



LAKE
MACQUARIE
CITY

EXPERIENCE SOMETHING DIFFERENT



4	Executive Summary: Focus On Our Lake
6	Strategy Structure and Acknowledgements
	<i>Role and Purpose of Events</i>
	<i>Lake Mac Events Vision</i>
	<i>Our Values</i>
12	Event Snapshot
14	Trends, Challenges and Opportunities
16	SWOT Analysis
18	Key Challenges for the Lake Macquarie Council Event and Festival Team
20	Key Opportunities for the Events Team
38	Investment
40	Lake Mac Events Mix 2019 - 2020
42	Conclusion

LET'S FOCUS ON OUR LAKE

Executive summary

Lake Macquarie is the twelfth-largest Local Government Area (LGA) in NSW, located south of Newcastle and north of the Central Coast. The City is home to more than 200,000 people living within 95 communities, including nine economic centres, wrapped around the largest permanent saltwater lake in the Southern Hemisphere, four beaches and the Watagans National Park.

The event and festival sector and competition for audiences have increased dramatically in the last decade. To be successful in delivering diverse and quality events, Lake Macquarie City Council must improve its position and develop a holistic Event and Festival Strategy that challenges, enables, advocates and drives economic activity for the City.

This Strategy and Action Plan is ambitious and deliberate, and aims high to support the vision for the region that enables experimentation and development of new markets, economic growth opportunities and promotion of our shared identity.

The Actions are direct and have been developed to ensure Council:

- collaborates with community to activate as well as entertain;
- develops events that are intimate, surprising and unexpected; and
- incorporates ticketed and economically powerful major festivals, attracted to our City and facilities.

Events and festivals are only part of the picture when building a diverse and economically strong community. It is significant that the Lake Macquarie Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan was created in alignment with the 2018-2022 Destination Management Plan. Wide consultation confirms that events are critical to the growth of tourism and a major influencer in driving awareness of Lake Macquarie City regionally and nationally.



Key strategic deliverables

2019- 2021 short-term actions

- Transition current governance structures to one that espouses contemporary event and festival activities and focus
- Deliver over \$600,000 in funding towards a targeted annual events program including sponsorship, iconic events and major festivals, partner, city identity, community and neighbourhood events
- Support, approve or deliver a minimum of 20 signature/iconic events for the City
- Coordinate a City calendar of events
- Implement new and customer-focused online events communication including website, Facebook and Instagram
- Develop and promote Lake Macquarie Corporate and Conference Prospectus

2021- 2025 medium-term actions

- Build on icon events as a driver for tourism and visitor economy
- Redevelop event infrastructure

2025 and beyond - future opportunities

- Establish Lake Macquarie as a co-leader within the Hunter as one of NSW and Australia's great destinations
- Host an international signature event that has wide economic benefit



LET'S MAKE MORE HAPPEN

The purpose of the Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan is to:

- 1 Identify the Lake Mac Events Team's role as:
 - Sponsor;
 - Funder;
 - Partner and facilitator in enabling events to happen; and
 - Creative producer.
- 2 Build on what is unique about the Lake Macquarie community and culture through celebration and gatherings
- 3 Identify economic and employment opportunities that derive from events and festivals
- 4 Develop marketing and positioning strategies for events and festivals and
- 5 Coordinate an annual calendar of successful events and festivals across the City.

The development of the Lake Macquarie Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan is informed by Council's Vision for the City, Community Strategic Plan and associated Operational Plan and Delivery Program, and the Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027.

The Event and Festival Strategy and Action Plan provides the strategic framework for the next five years of event delivery through Council, ensuring decisions and future directions for the service are informed and endorsed.

This strategy is aligned with:

- Council's Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan 2017-2027;
- Destination Management Plan 2018-2022;
- Lake Mac 2050;
- Lake Macquarie Youth Strategy 2014-2019;
- Ageing Population Plan 2018-2022;
- Lake Macquarie Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2019-2023;
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021;
- Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations 2015;
- Lake Macquarie Economic Strategy, written by DANTIA;
- Parks Fees and Charges;
- Priority Access to Performing Arts Centre Policy;
- Local Approvals Policy;
- Funding Assistance Policy;
- Child and Family Strategy 2015-2019;
- Aboriginal Community Plan 2015-2019; and
- Multicultural Plan 2016-2020.

ROLE AND PURPOSE

Our event landscape

The people of Lake Macquarie and the wider Hunter love their events and festivals. From music, food and arts and craft festivals to sports events, expos and conventions, new festivals and events pop up every year throughout our City and region, promising a variety of enriching experiences.

The Lake Mac Events Team works across Council developing, coordinating and delivering key events for the City, and manage and assist community groups and agencies to deliver about 250 smaller community events across Lake Macquarie.

Underwriting this Strategy and Action Plan is the firmly held belief that collaboration is the key to great events and that every event we host is a pathway to the next.

It is important that Lake Mac Events play with our City and region's strengths, including the Lake and relaxed natural amenity of the City.

What are events?

For the interests of this Strategy and Action Plan, events fall into six main categories:

- 1 Cultural celebration
- 2 Business and trade events
- 3 Arts and entertainment events
- 4 Sport and recreation
- 5 State events
- 6 Council celebrations and sponsored functions

How are Lake Mac Events valued?

Our vibrant City has events and festivals that enhance our lifestyle.

