2017_6PP.pdf)
- Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) (2017) *TEQ Events Strategy: 2025. Executive Summary*.
- Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) (2018). *Annual Report 17/18*.
- Tourism Events Queensland (TEQ) (2018). *Whitsundays*. Accessed from: <https://teq.queensland.com/destinations/whitsundays>
- Tourism Research Australia (TRA) (2018a). *National Visitor Survey*. Accessed from: <http://traonline.tra.gov.au>
- Tourism Research Australia (TRA) (2018a). *International Visitor Survey*. Accessed from: <http://traonline.tra.gov.au>
- Tourism Whitsundays (2018). 2017/2018 Annual Report.
- Whitsundays Regional Council, Tourism Events Queensland & Whitsundays Marketing & Development (WRC, TEQ & WM&D) (2014). *Whitsundays Destination Tourism Plan: 2014-2020*
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2011). *Whitsunday Regional Council Community Plan: 2011-2021*.
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2017a). *Whitsunday Regional Council Economic Development Strategy: 2017-2021*.
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2017b). *Whitsunday Regional Council 2016-2017 Annual Report*.
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2018a). *Whitsunday Regional Council 2017-2018 Annual Report*.
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2018b).
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2018c). *Media Release: Extra Virgin Flights with 54,000 new seats*. Accessed from: <https://www.whitsunday.qld.gov.au/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1197>
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2018d). *Media Release: Council Secures Bonus PEC Funding*. Accessed from: <https://www.whitsunday.qld.gov.au/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=1184>
- Whitsundays Regional Council (WRC) (2018e). *Tourism Recovery Fund Project: September Project Status Report*. Accessed from: [https://www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/images/Corporate-2017-18/Project-Status-Report/Project-status-as-at-1-Sept-2018\\_TW-website-content.pdf](https://www.tourismwhitsundays.com.au/images/Corporate-2017-18/Project-Status-Report/Project-status-as-at-1-Sept-2018_TW-website-content.pdf)
- Whitsunday Times (WT) (2018). *\$40 million Upgrade in Full Swing at Airport*. Accessed from: <https://www.whitsundaytimes.com.au/news/40m-upgrade-in-full-swing-at-airport/3519999/>
- Queensland Times (2017). *Bid for Red Bull Air Race at Airlie Beach*. Accessed from: <https://www.qt.com.au/news/gw3s-bid-for-red-bull-air-race-at-airlie-beach/3267114/>