Tablelands Regional Council

event strategy + action plan
2018–2021

Photo by Chris Greer

TRC
TABLELANDS REGIONAL COUNCIL

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Strategy Snapshot

The Tablelands Region

EVENT VISION

"To be known for distinctly Tablelands events that celebrate our world renowned nature and vibrant culture"

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

- Elevation, rainforest, rich soils
- Vibrant villages + locals
- Stunning landscapes + wildlife
- Mountain Adventure Sports, maximising extreme tropical wet season conditions

STRATEGIC APPROACH

- Grow home grown events
- Attract new events
- Develop distinctly Tablelands

EVENT ACQUISITION

- Shoulder + low season
- Brand + destination aligned
- Contribute significantly to profile +/or economy

TOP 5 KEY STRATEGIES

1. Develop Hallmark/Destination Events to grow Tablelands' profile
2. Partnerships to increase stay, spend + dispersal
3. Collaboration & Capacity Building to enable sustainable events + increase visitor satisfaction
4. Infrastructure to grow existing events + attract new events
5. Human Resourcing delivery, succession planning + volunteers

FOCUS

Leisure & business events that contribute to the triple bottom line.

Focus on events that:

1 Attract visitation and grow economy

2 Destination profile

3 Foster community pride

5 STEP PATHWAY TO GROWTH

Step 1 – One Stop Shop
To gain a greater understanding of resources and support through an online portal. Book a face-to-face 'one stop shop meeting' with relevant organisations, representing whole of council, all levels of government and regional organisations.

Step 2 – Regional Facilitation
The Event Sub-committee to identify the potential of the event for further support, such as training/ mentoring, cross regional support, packaging, possible funding/support opportunities and potential partners. Economic modelling may be required for events identified as having potential to transition to Hallmark status and quick turnaround for Major One-off or successful event bids.

Step 3 – Training and Development Program
Ongoing support through a training and development program, including developing "distinctly Tablelands" experiences.

Step 4 – Facilitating Partnerships
Through organised networking opportunities between events to encourage resource sharing and partnerships with the wider tourism industry and business community.

Step 5 – Mentoring
Program for events with potential to transition to a Hallmark/ Destination event.

HIERARCHY OF EVENTS

Hallmark/Destination Events
- "Distinctly Tablelands" and celebrate our locations. Recurring events.
- 50% of visitors and participants from outside the region.
- National and international media coverage.
- **Examples:** Woodford Folk Festival, Isa Rodeo, Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers.

50%

Major One-Off Events
- Generates significant economic impact.
- 40% of visitors and participants from out the region.
- National and international media coverage.
- **Example:** Enduro World Series – Derby Tasmania.

40%

Regional Events
- "Distinctly Tablelands". Celebrate our locations.
- 30% of visitor/participants from outside the region.
- Regional and state media coverage.
- **Examples:** Mt. Garnet Races & Rodeo, Yungaburra Triathlon, Taste of the Tablelands, Yungaburra Folk Festival

30%

Community Events
- Celebrate our locations.
- Predominately local visitors.
- Local/regional media coverage.
- **Examples:** Atherton Maize Festival, Torimba Festival.

HALLMARK/DESTINATION EVENTS

MAJOR ONE OFF EVENTS

REGIONAL TOURISM EVENTS

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Where We've Been
Situation Analysis

Purpose of an Event Strategy

Tablelands Regional Council has identified the need to develop an Events Strategy to create future economic opportunities for the region, and support and enhance community vibrancy. The purpose of the strategy is to provide:

- A strategic direction for events in the Tablelands based on market trends and consultation.
- An assessment of opportunities and challenges, and
- A framework to best enable growth of events for the economic and social benefit of the Tablelands.

The process used to develop the strategy involved:

- Face-to-face consultation, including public event workshop.
- Council and cross-departmental council meetings.
- Liaison with local and regional tourism organisations.
- Quantitative research through online surveys with event organisers.
- Benchmarking against local government authorities to identify best practice processes and resourcing.
- Interviews with national event organisers to identify what they look for in a potential event destination.

Strategic Context

The Tablelands Regional Council (TRC) lies within the Tropical North Queensland Region as defined by Tourism and Events Queensland. Regional links are identified with the state body, Tourism & Events Queensland, the regional tourism organisation Tourism Tropical North Queensland, and the local tourism organisation, Tropical Tablelands Tourism.

The TRC Event Strategy + Action Plan strategically aligns with the internal strategies of Tablelands Regional Council and the local, regional and state tourism and event strategic plans.

Specifically, this strategy aligns with the Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) Event Prioritisation Strategy to be part of the greater region's vision *"to be internationally recognised as a unique, natural and vibrant major event destination"*, with strategies to acquire new events, create home grown events and support existing events with growth opportunities.

Queensland Event Strategy is delivered through the *"It's Live in Queensland"* campaign and the *Queensland Destination Events Program (QDEP)*, supporting events that:

1. Generate local economic activity and development in the host destination.
2. Attract external visitation to the destination.
3. Drive social and community outcomes for the host destination, noting the important link between community outcomes and economic benefits.
4. Enhance the profile and appeal of the host destination.

Strategic Links

Situation Analysis

Location

Part of the Great Dividing Range, The Tablelands is located in Tropical North Queensland, 80 km, or a 90-minute drive, south-west of Cairns at an altitude ranging from 500 and 1,280m. The climate is rarely above 30 degrees celcius, free of the coastal humidity, making it the ideal location to escape the summer heat.

Atherton, Herberton, Innot Hot Springs, Malanda, Millaa Millaa, Mt Garnet, Ravenshoe, Tolga, Walkamin and Yungaburra feature quaint townships, weekend markets and form the Tablelands Regional Council regional boundaries.

Agriculture is the primary industry in the rich, fertile plateau of The Tablelands. Conditions are perfect for dairy cattle to graze in the green pastures, while farms grow tea, coffee, nuts, corn, vegetables and flowers for the local and export markets.

Population

The Tablelands Regional Council has a population of 25,312 residents (idcommunity, 2018), with Atherton the central business district having a population of 7,331 people (ABS, 2017).

Competitive Advantage

The Tablelands is a tropical region of Tropical North Queensland boasting World Heritage listed rainforests, unique wildlife and a refuge for people in surrounding regions wanting to escape the heat. The region provides a potential opportunity for off-season events, such as adventure sports, that can be staged in high rainfall times.

Unspoilt nature is the key competitive advantage for The Tablelands:

- Heritage listed National Parks.
- The Waterfall Circuit.
- The Food and Wine Trails - food bowl of the Tropical North.
- The region is the gateway to Savannah Way and Cape York.
- The Wildlife of the region with emphasis on the birding trails and unique wildlife e.g. Tree Kangaroo.
- A world-class mountain biking destination.
- Elevation – cooler climate.
- Queensland's highest town.

Travelling to the Tablelands

Visitors to the Tablelands can self-drive or travel by bus on sealed roads from the coast and the outback. Daily buses run from Cairns and tour buses are available when booked in advance.