Community Value: We value lifestyle and wellbeing

Support and provide a sense of belonging through our community by encouraging new initiatives and activities that enrich the places where we live, work and play, and that contribute to the City's social fabric and culture.

Strategic Goal 4: Celebrate connectedness

Celebrate and promote creativity, innovation and uniqueness through engaging and active events, festivals, programs and exhibitions for community and visitors.

Strategic Goal 9: Communicate our culture: Be local, aim global

Transform Lake Macquarie into a recognised visitor destination both nationally and internationally.

Community Value: We value a diverse economy

Develop a five year Events Strategy for the City.

Strategic Goal in Destination Management Plan: Deliver unique visitor experiences to enable growth in tourism

Who delivers events and festivals in Lake Macquarie?

Lake Macquarie City Council

- Lake Mac Libraries deliver a variety of events – about 2800 a year – from storytime for toddlers to a major writers festival
- Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery delivers about 300 events a year, from exhibitions and art workshops, to children's activities and sculpture tours
- Community Services – Me2 Program, Over 55s Program, NSW Seniors Festival, NSW Youth Week, Reclaim the Night, You're Kidding Me Program, International Women's Day, Children's Week, Harmony Day, Picnic in the Park, NAIDOC Week and other significant cultural events, May Movie Month, Explore Our Great Outdoors
- Communications and Corporate Strategy – Community engagement opportunities
- Leisure Services – Swim with the Stars, Endless Summer in partnership with the Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
- Major events
- Sponsored events

Community groups

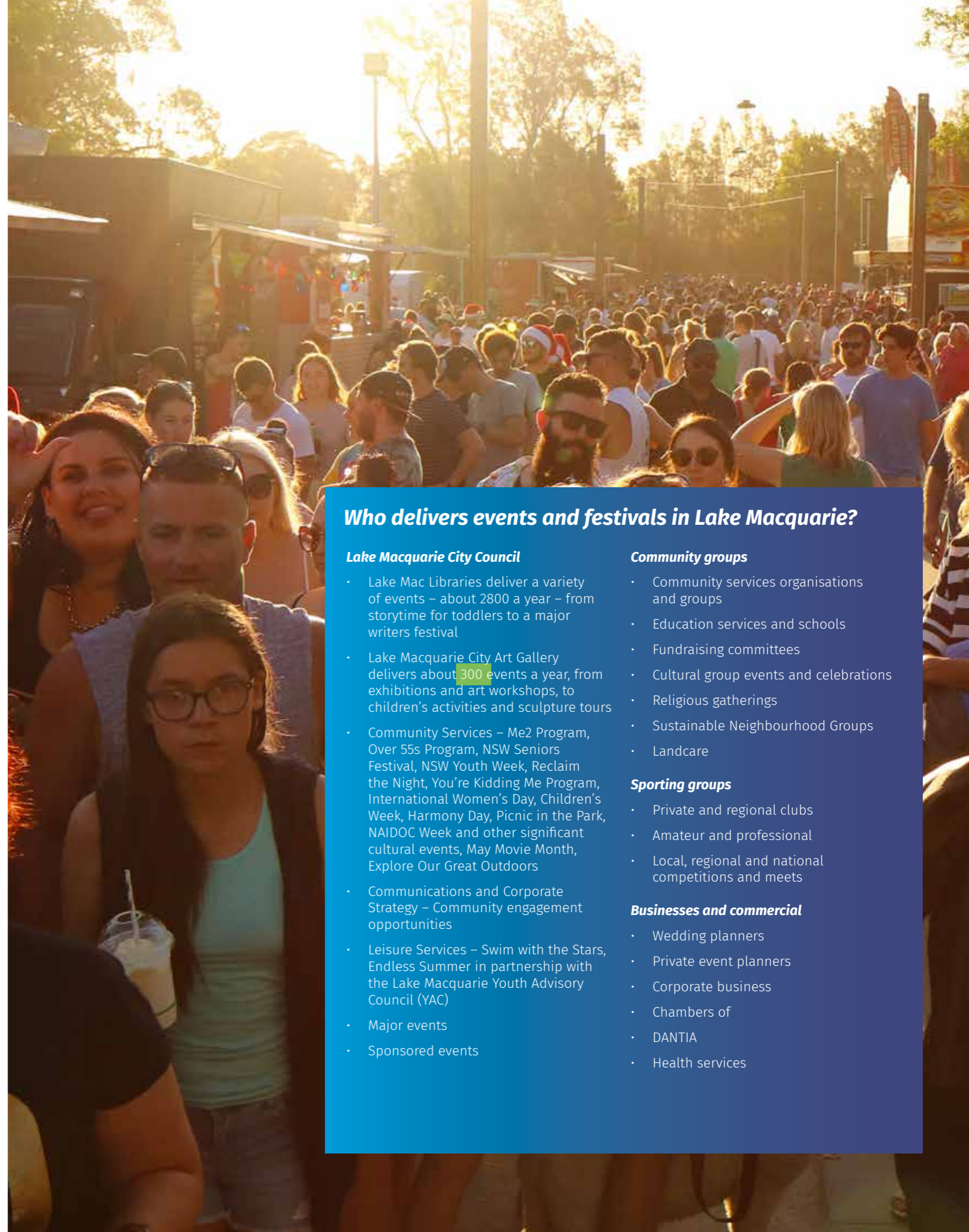
- Community services organisations and groups
- Education services and schools
- Fundraising committees
- Cultural group events and celebrations
- Religious gatherings
- Sustainable Neighbourhood Groups
- Landcare

Sporting groups

- Private and regional clubs
- Amateur and professional
- Local, regional and national competitions and meets

Businesses and commercial

- Wedding planners
- Private event planners
- Corporate business
- Chambers of
- DANTIA
- Health services



To lead and facilitate the successful and professional delivery of meaningful, creative, quality events for our community and visitors.