Cairns Airport has daily domestic and international flights and it is only a short, scenic 90-minute drive from the Tablelands.

Accommodation

The Tablelands has a mix of motels, hotels, caravan and camping grounds, B & B's, host farms and Airbnb accommodation providers, however the region lacks 4-5 star hotel chains.

Retreats, lodges and cottages are the most popular style of accommodation, with a smaller maximum capacity to accommodate people.

Event Facilities

The Tablelands has a variety of event venues for conferences and events with capacity ranging from 15 to 550 people. In addition to the venues, there are over 165 open spaces and sporting fields with and without facilities that could be potential event spaces.

Opportunities exist to capture midweek events hosting conferences packaged with accommodation.

Challenges

The greatest barriers to attract large-scale events and grow visitation for current events are:

- Limited 4-5 star branded accommodation.
- Limited public transport from surrounding regions to the Tablelands.
- High cost of transport to The Tablelands for larger scale event equipment.
- Limited intra-regional transport, limiting access to events and other areas of the Tablelands with food and accommodation services without a private vehicle.
- Limited food providers are open after hours/weekends.
- Reduced event participation from non-residents who are unable to obtain accommodation.
- Limited dedicated event facilities with capacity for larger events.

Recommendation

Undertake a full audit of accommodation operators and event facilities to identify the total bed capacity, event facilities and services available across the region.

Market Trends

Events are a competitive and rapidly growing industry that showcases the host destination and are often an impetus for travel.

Event attendees have the expectation that events evolve and provide new, unique experiences, influencing the way they feel creating an emotional connection with the event and destination (Getz, 2008). The focus has shifted towards engaging attendees, who are spending more disposable income on travel and culture, with events benefiting from a rise in event technology that further engages millennial travellers.

To remain competitive, and constantly evolve, an assessment of national and global events, festivals, and consumer trends that could potentially impact The Tableland's ability to sustainably grow events has been undertaken.

Consumer Trends

LIKE A LOCAL	Live like a local. With the explosion of tourism blogs and publications relating to eat like a local, hang out where the locals go, speak like a local. **Opportunity**: - for visitors to live like a local and immerse themselves as Tableland locals during events. Incorporate local foods and hangouts in the event content/program.
	Food and superfoods have been a major consumer trend in Australia within food and coffee culture. Paddock to plate experiences and health and well-being relating to food, high on consumer agendas. Wholefoods and getting back to basics are on trend in 2017/18. **Opportunity** The development of signature paddock to plate food experiences at events, using local produce.
	Give Back. The Conscious Consumer, being environmentally aware, wanting to consume environmentally sustainable products and experiences and wishing to contribute and give back are another consumer trend influencing events. **Opportunity** Further develop the non-profit events in The Tablelands that provide a genuine opportunity to give back to the community, acting as a fundraising platform for multiple community groups and adding value to the culture, arts and community in the region.
	Cultural and Learning Experiences at events and festivals, such as workshops, new skill development, hands-on, immersive experiences. **Opportunity** Further enhance hands on activities (including pre-and-post-event) and pre-package for visitors with local arts and produce.
It's all about ME	**Rise of the Individual**, exclusive, personally tailored, interactive and behind the scenes experiences that can't be experienced anywhere else are in demand. **Opportunity** Develop exclusive, premium experiences at events with VIP passes which include access to exclusive experiences that are distinctively Tablelands and packaging of experiences with events e.g. breakfast with the banana growers.
	Digital and Online Tracking - social media interaction and sharing is increasing across all demographics.. **Opportunity** Develop visually enticing event and festival sites through decoration/design of site, entries, lighting and engaging content to encourage social media sharing. Live streaming of aspects of the event or festival. Use of regional and destination hashtags to encourage third party distribution of Tablelands event content.

Event Trends

Globalisation and Homogenisation - With the expansion in the number of festivals and events across Australia, globalisation and homogenisation of events needs to be considered. Many events throughout Australia have similar live entertainment, experiences, food stalls and performers. Event attendees expect to see something new and different at each event, or over time, the homogenisation of some events could reduce their attractiveness, and stop attracting outside visitors.

Opportunity Further develop signature/destination events that are distinctly Tablelands and not easily copied. Encourage event organisers to develop event experiences that meet consumer trends and build on experiences only available in The Tablelands.

Digital and Online Ticketing - Innovation and advances in technology are changing consumer's expectations of how to research and book events. It is expected event and festival tickets can be purchased online, using any platform and device.

Opportunity Encourage events and event information to be easily accessible online, including smartphone responsive websites, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listings, digital programs, online ticketing and, potentially online, merchandise.

Technology - Innovations in technology are impacting the festival and events industry with a convergence of blending speakers, experiences and content in unique and practical ways.

Opportunity Streaming a group of experts from different locations to the event participants.

Events in the Tablelands

Value of Events

The value of festivals and events for the Tablelands Regional Council is determined by the drawing power of the event, plus measures of value to the Tablelands as a host destination by the following criteria:

- Demand (measured by trends in the number of visitors from outside local region attracted).
- The value in meeting other tourism goals (e.g. media coverage, image enhancement, theme development, sustainability) (Getz, 2008).

Research by Tourism Research Australia identified regional events provide the following benefits:

- An event is the impetus for 57% of first time visitors to a region and 69% of repeat visitors.
- Three-quarters of event attendees are prompted to visit the region to attend the event and would not have travelled to the region if the event was not on.

A cross selection of events is currently hosted in the region. As a host event destination, the region will not only foster community cohesion; it will encourage visitation from people that would not normally visit the Tablelands and who have an interest in the festival or event.

The benefits to the region will include:

1. Stimulate economic growth for the region with the multiplier effect.
2. Increased visitation will serve as a catalyst for infrastructure investment and tourism capacity.
3. Foster a positive destination image and community pride.

Seasonality

The majority of events in the Tablelands are staged from May to November, outside the wet season.
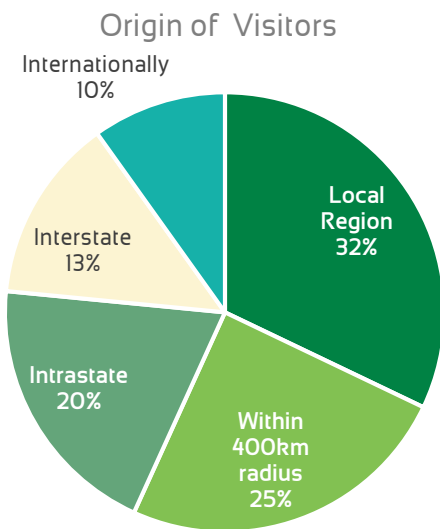
Current Events Landscape

To understand the current events landscape, facilitated workshops were conducted with council staff, local community members, and event organisers. Post the workshops; surveys were distributed to event organisers with a sample size of 30 respondents. The findings below summarise the event organiser survey data.
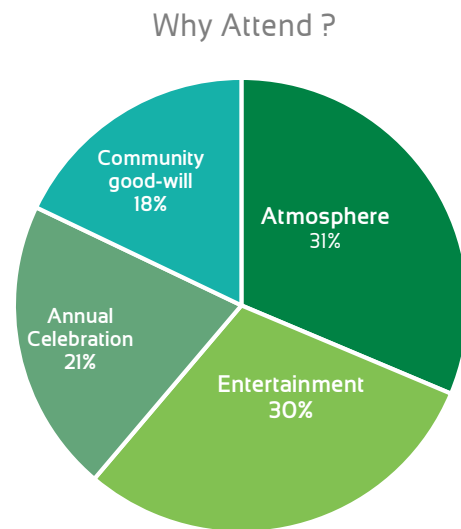
Visitor Origin

The majority of visitors are from the Tablelands region, with 25% within a 400km radius and 20% intrastate visitation.