Develop a vibrant annual calendar of contemporary and creative events and festivals in the City where people can meet, learn, celebrate and share experiences and new opportunities.

LAKE MAC EVENTS VISION

EVENT VALUES

Quality not quantity

It is not the number of events and festivals that matters, but the quality of experiences that ensures events are successful.

Events that have meaning

Events and festivals are successful if they capture the interest of the community and visitors. As our society becomes more time poor, events and festivals that share and celebrate personal and community interests, and that the community can identify as their local Lake Mac event, will have greater meaning to potential audiences.

Creative empowerment makes successful events

Attracting audiences to events and festivals is becoming more difficult and competitive. Thinking outside the box, curating performances and stimulating immersive experiences, colour, action, community and difference not only define an event as one to remember and return back to, but also attracts interest nationally.

Be proactive and chase opportunities

As a key driver within the events and festival sector of the City, it is essential that the Lake Mac Events team actively seeks, advocates, facilitates and supports the provision of a variety of successful events and festivals across the City to achieve strategic, economic, social and creative outcomes.

LAKE MAC

Lake Mac Events produces and coordinates

FIVE

major events a year
(Lake Macquarie Festival, Carols by Candlelight, Lake Mac Big Weekend, Living Smart Festival, and Float Your Boat) with more than

110,000

participants.

Since 2015, Council has provided more than

\$252,000

in funding to support

34

Business Chamber events in Warners Bay, Toronto, Swansea and Belmont.

Council funded, through the Community Grants Program and in-kind support,

105

community events in 2017-2018

Council also partners to facilitate

MANY OTHER EVENTS

each year including the Lake Mac City Pro Junior surf event, the Music in the Podium series at Warners Bay, Rathmines Catalina Festival, NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, Port to Port, Loop the Lake, Lake Macquarie Running Festival, Fernleigh 15, Lakefest, and the Hunter Track Classic.

The primary followers (and those who are engaged) of Council's event social media are female, with the exception of Twitter.



75 per cent female and 25 per cent male (average age 35-44 years)



68 per cent female and 32 per cent male (average age 25-44 years).

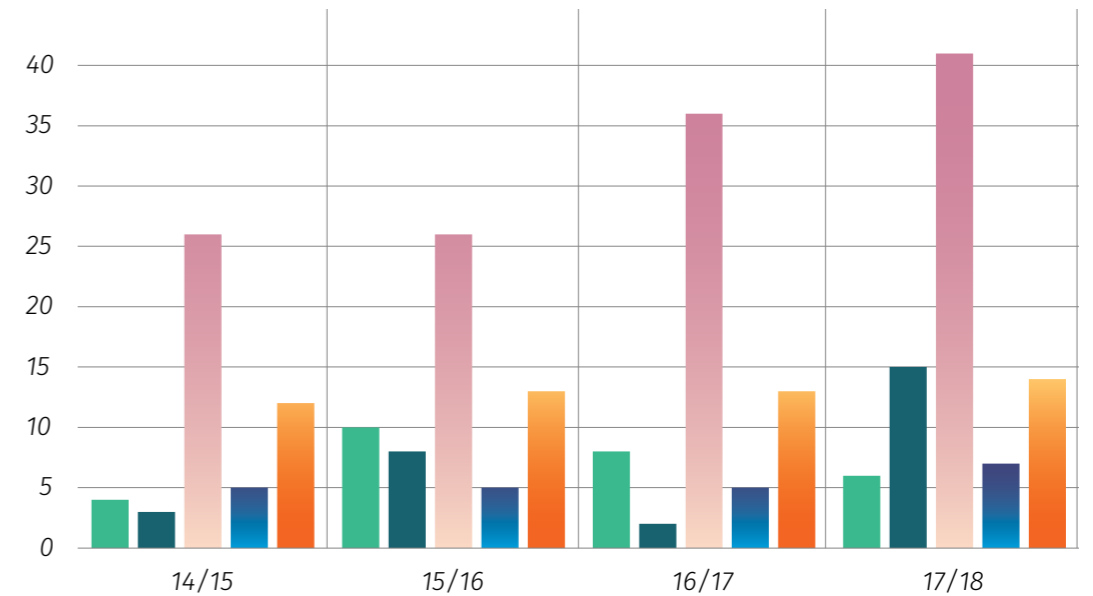


59 per cent male and 41 per cent female (average age 25-34 years)