Origin of Visitors

Internationally
10%

Interstate
13%

Intrastate
20%

Local Region
32%

Within 400km radius
25%

Why Attend?

The top four reasons why visitors attend events cited by event organisers is:

Why Attend ?

Community good-will
18%

Annual Celebration
21%

Atmosphere
31%

Entertainment
30%

Events

Most of the events in The Tablelands are either community, cultural, music or sporting events, staged annually. Over 37% of the events surveyed have been running in excess of 20 years.

Event Attendance

The majority of events in the Tablelands attract between 1,000-3,000 attendees

Event Attendance

Category	Percentage
10,000+	
5,000-...	19.23%
3,000-5,000	23.08%
1,000-3,000	26.92%
500-1,000	3.85
100-500	19.23%
Under 100	7.69%
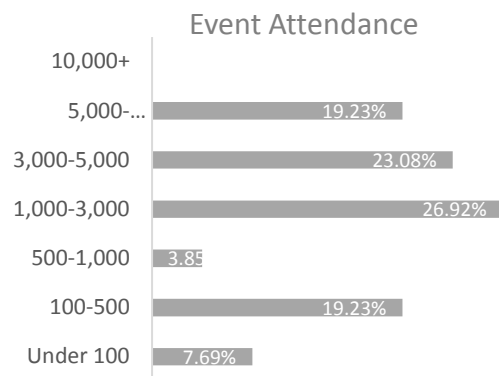
Major Challenges

Three major challenges facing event organisers identified in the survey are:

- **Sustainability** – increasing financial costs, cost to transport additional infrastructure, handling growth, changing consumer demands and trends.

- **Human Resources** – burn out of volunteers, skills of committee/event organiser, succession training.

- **Funding** – Limited sponsorship and grant funding.

SWOT Analysis

The following SWOT analysis of the region and its events was developed during consultation workshops.

STRENGTHS

- Elevation – Queensland's highest town.
- Diversity in a small area.
- World Heritage listed National Parks.
- Waterfalls.
- Heritage towns.
- Accessibility - International airport.
- Community support.
- Infrastructure - sporting events.
- Mountain biking/cycling.
- Artistic community.
- Climate – cool tropics.
- Agriculture - Local produce, red soil.
- Flora & fauna.
- Community - strong links and associations.
- Open spaces and natural attractions.

WEAKNESSES

- Event sustainability, limited innovation and growth.
- Limited collaboration between event committees.
- Calendar of events - conflicting event dates.
- Limited branding of the region.
- Competing messages between events.
- Volunteers.
- Limited funding opportunities.
- Lack of accommodation and accessible databases.
- Limited event management experience.
- Limited succession planning.
- Limited dedicated event venue/infrastructure and capacity.
- Limited training and networking opportunities for event organisers.
- Limited partnering with tourism industry and local business and leveraging marketing opportunities.
- Limited food providers operating before and after business hours and over the weekend.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Adventure sports, off season/rain.
- Botanical gardening – tours.
- Youth events.
- Music, arts and culture.
- Packaging and cross-promotion with other regional events.
- Turn 1 day events into 3 day events.
- Collaboration with small committees.
- Nature based, wildlife events.
- Local produce events/tours.
- Indigenous art.
- Partner tours ex Cairns.
- Combined marketing of region.
- Collaboration and partnerships.
- Packaging to enhance visitor experience.
- Capacity building & networking.
- Greater coordination and promotion of events via local calendar and ATDW.
- Opportunity to increase midweek visitation through small business events.
- Roadshows to promote the Tablelands.

THREATS

- Weather.
- Event competition.
- Perception of distance.
- Perception that the ranges are dangerous.
- Environment - adventure - similar venues.
- Natural environment competition - GBR, Daintree.
- Cost of insurance/liability.
- Age of residents and visitors.
- Commitment to organization.
- Local resistance to road closures and parking.
- Government agency restrictions (local and state regulation, i.e. national parks, environment protection).
- Changes and/or reduced government focus and/or funding of events.

Challenges

In summary challenges facing the region for events include:

- Availability of cafes and restaurants open for breakfast and dinner, weekdays and weekends.
- Public transport to the Tablelands and intra-regionally.
- Capacity building of event organisers, committees and volunteers.
- Collaboration between organisers and the tourism industry, packaging of products.
- Moving event locations to accommodate growth.
- Event dates clashing with other events, not using the Event Calendar.
- Reinvigoration of tired events.
- Facilities may not be fully utilised, e.g. town halls, areas for overflow camping, sporting facilities.

Council Processes and Council Events

Council Events

- The Tourism Culture and Events unit manage Council Civic Events – Australia Day, VP Day, Garden & Christmas lights competition and the Mayor's Christmas Appeal.
- Community events are managed by community groups.
- Yungaburra Triathlon has been outsourced to a professional event organiser.

Community Events

- Funded via the TRC Events Budget and aligned with the TRC Events Management Plan.
- The application is assessed by the Tourism Culture and Events unit based on needs
- Applications are assessed during council budget workshops.
- Events Acquittal Report is required following the completion of the event.

Community Grant Program

- Grants of up to $1000 are available to not-for-profit community organisations which are not also receiving funding through the TRC Events program, and are often used to support events. Grants may be as cash, in kind (see below) or remittance of fees such as hall hire.

In-kind support

- Use of Council's equipment such as tables, chairs, wheelie bins, marquees and witch's hats.
- Free for community to use when they are collected and returned by the community.
- A cost is involved when a TRC staff member is required to deliver items, such as waste services delivering wheelie bins or the garbage truck emptying bins.

Challenges

- Limited existing capacity or resources to manage events more proactively.
- Sponsorship is provided based on historical support.
- Council does not have the infrastructure to support external events.

Recommendations

- Develop a 'one-stop-shop' approach to facilitate community events and event enquiries.
- Review current sponsorship agreements against Evaluation Criteria.
- Evaluate current events to identify hallmark/destination potential.
- Identify existing events with tourism potential to grow to major/hallmark status and where possible, provide in-kind/capacity building support for community events.
- Where appropriate, provide a 3-year funding agreement, linked to capacity building workshops to develop event growth and sustainability.
- Consider engaging professional marketing support for potential hallmark events e.g. photographer, drone coverage and brand development.
- Develop a volunteer strategy, link to incentives to encourage wider and younger generation to participate in events.