The Living Smart Festival was named

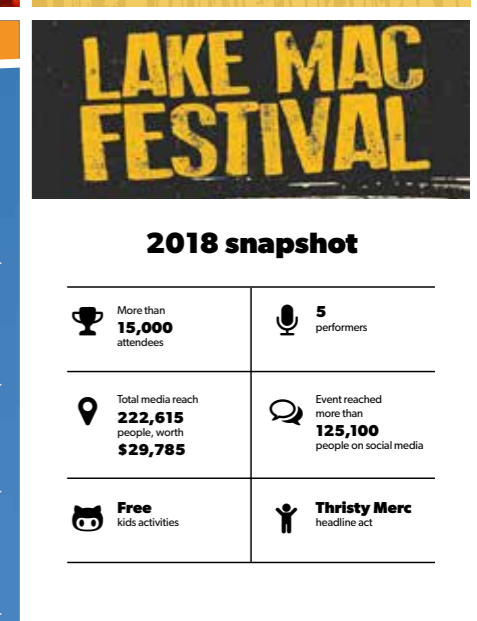
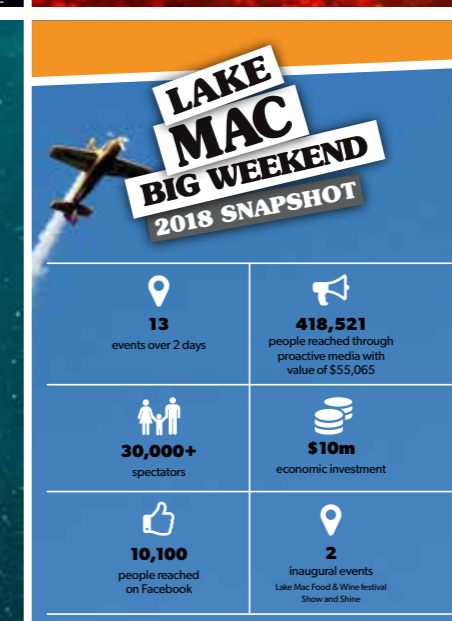
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY EVENT OF THE YEAR

for 2017 at the Australian Event Awards.



LOCAL EVENTS FUNDED BY COUNCIL 2014 - 2018

■ Cultural event ■ Sporting event ■ Community event ■ Council owned event ■ Sponsored event





TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regional trends in events and festivals

Food and wine, aquatic and coastal, environmental and wildlife themed events in regional areas are top drivers for regional travel in Australia for the international market. Audiences travel to participate in boutique, smaller, experienced-based events where there is a story or meaning identified as part of the event.

This has been particularly notable within the bespoke food industry. The “from the farm to the table” narrative has become a major drawcard, with the current trend for high-end restaurants and chefs to make pop-up appearances to add a culinary focus to the event, not just food festivals. Other examples include pop-up restaurants in a free festival outside the Australian Open, playing croquet coupled with food and drink, or value adding to existing events with ‘Sensory’, an immersive dining experiment that explores the relationship of sight, sound, taste, smell and touch.

Other regional areas are driving tourism numbers through the attraction of events based on their natural environment, iconic features, or unique qualities. Wollongong for example boasts a picturesque coastline and hosts adventure running, cycling and water events year round.

Another change is how events and festivals are planned. The broadening appeal of events and festivals that suit busy lifestyles, as well as an increased awareness of the opportunities presented by a

developing night-time economy, has made evening and night-time events popular. Light festivals such as Sydney’s Vivid, and Melbourne’s White Night, Christmas Projections, Gertrude Street Projection Festival and Acland Street Projection Festival feature artistic installations and dynamic projections on buildings and draw huge crowds after dark. Councils and business chambers are leading the way in activating public spaces and supporting this type of event.

For Lake Macquarie, there is opportunity for winter festivals to attract visitors during the ‘off-season’. These events are often family orientated and feature ice skating rinks, snow machines and toboggan rides for children. Examples of this type of event can be seen locally in Newcastle’s Winter Heat, Maitland’s After Dark, and the Christmas Lights Spectacular at Hunter Valley Gardens. Other opportunities include programming events during the cooler months to take advantage of our mild winters.

Another rising trend in the events and festival sector is adventure sports. Several adventure sports events already exist in Lake Macquarie such as the Port to Port mountain bike event that covers a large area within the LGA including the Awaba State Forest and Awabakal Nature Reserve, adventure races in the areas around Cams Wharf, and orienteering on Mount Sugarloaf. There are also opportunities around go karting, motorbike riding, archery and horse riding.

National trends in events and festivals

Lake Macquarie is well positioned within the Hunter and NSW for events and festivals. It is close to Sydney, Newcastle Airport and Newcastle Cruise Terminal, has great weather and is easily accessible by road and train.

Events have changed dramatically over the past decade in scale as well as value. Events drive tourism and economic growth, with the event industry itself having undergone substantial growth in both value as a key strategic economic influencer, as well as a means of boosting the profile of the host city or region.

Although events and festivals are popular, they do not necessarily require major infrastructure and investment to gain significant returns. They also have the potential to improve liveability of a region, display innovation and celebration and have a wide social and economic impact.

Events and festivals are intrinsically linked with the visitor economy. In recent years, Australia has seen a 20 per cent growth in tourism from Asia.

This Strategy and Action Plan outlines how Lake Mac Events can produce, facilitate, partner and collaboratively create events and festivals that provide clear regional tourism benefits, improve employment, celebrate community and generally provide vibrancy, positive activity and opportunity for community and visitors alike.

SWOT ANALYSIS



Many of the overarching themes and key challenges identified by the SWOT analysis have been captured in the Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan. The work streams and organisational focus required to action and deliver these goals, strategies and actions are reflected in the new workforce structure for Arts, Culture & Tourism.