Issues and Opportunities

Issues and Gaps

To facilitate the success of the Event Strategy, and ultimately promote the Tablelands as a leading event destination, the following issues and gaps have been summarised in key priority areas.

HALLMARK EVENTS	PARTNERSHIPS	CAPACITY BUILDING	INFRASTRUCTURE	HUMAN RESOURCING
• Limited growth of hallmark events. • Long-term approach required to grow events into destination/hallmark events. • Events need reinvigoration. • Limited region branding. • Limited out of region marketing. • Perception of distance and ranges are dangerous. • Many events are managed by volunteers with limited professional event experience or support, making event growth development difficult.	• Limited partnerships with organisers, tourism industry, and local businesses. • Limited event packaging with local tourism operators and businesses. • Surrounding regions are not aware of events in the Tablelands. • Limited partnering with TTNQ and TTT to leverage opportunities. • Limited use of ATDW listings. • Organisers work independently and do not collaborate.	• Event dates clash with other events in the region – not recorded in the events calendar. • Some event organisers are not aware of the growth process. • Limited capacity building and networking opportunities. • Limited Governance reporting. • Limited event reporting.	• Cost of infrastructure transport to the Tablelands. • Limited facilities with growth opportunities. • Limited food operators. • Lack of services in open spaces – water, power, amenities. • Limited public transport to the Tablelands and inter-regional. • Limited dedicated event facilities. • Underutilised open spaces and event facilities. • Limited higher end and large-scale accommodation.	**Council** • Limited event staff for event attraction and servicing. • Limited auditing of infrastructure and open spaces. **Events** • Limited volunteer database. • Volunteer burn out. • Limited skills. • Aging population. • Succession planning processes have not been implemented.

It is important to note that the responsibility of resolving these issues does not fall solely on the Tablelands Regional Council. Active participation is required by both council and the Tablelands community to facilitate growth of events in the region.

The issues and gaps are addressed in the strategy with actions to resolve or convert these issues into opportunities in the Action Plan.

Opportunities

There are some key opportunities for Tablelands event stakeholders and council to focus on to activate and grow the events industry and to be known as an event destination

HALLMARK EVENTS	PARTNERSHIPS	CAPACITY BUILDING	INFRASTRUCTURE	HUMAN RESOURCING
• Attract and support events that meet the Tablelands event objectives and key selection criteria. • Be known as an event destination by making applications easy to navigate. • Encourage events to develop distinctly Tablelands hero experiences. • Spread events throughout the region.	• Develop council sponsorship criteria. • Develop partnerships with surrounding LGA. • Leverage marketing opportunities to cross promote events. • Build partnerships between event organisers, local business suppliers, tourism and third-party funding providers. • Packaging of events with hero experiences. • Packaging events with accommodation, including pop-up accommodation and camping. • Maximise the Tablelands event presence through the Australian Tourism Database Warehouse (ATDW).	• Grow event organisers' professional event capacity. • Facilitate event organiser networking. • Event Boot Camp workshops. • Sharing of resources and volunteers. • Event website for event organisers. • Promote Calendar of Events.	• Undertake an audit of venues, accommodation to identify capacity. • Dedicated open space event facilities. • Pop up accommodation. • Pop up event venue. • Activate event spaces across the region. • Encourage intra region transport for events, linking venues with public transport and services. • Undertake maintenance of venues. • Renovate tired venues.	**Council** • Dedicated event resources. • Develop a one-stop shop approach. • Identify and address training needs for council staff involved in events. • Further develop event measuring tools and processes. **Events** • Identify and address training needs for event staff and volunteers. • Undertake succession planning. • Develop volunteer incentives. • Encourage younger people to volunteer.

These opportunities are further detailed in the Strategic Direction, with specific implementation in the Action Plan

Where We're Going?
Strategic Direction

Strategic Direction

Vision

"To be recognised for distinctly Tablelands events that celebrate our world-renowned nature and vibrant culture".

Strategic Goals

1. Attract Visitation + Grow Economy.
2. Profile Destination.
3. Foster Community Pride.

Competitive Advantage

Events should build on the Tablelands brand, hero experiences and competitive advantage, reflecting our natural and cultural assets:

- Elevation, rainforest, rich soils.
- Vibrant villages and locals
- Stunning landscapes and wildlife.
- Mountain Adventure Sports, maximising extreme tropical wet season conditions.

Strategic Approach

- **Grow home grown events** – with tourism potential, working with events to lift them to Hallmark Events.
- **Attract new events** - to lift the profile of the Tablelands and/or contribute significantly to the economy.
- **Distinctly Tablelands -** to facilitate and enable events to better reflect our locations through event space activation across the Tablelands. Develop "distinctly Tablelands" experiences to ensure long-term competitive advantage.

Event Acquisition

The focus of attracting new events should be:
- In the shoulder and low periods.
- Brand and destination aligned and/or contribute significantly to the economy.

Strategic Focus Areas

1. Hallmark/Destination Events	Development of hallmark/destination events through a *pathway to growth* to raise the profile of the Tablelands, increase visitation and economic benefit
2. Partnerships	Develop partnerships across the region, particularly between tourism operators and event organisers to increase length of stay and regional dispersal.
3. Capacity Building	Capacity building of event organisers to deliver distinctly Tablelands events of high-quality that reflect the region to increase visitor satisfaction and repeat visitation.
4. Infrastructure	Development of infrastructure and open spaces to facilitate event growth of existing events, and provide opportunities to attract new events.
5. Human Resourcing	Volunteer management and succession planning for event organisers, committees, volunteers and suppliers.

In Five Years' Time

- The Tablelands will be home to regional events with the aim of growing to hallmark/destination events, recognised nationally, with the region featured as an event destination on the Queensland events calendar.
- The Tablelands will be known for distinctly Tableland events.
- Infrastructure and facilities within the Tablelands are suitable for events of various sizes.
- There is a culture of practical and profitable partnerships and collaboration that facilitates resource sharing, co-promotion and participation in a *Pathway to Growth* program.
- Current events are reinvigorated, and where possible, partnered with competing events.
- Events are packaged to include transport, accommodation, activities and experiences that enhance visitor experience and result in longer stays within the region and satisfactory return on investment.
- Leveraging marketing and opportunities from events and conferences with neighbouring towns and regional tourism bodies.
- Leveraging opportunities with international flights to Cairns with TTNQ.

Target Market

Aligned to Tropical Tablelands Tourism and Tourism Tropical North Queensland, target markets have been identified as:

Social Fun-Seekers	• Look for lots of activity and plenty of people to share the fun. • Seeking new destinations.
Connectors	• Bonding with family and friends. • Likely to drive to their destination.
Local + regional drive market	• 400 km radius, primarily targeting young families and VFR.
Event motivated visitors	• Special Interest - sporting, cultural and business.
Long haul drive	• Interstate and SEQ - Primarily Brisbane and South East Qld.