Governance and management structure

The structure in its simplest form is a customer-centric model, which aims to address the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis by utilising the skills and expertise from across the Arts, Culture & Tourism Team. Aimed for complete migration mid-2019, the structure will be made up of teams that work across the visual arts, performance, heritage, literacy, events, tourism and marketing sectors.

Strengths

- Proximity to Sydney and the Hunter
- The Lake as a stage and backdrop
- Community love to gather and attendance is consistently high
- Substantial funding and support for events and festivals in the City
- Speers Point Park
- Warners Bay Foreshore
- Croudace Bay Park (due for completion 2020)
- Council's commitment to Master plan-redevelopment of Rathmines with an events focus
- Open space for large events
- Morisset Showground
- Our beaches

Weaknesses

- Red tape for the booking of facilities and space for events
- Minimal indoor facilities
- Low-level cultural infrastructure (theatre, performance hall etc.)
- Absence of large, 'icon', partner events and festivals for the City – currently no events of this kind
- Young people don't identify with Lake Macquarie
- The Lake divides us and makes transport difficult
- Headstrong sense of town identity that causes friction and competitiveness
- Limited night-time economy opportunities
- Lack of capitalising on large events in the region
- Current focus on legacy events without strategy
- No diversity in events and festival delivery
- No conference facility
- Suburban demographic and expectation
- No clear brand for Lake Macquarie Events
- No strong sponsorship or grant-seeking culture

Opportunities

- Morisset Showground
- Make better use of existing facilities and locations
- Work collaboratively within the region
- Leveraging off events in surrounding regions
- More Lake-focused activities
- Construction of a suitable performing arts facility
- Programming the Rathmines Hall, Lake Macquarie Centre for Performing Arts
- Diversification provided by Speers Point Multi Arts Space from June 2020
- Speers Point Park – a range of events
- Improve processes for booking events
- Improve entrepreneurial and conference programs
- Utilise transport on and around the Lake
- More evening and night-time activities
- Increase our target market (or target specific markets)
- Improve value and performance of the Lake Mac Events Team
- Grow successful existing community events into high profile events
- Take advantage of accommodation availability in the off peak and winter periods

Threats

- Bound by legacy
- No conference/indoor facility – loss of market opportunity
- Lack of identity as a City
- Unable to achieve objectives in Strategy
- Remain mediocre in the delivery of events and festivals
- Remain bland and unexciting
- Lack of parking and transport options at major sites makes it difficult to attract large events
- Unable to attract major events and festivals



KEY CHALLENGES

Reactive vs Proactive

The events industry in Australia has changed substantially over the last decade and is growing more and more as a legitimate and significant economic driver for the individual regions. It is also extremely competitive; therefore, government and promoters need to take a proactive-aggressive approach to winning key events and supporting emerging local opportunities rather than a reactive-passive stance. Lake Macquarie has traditionally been reactive rather than strategic in developing its events calendar.

The effect of this is that the scope and diversity of events offered in Lake Macquarie is small and community-focused, with emphasis on repeat annual events, medium to small sporting meets and competitions. When opportunities do arise, it is difficult to negotiate approvals within deadline.

Event and Festival Servicing and Infrastructure

Many of our recreational areas have not been designed with events and festivals in mind. An opportunity for ongoing consultation with Events staff would assist with planning and installation of event-related infrastructure and amenities as upgrades occur throughout these facilities. For example, including three phase power, lighting, amenities, pathways and parking in the planning stage to cater for specific events.

Legacy events

Outside a handful of new events since 2017, the event sheet for the City is mostly filled with community legacy events and gatherings, with many continuing year after year unchanged.

Successful events and festivals enable the community to grow socially, culturally and economically. Hosting events because "that's what we have always done" is neither healthy nor the contemporary role of Council.

Lake Macquarie is changing and Council has the opportunity to capitalise on the community's growing appetite for experimentation in the events and festival sector. We must identify, champion, highlight and truly take advantage of what makes Lake Macquarie a distinctive event destination regionally and within NSW.

Community perception

Lake Macquarie is a relaxed, family-orientated City that values its laidback lifestyle, beautiful surrounds and open spaces. Over the coming years, it is expected that the proportion of retirees and elderly will grow, with employment growth in health, retail, construction and education.

The City's legacy major events, Lake Mac Carols and the Lake Mac Festival, are community-based annual day events and have not been promoted as tourist or driver events. Outside these days, the events calendar is predominantly dotted with smaller community events, which are largely sport-based.

There has been no significant attempt to promote the City and region to national audiences.

Accountability

Measuring and evaluating the economic impact and success of an event, reviewing how the event was received, defining opportunities for improvement, analysing attendance and media data is as important as developing the program. However, it is unfortunately usually missed citing lack of time or importance. It is easy to have an event; it is hard to make one successful.

Venues

Lake Macquarie City Council does not have an indoor entertainment venue that could seat more than 500 people as either a theatre or conference venue. The City has three commercial venues that seat up to 600 people, Sala's, Belmont 16s, Caves Beach Hotel and Club Macquarie. Smaller venues include Mercure Charlestown, Apollo Charlestown and the Catalina Convention Centre at Rathmines.