The secondary target markets to be pursued are international markets in partnership with Tourism Tropical North Queensland.

Event Hierarchy

Aligned to the *TNQ Event Prioritisation Strategy*, the following hierarchy of events has been developed to provide a strategic focus for the support of events across the Tablelands.

The hierarchy identifies both leisure and business events that contribute to the triple bottom line and deliver social, environmental and economic benefits to the region by:

1. **Attract Visitation + Grow Economy** - attract visitation from outside the region, increasing length-of- stay and spend to maximise the economic return.
2. **Profile Destination** - build profile and further grow the destination's brand through events that reflect our location, natural assets and unique fauna.
3. **Foster Community Pride** – social cohesion and community pride through participation and involvement in events throughout the region.

Categories and Definitions

The Hierarchy of Events can be defined by the following. It should be noted that growing events to Hallmark/Destination Events can take significant time to develop, representing a style of event that cannot be replicated elsewhere, and of interest to visitors from outside the region. It is not the intent of the strategy to grow all events to Hallmark/Destination Events, but rather provide a pathway of growth for those events with proven ability to generate significant media coverage and visitation from outside the region.

Hallmark/Destination Events

- "Distinctly Tablelands" and celebrate our locations. Usually recurring events.
- 50% of visitors from outside the region.
- National and international media coverage.

Examples Woodford Folk Festival, Mount Isa Rodeo, Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers.

Major One-Off Events

- Generates significant economic impact.
- 40% of visitors from outside the region.
- National and international media coverage

Example Enduro World Series, Derby Tasmania.

Regional Events.

- "Distinctly Tablelands". Celebrate our locations.
- 30% of visitors from outside the region.
- Regional media coverage.

Examples Taste of the Tablelands, Mt. Garnet Races & Rodeo, Yungaburra Triathlon, Yungaburra Folk Festival.

Community Events.

- Celebrate our locations.
- Predominately local visitors.
- Local/regional media coverage.

Examples Torimba Festival, Atherton Maize Festival.

Hierarchy of Events

Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

Key criteria for consideration when assessing council support for events, such as providing in-kind assistance and funding, needs to be in line with the Tablelands Event Vision and be directly related to the objectives and strategic approach.

The priority areas for council support would focus on events that meet and demonstrate potential growth in the following: -

1. **Contributes to The Regional Economy**	• Generates new investment and business. • Demonstrates partnering with local businesses to stimulate local business activity and/or employment. • Contributes to off peak and shoulder seasons.
2. **Attracts External Visitation**	• Attract visitation from outside the region, increasing spend and length-of- stay. • Offers value for money, taking consideration of council's contribution as a percentage of the total event budget and the number of visitors from outside the region.
3. **Enhances Profile**	• Profiles the Tablelands, attracts regional, state, national and possibly international media and social media coverage. • Embraces stunning landscapes, world heritage listed rainforest, vibrant villages and culture.
4. **Fosters Community Pride**	• Community support, participation and/or involvement in events. • Embodies cultural heritage.
5. **Demonstrate Future Growth & Sustainability**	• Demonstrates financial sustainability and success managing past events. • Includes commitment to safety and risk management. • Event Management Plan. • Demonstrates good Governance.
6. **Contribute to a balanced events portfolio**	• Contributes to a balance of events throughout the year. • Potential regional dispersal of visitation. • Staging of events throughout the region.
7. **Demonstrate no adverse environmental impact**	• Environmental policy. • Use grey water where possible. • Waste management plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

A cooperative partnership between event organisers, the community, tourism industry and all levels of government is required to achieve the event vision.

The role for the Council is primarily as a leader, provider, sponsor, facilitator & communicator.

Leader:	Council advocates, attracts, supports, plans and provides an event focus for the Tablelands. It acts as a catalyst for collaboration and partnerships between event organisers and suppliers.
Provider:	The council provides potential venues, open spaces and in-kind support for festivals and events that meet key criteria aligned with the event vision.
Sponsor:	Council evaluates opportunities to invest as a cash and/or in-kind sponsor in events aligned to the event vision and strategic goals.
Facilitator:	Council supports events in the region by building capacity for event management in the community and the council itself. Providing an environment to foster events coming into the region by providing venues and streamlining governance.
Communicator	Council networks with tourism and event organisations, and actively promotes events in the region using all available channels and resources.

Responsibilities

Support	Provide event organisers with advice, resources, tools and training to deliver best practice events.
Approval	Coordination and facilitation of the event approval process and single contact point for event organisers.
Safety	Actively facilitates with event organisers the safety of event attendees and staff through risk management.
Governance	Provide advice to council and community events during the planning stage to deliver best practice events.
Sponsorship and Grants	Develop sponsorship policy, procedure for dealing with applications and guidelines for event organisers. Council promotes funding through grant applications and provides assistance to community members in grant writing skills.
Event Sustainability	Provide capacity building for event organisers to ensure long-term viability of events.
Bid & Attract Events	Actively attract new events, identifying opportunities to leverage significant community, social, cultural or commercial/economic benefits.
Event Delivery	Council to deliver civic events for the community.
Event Equipment Hire	Manage event equipment hire bookings and maintain a suppliers' database.
Communication	Promote Council and community events through "Tablelands Event Calendar", social media, and links to ATDW calendar, newsletters and other mediums. Increase leverage of events across the tourism sector and integrated marketing with LTO and RTO.
Event Evaluation	Facilitate event monitoring and post evaluation of the impact of events and festivals with event organisers against key performance indicators.

Event Resources

The table below illustrates a suggested outline of the delivery areas for Event Resources.

Management of Events	• Community events managed by community groups. • Larger events managed by external event organisers with dedicated council event resources to cater for increased demand.
Management of Infrastructure	• Events Unit to manage event equipment hire and inventory. • Maintain database of suppliers. • Manage venue bookings.
One –Stop-Shop	• Provide a single point of contact for event organisers. • Coordinate event organisers' event application assessments.
Event Calendars	• Ensure events are listed on the Tablelands Event Calendar, ATDW listings and social media.
Online Toolkit	• Develop an online toolkit e.g. procedures, applications, governance, risk management, marketing resources.
Capacity Building Workshops	• Organise and facilitate capacity building workshops and networking opportunities.
Sponsorship	• Facilitate sponsorship applications. • Facilitate acquittal process. • Coordinate sponsorship policy, procedures, guidelines, applications and acquittals.
Community	• Coordinate sponsorship policy, procedures, guidelines, applications and acquittals.
Attract Events	• Work closely with Enterprise Manager/Economic Development, TTT, TTNQ & TEQ.

Event Acquisition Strategy

The natural assets of the Tablelands provide an opportunity to actively promote the region as an event destination, to attract new events, and leverage opportunities with events in the region, particularly in the shoulder season.

Aligned to the TTNQ objectives, the strategy is focused on the attraction of new events:

1. Bidding for Events	Bidding for events aligned with event vision and event strategic goals. Raise the profile of the Tablelands through media attention.
2. Support Event Organisers	Actively work with potential event organisers to identify their needs, conduct familiarisations, and provide incentives where appropriate.
3. Participation in Promotional Opportunities	Attend and participate in event activities with Tropical Tablelands Tourism, Tourism Tropical North Queensland and TEQ, supplying information and promotional material to leverage and maximise their bidding processes.
4. Shoulder Periods	Ensure event attraction considers shoulder periods, including working with event organisers to influence timing for new events.
5. Geographic Dispersal	Encourage the geographic dispersal of events across the region, particularly in open spaces.
6. Attract Mid-Week Events	Attract mid-week events and conferences.
7. Partnerships with surrounding regions	Build partnerships with surrounding regions to leverage event opportunities where elements of the event can be hosted in the Tablelands.
8. Staff Resourcing + Training	Staff resourcing and training to ensure the strategy to attract events, event support and unsolicited event enquiries can be carried out effectively.

Collaboration

Human resourcing, funding and sustainability were critical issues cited by event organisers in the workshop and survey, where collaboration and partnerships would assist them to overcome these issues.

Actions to increase collaboration and partnerships include:

NETWORKING	• Facilitate Event Organisers' Network, including networking opportunities and training. • Networking platforms between events, the tourism industry and suppliers to assist in the sharing of resources. • Develop network with local cafes and restaurants to extend trading hours during events.
DATABASE	• Access to quality and competitive suppliers and the development of an event supplier's data base was identified as a major need for event organisers. • Development of infrastructure, capacity and facilities database.
CO-PROMOTION	• Co-promotion of events with regional tourism experiences and accommodation through websites. • Co-promotion of events in surrounding regions.
PARTNERSHIPS	• Strengthen tourism partnerships with LTO and RTO to leverage marketing and sponsorship opportunities. • Develop partnerships with local libraries, Chambers of Commerce and churches to promote events.
PACKAGING	• Packaging events with regional tourism experiences and accommodation. • Development of hero experiences. • Packaging experiences with events in surrounding regions.
VOLUNTEERS	• Strengthen community involvement in events through volunteerism and sharing of volunteer resourcing – attraction, retention and training. • Develop incentives to attract younger volunteers.

Building Event Organiser Capacity

The workshops and event organiser survey identified that the event organisers are struggling to invigorate events in line with changing consumer trends to maintain visitor participation due to either:
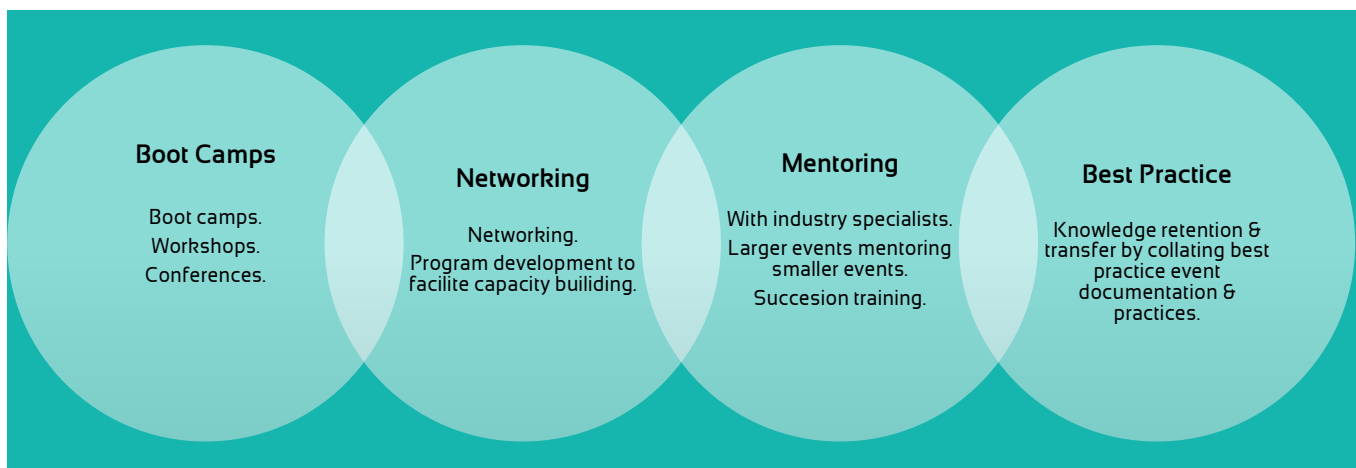
- Not having the experience or knowledge to grow the event.
- Not having the resources to support event growth.
- Not having the financial sustainability strategies to grow the event.

To facilitate building event organisers' capacity to grow their events a Pathway to Growth is recommended.

Event organisers surveyed, identified they would like to participate in training workshops covering

- Networking with other local event organisers (88%).
- Event Management (88%).
- Funding and Sponsorship (77%).
- Marketing (77%).
- Social Media (55%).
- Risk Management (50%).
- Board Governance (38%).
- Mentoring (38%).

Aligned to the TTNQ strategy, capacity building can be facilitated as illustrated below:

Boot Camps

Boot camps.
Workshops.
Conferences.

Networking

Networking.
Program development to facilite capacity builiding.

Mentoring

With industry specialists.
Larger events mentoring smaller events.
Succesion training.

Best Practice

Knowledge retention & transfer by collating best practice event documentation & practices.

Pathway to Growth

A pathway to growth is recommended for events that display potential and meet the objectives and key selection criteria. The pathway could be facilitated through the events subcommittee.

Step 1 One Stop Shop Online Portal & Meeting – to gain a greater understanding of resources and support available. Book a face-to-face "one stop shop" meeting with relevant organisations, representing government and regional organisations.

Step 2 Regional Facilitation –identify the potential of the event for further support, such as training and development, mentoring, cross-regional support, possible funding/support opportunities and potential partners. Economic modelling may be required for events identified as having potential to transition to signature status.

Step 3 Training and Development Program - ongoing support through a training and development program, such as event boot camps.

Step 4 Facilitating Partnerships - through organised networking opportunities between events to encourage resource sharing and partnerships with the wider tourism industry and business community.

Step 5 Mentoring program for events with potential to transition to hallmark events.

Monitoring the Event Strategy

The overall monitoring of outcomes, should be aligned with the event strategy objectives:

Objectives	Measured By
Attract Visitation + Grow Economy attract visitors from outside the region, increasing the length of stay and economic benefit to the region.	• Monitoring event attendance trends annually. • Economic impact assessments of events including visitor origins and length of stay. • Contributes to off peak and shoulder seasons.
Build Destination Profile of the Tablelands, embracing the natural assets and culture, contributing to the destination image.	• Media monitoring using advertising value equivalent (AVE). • Increased presence of Tablelands events online/social media. • Use of destination images, branding and messages in event marketing. • Community events demonstrate elements of cultural heritage with event plan.
Foster Community Pride opportunity for community participation, involvement and to embody cultural heritage.	• Community support, participation and/or involvement in events. • Embodies cultural heritage in the event program. • Involves the wider Tablelands region.