The City manages the Lake Macquarie Centre for Performing Arts (300 seats) and Rathmines Hall (currently undergoing a \$1.8m refurbishment, seats 300). Regional theatres and conference facilities include Cessnock Performing Arts Centre (466 seats), The Art House – Wyong Performing Arts Centre (500 seats), Newcastle Civic Theatre (1450 seats), the Entertainment Centre (2000 capacity), Hunter School of Performing Arts' Hunter Theatre (380 seats), St Phillips College Theatre Waratah (470 seats), Newcastle City Hall (820 seat concert hall), Harold Lobb Concert Hall Newcastle (400 seats) and the Laycock Street Community Theatre in Gosford (392 seats).

Reducing Red Tape

A 'blanket Development Application' lodged by Arts, Culture & Tourism with the scope of the ultimate event in mind, would streamline the process for event organisers. It is proposed as an action within the document, that a new process occurs on our premier event sites to increase appeal to commercial events. The revision of our event licencing procedure, and providing up-to-date information for event organisers on an online portal, would also assist with the application process.

Improve use of the Lake

Given we have the Lake, we have a major advantage with water activities occurring on a regular basis, such as sailing meets and regattas, jet ski competitions as well as major water-based events such as Paddlefest, Float Your Boat and the Superboats.

The Lake is also becoming increasingly recognised as a destination for national titles to be held for sailing (Eastlakes and Southlakes), jet skiing (Eleebana Lions Park) and wind surfing (Toronto).

Night-time economy

Growing the City's night-time economy is an important element in making Lake Macquarie a City like no other. To grow our economy and remain competitive, we must attract new investment and residents. To facilitate this growing interest, Council has developed the Night-Time Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 and Night-Time Economy Working Group.

Captive audience

Lake Macquarie residents love attending events and festivals. The number of community events held annually has been steadily increasing, by more than 20 per cent each year, to now where there are nearly 280 community events held annually across the City.

Targeted and strategic marketing and positioning of events

Lake Macquarie is part of the Hunter region, a cluster of Maitland, Cessnock, Newcastle, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Port Stephens. The region has a population of about 500,000 and is an hour's drive from end to end.

Newcastle has the facilities for large sporting events, conferences and the accommodation to attract major events such as the Newcastle 500.

Port Stephens has a strong tourism focus with Love Sea Food Festival and Tastes at the Bay Jazz Food and Wine Festival.

Cessnock can host very large music events throughout the vineyards, mainly aimed at a more mature crowd during the visitor season, and has a variety of bespoke events happening in coordination.

Maitland hosts Groovin' the Moo and Aroma Festival, two very unique and long running events, as well as the newer, very popular Bitter and Twisted Boutique Beer Festival.

The development, timing and theme for events is linked with economic drivers and raising regional profile, using events as a drawcard for Sydney audiences. An opportunity exists for Lake Macquarie to develop strategies to cluster activities that have traditional and trending appeal to Sydney-siders (particularly Western Sydney) into larger overnight packages, improving variety and linking with tourism-based international-ready products.

New partnerships

Either through more active sourcing of sponsorship and corporate partnerships to entrepreneurial events, there is a large, untapped opportunity to approach events and festivals as partnership activities that leverage audiences and diversity with commercial interests.

Partnership opportunities exist with the wider Hunter network, value adding to the Hunter Wine Country events, Newcastle and holiday destination periods.

There is also opportunity for sporting partnerships to promote the City to national and international professionals and amateurs within the fields of yachting and adventure water sports, golf and individual sports.

New Infrastructure suitable for events and festivals

The showground is a cleared, flat site comprising 13.1 hectares and is ideally located 680m from the Morisset economic precinct, 850m from the Morisset train station and bus drop off and pick up, and just 1.9km from the Pacific Motorway, providing easy access from Sydney, Maitland and the New England region. The site has infrastructure, parking, utilities and suitable zoning to support a major weekend festival for up to 15,000.

Experimentation

New ideas and innovation in the presentation of creative ideas and experiences differentiate events and festivals as key attractors. Lake Macquarie as host for an international arts biennale, music festivals and international sport regattas are all possible with strategy and collaboration.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

Lake Macquarie is traditional Awabakal land, where the culture of all people is recognised, acknowledged and respected.

A SENSE OF PLACE AND BELONGING

	Strategic goal and focus area alignment	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams
1	AHC 1.5 KFA and Strategy 5.3.1	Celebrate and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage	Support community groups and organisations to provide programs or activities that promote cultural identity	Funding and logistic support for NAIDOC and Sorry Day events		Operations Grants	Community Services External partners
2			Ensure all major events start with Welcome to Country		Ongoing		Aboriginal Community
3			Engage Aboriginal artists and businesses within existing community and Council-hosted events	Aim for all Council major events to include Aboriginal artists/performers	Ongoing		Lake Mac Libraries Arts, Culture & Tourism
4			Investigate and seek opportunities to host International cultural festivals	Council to host an annual Harmony Day Event		Operations Grants and commercial approaches	Community Services
5	3.1 NTE Action Plan ⁷		Investigate feasibility of a seasonal cinema festival in a suitable Lake Macquarie venue	Coordinate an International Film Festival for Lake Macquarie	Annual	Operations Grants and commercial approaches	Arts, Culture & Tourism external partners
6				Continue with existing May Movie Month annual program		Operations	Community Services

- AHC** Refers to Arts, Heritage and Cultural Plan
- KFA** Refers to Key Focus Areas
- NTE** Night-Time Economy (Working Group and/or Action Plan)
- GNMP** Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2018
- DANTIA** Economic Development Strategy 2018-2038
- SCP** Social and Community Planning team

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Develop our City's visual identity

Promote and facilitate quality and diverse public art initiatives, place making and aesthetic design excellence of our built and landscape architecture.