HOW WE'RE GOING TO GET THERE?

The Action Plan

How We're Going To Get There

Action Plan

This Action Plan contains the steps required to develop the Tablelands as an event destination to capture future opportunities recommended in the strategy.

Key performance areas are directly linked to the 5 Key Strategic Focus areas of the strategy including:

1. Hallmark/destination Events
2. Partnerships
3. Capacity Building
4. Infrastructure
5. Human Resourcing

Actions will be implemented over the following time frames:

- **Short-term** – within the next two years (2018-2019)

- **Medium-term** – within the following three years (2019-2021)

- **Long-term** – those to be undertaken after five or more years (2021 onwards) but may need to commence in the medium-term.

Actions are listed in order of timeframe, not priority.
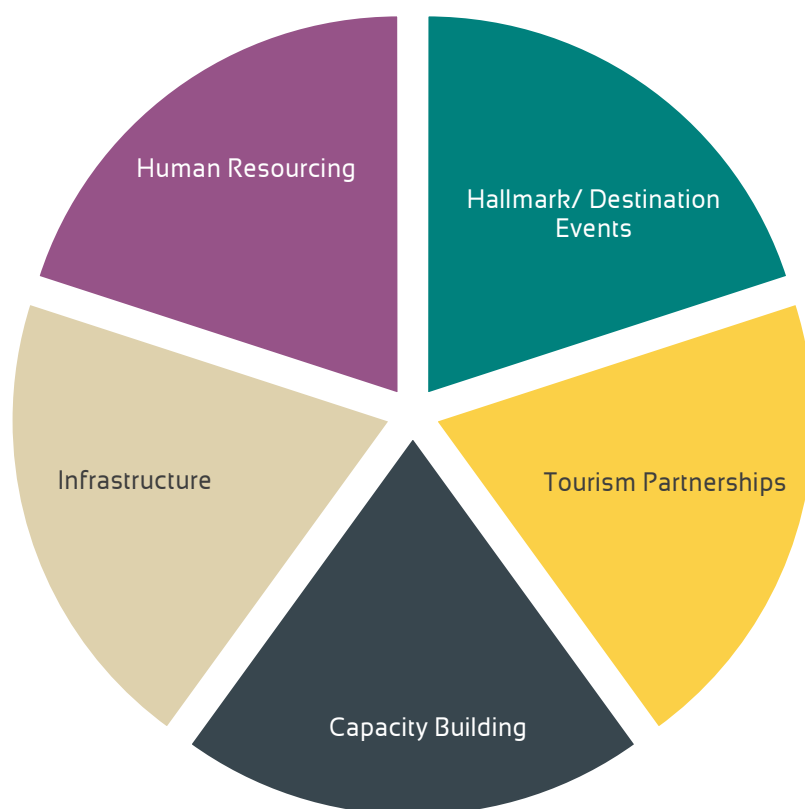
Strategic Focus Area 1 - Hallmark Events

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Event hierarchy	• Constitute an event hierarchy with tier definitions.	Council	Short-term	• Event hierarchy constituted.
Hallmark event development	• Identify and support events with potential for elevation to regional//hallmark event. • Using evaluation & assessment criteria (refer p25). Potential events could include Taste of the Tablelands, Mt. Garnet Races & Rodeo, Yungaburra Triathlon, Yungaburra Folk Festival and cycling events.	Council Internal events sub-committee	Short to medium-term	• Recognised hallmark event/s for the Tablelands.
Reinvigorate events with "Distinctly Tablelands" hero experiences	• Reinvigorate existing events by encouraging the development of "Distinctly Tablelands" experiences through a *pathway to growth.* • Encourage staging events in iconic, destination locations to maximise "distinctly tablelands" experiences. • Encourage moving event locations to accommodate growth. • Keep event coordinators abreast of latest consumer and event trends.	Council	Medium-term	• Increased number of Distinctly Tableland event experiences. • Increased economic growth.
Event attraction	• Develop event attraction strategy. • Leveraging TTNQ + TEQ body event bidding initiatives. • Attract and support events that meet/or show potential to grow to hallmark event status. • Evaluate if engaging a third party or outside event organiser will be effective. • Streamline event application process for outside event organisers. • Encourage event dispersal throughout the region.	Council TTT TTNQ TEQ	Medium-term	• Adoption of event attraction strategy. • Number of new events per year. • Economic value to the Tablelands.
Branding and marketing	• Develop consistent branding message and guidelines to market the Tablelands as event for all marketing. • Engage event specialist photographer to capture events. • Supply and encourage event organisers to use destination images, messaging and branding. • Leverage marketing opportunities with TTT, TTNQ and TEQ.	Council Event organisers	Medium-term	• Increased awareness of the Tablelands as an event destination. • Use of destination images and messaging. • Increased media profile of events.

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Event investment	• Establish council event sponsorship budget for events that meet event objectives.	Council	Short-term	• Confirmed budget.
Event impact assessment	• Develop process to assess the economic benefit of sponsorship applications.	Council	Short to medium-term	• Implementation of economic impact calculator.

Strategic Focus Area 2 - Tourism Partnerships

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Local partnerships	•Develop networking opportunities for event organisers, tourism operators & local businesses. •Develop partnership with local bodies e.g. Chambers of Commerce & Start-up Innovation Tableland	Event Organisers TTT, Chambers of Commerce/local business bodies Council	Short to medium-term	•Communication links, events included in local organisation comms/activities
Surrounding LGA partnerships	•Cross-promote events with surrounding LGA. •Identify opportunities to partner with surrounding regions hosting events to deliver elements of the event in the Tablelands	TTT Council Internal events sub-committee	Short to medium - term	•Regular contact between council event teams. •Increased cross-promotion of events.
Leveraging and partnering with marketing partners	•Partner and leverage marketing opportunities with Tourism Tropical Tablelands (TTT), Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ) and Tourism & Events Queensland (TEQ) to include Tablelands events in marketing campaigns and event bidding. •Increase presence in ATDW listings (Council could update as part of sponsorship package).	Council TTT TTNQ TEQ	Short to medium - term	•Increased presence & profiling of the Tableland events in regional & state tourism & event marketing.
Sponsorship funding and partnerships	•Develop guidelines & criteria to assess sponsorship and or partnership applications •Develop multi-year funding agreements to deliver outcomes aligned with event objectives. •Assess historical sponsorship agreements against criteria & objectives.	Council	Short-term	•Implementation of streamlined applications with criteria & objectives.
Event packaging	•Packaging of events with tourism experiences, accommodation and transfers. •Include promotion and packaging of inter and intra-regional transfers.	Event organisers Tourism operators TTT, TTNQ Chambers of Commerce/local business bodies	Medium-term	•No of event packages available. •Higher profile of accommodation, tours & transfers with events.
Dining opportunities	•Encourage cafes /restaurants to open during event periods •Encourage events and Chambers of Commerce to communicate event dates/times to dining businesses.	Event organisers Tourism operators TTT, Chambers of Commerce/local business bodies	Medium-term	•Inclusion of dining opportunities in event marketing

Strategic Focus Area 3 - Capacity Building

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Events calendar	• Develop link access on Events Calendar, promote and educate event organisers to upload their event details. • Develop 'annual view' of events on the Events Calendar. • Develop a snapshot tab of major events on the Events Calendar • Link the Events page to the Events Calendar. • Develop ATDW as content feeder.	Council Event Organisers	Short-term	• Easy to see all events in the region at a glance • User friendly calendar. • Increased usage, Google analytics. • Increased number of events on ATDW
Event website	• Develop a suitable online portal for event organisers.	Council Event Organisers	Medium-term	• Completed Event Website. • Increased use over time and regular review.
Local communication	• Develop strategies to incorporate libraries, VIC's, local Chambers & churches as event and volunteer promotional opportunities.		Short-term	• Increased local awareness and participation in events.
Networking opportunities	• Identify networking opportunities and create networking schedule/plan/strategy.	Event organisers, Chambers of Commerce, Tourism organisations	Short-term	• Attendance at networking opportunities
Event organiser capacity building	• Establish a Pathway to Growth capacity building program for event organisers. • Partner with Start-up Innovation Tablelands & Dept. of Sport & Rec to deliver capacity training.	Council Event organisers	Short-term	• Training in place. • Improved sponsorship applications and post event reporting.
Event organisers online toolkit and industry database	• Develop online event organisers' toolkit. • Develop database of event organisers, tourism operators and suppliers.		Mid-term	• Event Toolkit available online. • Completion of database.
Sponsorship policy, procedure and guidelines	• Develop key assessment criteria for sponsorship by council. • Review current sponsorship agreements against sponsorship criteria.	Council	Short-term	• Confirmed key assessment criteria published.
Event insurance	• Investigate opportunities to purchase joint event insurance policy	Event Organisers with Council	Medium to Long-term	• Knowledge of insurance options

Strategic Focus Area 4 - Infrastructure

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
Audit event venues & facilities	• Undertake an audit and identify capacity of potential events venues and underutilised facilities (council-owned, privately owned and public spaces). • Identify existing facilities that need to be upgraded, repaired. • Activation of open spaces.	Council	Medium-term	• Audit completed and published. • Activation of new event spaces.
Audit accommodation	• Audit accommodation providers and identify capacity.	Council	Medium-term	• Audit completed and published.
Mobile event support equipment hire	• Undertake an audit of equipment available to hire.	Council Event Organisers	Short – medium term	• Support equipment available to be booked.
Bike trails	• Pre-feasibility studies of potential dedicated bike trails /adventure trails. • Investigate if bike trail ownership can be transferred to TRC • Evaluate benefits of partnering with a Professional Sporting Organisation to attract events.	Council	Medium–long term	• Pre-feasibility studies completed.
Pop-up events and accommodation	• Establish database of pop-up event venues and temporary accommodation sites.	Council	Medium to long- term	• Increased pop-up event venues and accommodation.
Investment	• Encourage accommodation investment strategy with Economic Development team, profiling potential demand for events.	Council	Medium to long-term	• Attraction of quality accommodation to cater for business events

Strategic Focus Area 5 - Human Resources

Action	Tasks	Responsibility/ Stakeholders	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicators
One stop shop	• Develop a one stop shop approach as single point of contact.	Council	Medium-term	• Implementation of one stop shop approach.
Documentation of knowledge	• Document event knowledge and experience.	Council	Ongoing	• Procedure for event documentation retention put in place.
Volunteer strategy	• Develop volunteer strategy, including database of volunteers and online volunteering opportunities. • Contact TAFE/tertiary education to develop event intern program. • Share volunteering opportunities with libraries, VIC, local Chambers & Churches.	Council Event organisers	Short-term	• Increase in volunteers.
Training	• Provide best practice training for event organisers: volunteer recruitment, succession planning. • Identify training opportunities for internal staff.	Council	Short-term	• Number of participants in program.
Volunteer Incentives	• Recognise volunteerism through a Volunteer Awards Program or incentives.	Event Organisers	Short to medium-term	• Volunteer retention

Making It Happen – Action Timeline

This action plan below summarises strategic focus areas for implementation:

ACTION	2018	2019	2020	2021
1. HALLMARK EVENTS				
Event hierarchy – constitute event hierarchy with definitions.	■	■	■	
Hallmark event development – support events with hallmark/destination potential.	■	■	■	■
Reinvigorate events with "Distinctly Tablelands" hero experiences – development of hero experiences, iconic locations		■	■	■
Event attraction – attract and support events with signature/destination potential.			■	■
Branding and marketing – develop marketing guidelines.			■	■
Event investment – establish event budget.	■	■	■	■
Event impact assessment – develop process to assess economic benefit.	■	■	■	■
2. TOURISM PARTNERSHIPS				
Local partnerships – develop partnership opportunities	■	■	■	■
Surround LGA partnerships - networking with surrounding LGA.		■	■	■
Leveraging and partnering with marketing partners – cross-promote.	■	■	■	■
Sponsorship and funding partnerships – development of multi-year sponsorship partnerships.	■	■	■	■
Event packaging – packing experiences, accommodation and transfers			■	■
Dining experiences - through partnerships encouraging dining experiences during event times		■	■	■
3. CAPACITY BUILDING				
Event calendar – further development and promotion of events calendar.	■	■	■	■
Event website – development of event organisers' website.			■	■
Local communication – strategy to incorporate local organisations.			■	■
Networking opportunities – identify networking opportunities and schedule.	■	■	■	■
Event organiser capacity building – establish pathway for growth capacity building program.	■	■	■	■
Event organisers' online toolkit and industry database – development of event organisers' toolkit.			■	■
Sponsorship policy, procedure and guidelines – key assessment criteria.	■	■	■	■
Event insurance – joint insurance policy			■	■

ACTION	2018	2019	2020	2021
4. INFRASTRUCTURE				
Audit event venues – audit event venues & facilities.			�▪	▪
Audit accommodation – audit accommodation providers.			▪	▪
Mobile event support equipment hire – audit equipment to hire.		▪	▪	▪
Bike trails – feasibility study.		▪	▪	▪
Pop-up Venues and Accommodation – develop pop-up accommodation and event venue database.		▪	▪	▪
Investment – infrastructure investment			▪	▪
5. HUMAN RESOURCING				
One stop shop – development of one stop shop approach.			▪	▪
Documentation of knowledge – development of event manual.	▪	▪	▪	▪
Volunteer strategy - development of volunteer strategy.	▪	▪		
Training – training internal and volunteers.		▪	▪	▪
Volunteer incentives – recognition of volunteerism.	▪	▪	▪	▪

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