A SENSE OF PLACE AND BELONGING

Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams			
7	AHC 2.8 KFA and Strategy 5.3.1 3.2 NTE Action Plan	Assist in developing a night-time economy	Partner and facilitate a range of events that encourage evening and night-time activation			Music in the Podium Night markets Pop-up Bars/Speak Easy Other Council sites Night skate event Charlestown	2019 onwards	Operations Grants and commercial approaches	Night-Time Economy Working Group Community Services Team
8	2.2, 2.3 and 2.5 NTE Action Plan		Creatively produce a diverse selection of events that encourage evening and night-time activation			Evening component at the Living Smart Festival Evening music concerts around the Lake FeastFest in local foreshore sites throughout winter Superboat evening events	2019 onwards	Operations Grants and commercial approaches	Night-Time Economy Working Group Community groups Event and festival coordinators
9			Continue growth of Float Your Boat to attract national and international interest.			Annual two-day event in winter KPI – Grow audience 2500 a year to 25,000 in 2022	Annual	Operations Grants and commercial approaches	Arts, Culture & Tourism external partners
10	1.8 NTE Action Plan		Develop a business workshop event for local businesses			In conjunction with the Night-Time Economy Working Group	2019	Operational	NTE Working Group Chambers DANTIA
11		Integrate and support Council's City Identity Strategy and Positioning	Investigate and support branding opportunities with existing and new iconic and signature events			Incorporate with wider marketing and tourism actions and promotional material	Ongoing	Operational	Communications Tourism
12						Develop event branding guidelines	2019	Operational	Communications
13						Identify opportunities for social media coverage at major events and media announcements as well as targeting the Tourism sector	2019	Operational	Communications Arts, Culture & Tourism
14		Develop a Calendar of Events that provides easy access and target marketing to attract visitors to a diverse range of events and festivals all year round	Incorporate contemporary marketing and promotional actions that are aligned with the character of the event. Include events and festivals spaces within Citywide GIS to show residents and regulators what type events are proposed and where			In line with Arts, Culture and Tourism and Communications strategic marketing actions and priorities	2019-2020 onwards	Operational	Arts, Culture & Tourism
15		Showcase the lake as a key tourism and event driver for the city	Partner, facilitate and produce a series of diverse events that focus in or on the lake eg Float your Boat, regattas, Superboats, fishing competitions etc				2019-2020 onwards	Operational	Arts, Culture & Tourism

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Celebrate connectedness

Support and provide a sense of belonging, yet encourage our suburbs and economic centres to develop their own cultural identity by encouraging new initiatives and activities that make the places in which our residents live, work and play a central facet of Lake Macquarie's cultural life.

A SENSE OF PLACE AND BELONGING

	Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions		Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams
16	AHC 4.2 KFA and Strategy 5.1.4 5.4 NTE Action Plan	Develop meaningful community arts projects	Provide creative programming that supports quality community program deliver and participation		Investigate ways to assist groups to activate public spaces of an evening	2019-2020 onwards	Operational	Cultural Development Officer NTE Working Group External partners Youth council
17	AHC 4.2 KFA Strategy 5.1.4		Actively work with Cultural Projects Officer on new community arts programs		Open Studio Trails Evening sculpture events Outdoor theatre productions Opera and live music events Marching bands Dance companies Heritage celebrations	2019-2020 onwards	Operational and grants	Cultural Project Officer Artists
18	AHC 4.7 KFA and Strategy 2.3.1	Establish an annual 'Neighbourhood Connection' program to develop micro-tourism economy	Seek opportunities to link major arts festivals with neighbourhood initiatives			2020	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Community Services
19	AHC 4.8 KFA and Strategy 2.3.1		Explore a City-wide community festival with events taking place in key locations in and around the Lake, connecting communities to culture			2019-2024	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	
20			Provide 'one-stop shop' to assist community groups in providing successful events		Include within the SmartyGrants program, training and support for groups to participate	2019 ongoing	Operational	
21			Define equipment required and establish pop-up play events kits			2019	Operational	
22	AHC 6.1 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Ensure the team continues to place customers at the centre of all programming and operations	Review existing processes and reduce red tape in allowing groups to implement events in the City		Engage SmartyGrants to have application process online	2019	Operational	Communications
23			Streamline compliance and regulations		Review all current event and community licencing procedure, DAs, focusing on making the process easier and faster	2019 ongoing	Operational	Arts, Culture & Tourism
24	3.3 NTE Action Plan		Revise existing policies, funding programs and procedures aligned with this Strategy and Action Plan		Review all existing processes and review based on customer use, process, effectiveness and strategic criteria	2019	Operational	Communications Arts, Culture & Tourism
25	3.8 NTE Action Plan		Review best practice and value for money from supported and sponsored events		Review and simplify all existing processes and review based on customer use, process, effectiveness and strategic criteria	2019 ongoing	Operational	NTE Working Group Communications Development

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

(continued)

	Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams
26	AHC 6.2 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2		Seek opportunities to enhance productivity and strengthen offerings through a comprehensive review of systems and processes	Including the division of Council funds through the grants program and include one-off, multi-year and sponsor partnerships as a means of growing the event sector	Ongoing	Operational	Events Team
27	AHC 6.4 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Review staff capabilities and plan a comprehensive development program to build the capabilities needed to achieve the outcomes envisaged in this Plan	Review event and festival governance, PDs and processes	Review existing team structure and align PDs with Strategy	2019 ongoing	Operational	Events Team
28	AHC 6.9 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Invest in quality infrastructure that meets community and economic aspirations	Complete a Performing Arts, Hall and Theatre Review and implement recommendations	Develop and implement contemporary performing arts, halls and theatre operational models, subscription seasons and industry partnerships. For example, Rathmines, Speers Point Multi Arts Space and Lake	2019-2020	Operational	Events Team
29			Complete a feasibility study and, if viable, develop concept designs for a new performing arts centre		2020	Operations, grants	Events Team
30			Complete a feasibility study and develop programming for our major sporting and leisure facilities	Pasterfield Sports Complex, Charlestown Skate Park Lake Macquarie Football Facility	2020	Operations, grants	Events Team Asset Management
31		Build on events and festival equipment as a resource	Incorporate events supporting infrastructure within all recreational parks including new capital and redevelopment works	Includes, if suitable, three-phase power in strategic locations, food van access etc. Upgrade the stage at Speers Point Park		Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Asset Management
32			Develop Plan of Management and Operational Strategy and programs for the Morisset Showground as a key event and festival location		2019-2020	Operational	Asset Management Arts, Culture & Tourism
33	AHC 6.13 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Achieve national event and festival professional standards in governance, operational responsibility and integrity	Continuously review service delivery for excellence, efficiency, cost management, sustainability, programming and resource use	Complete monthly, quarterly and annual reporting against KPIs and industry benchmarking		Operational	
34	AHC 6.15 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2		Actively seek sustainable funding partners and sources for project and program delivery		2019 ongoing	External funding	
35			Actively seek funding sources and sponsorship for major and significant events	Develop a sponsorship prospectus for iconic events KPI: 20 per cent of Council events funded through sponsorship by 2023	2019 ongoing	External funding	Communications Arts, Culture & Tourism
36			Embrace sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, such as UN Sustainable Development Standard Actions, into our planning and programming of events and festivals		Ongoing	Operational	
37		Develop business partnerships with tourism, retail and the professional sector in the support of industry specific events	Work with chambers and business sector for major events		2020	Operational	Events Team

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Foster open communication, partnerships and leadership

Honour open and honest communication with the creative community, facilitate and champion partnerships that strive for the City's arts, heritage and cultural vision and promote and facilitate strong leadership within the sector.

A CITY OF CULTURE AND INNOVATION

Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams		
38		Incorporate sound planning into the development of events and festivals within the city	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embrace sustainable environmental practices into our planning and programming of events and festivals 2. Continuously review events governance approvals processes in alignment with land control and plans of management for Council, private and Crown lands 3. Continuously review in line with DANTIA and other Hunter economic strategies and focus areas 4. Create and implement evaluation program for events and festivals for economic as well as social, infrastructure and environmental pressures/opportunities that were created because of the event 			2020	Operational	Events Team, DAC, Community Partnerships
39	AHC 7.1 KFA and Strategy 6.1.1	Support and nurture an environment that encourages creativity and innovation	Ensure openness and continuous improvement through an open grant program and annual Expressions of Interest for the delivery of events			Ongoing	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	All
40	AHC 7.4 KFA and Strategy 6.1.1	Maintain existing and instigate new partnerships with external regional and national cultural organisations	Develop strategic funding, programming and professional development partnerships with organisations		KPI: Partner with a minimum of 20 external events providers	Ongoing	Operational	External stakeholders
41			Develop a communication database with other event organisers, stakeholders and operators, performers, stallholders and musicians			2019	Operational	
42	AHC 7.7 KFA and Strategy 6.1.1	Create opportunities that provide open communication, partnerships and leadership	Investigate the creation of a formal network of professional events businesses and organisations		Develop opportunities around NSW and aligning with councils	2019	Operational	External partners
43	3.6 NTE Action Plan GNMP		Develop a Live Music Action Plan for the City, in consultation with key stakeholders including local artists, venues, community and businesses		Program events that support music and live performance	Long-term	Operational	NTE Working Group External partners
44	GNMP		Identify and activate existing assets to support live music and performance		Presentation of live music at existing Council cultural assets and through partnership programming	Ongoing	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	
45	AHC 7.11 KFA and Strategy 6.1.1	Strengthen all cultural organisations in the City, professional or amateur, big or small	Develop professional development workshops in successful events management			2020 onwards	Operational	
46			Provide training and information kits for community events organisers in consultation with other departments eg: accessibility and child protection		Events guideline and prospectus that assists organisers to plan and implement their events	2020 onwards	Operational	Communications Arts, Culture & Tourism Community Services

STRATEGIC GOAL 5

Value and support our creative industry and cultural economy

Lake Macquarie values and supports individual creativity, skill and talent, which have the potential to drive employment and the development of a sustainable creative economy.

A CITY OF CULTURE AND INNOVATION

	Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams
47	GNMP	Build capacity in events and festival sector employment	Support events that employ artists, contractors, artistic directors, food vendors and logistic support		Ongoing	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Contractors
48	3.9 NTE Action Plan	Develop an annual program of Lake Macquarie events that supports the City being home to excitement and adventure sports (City identity)	Continue to curate a regular program of events and festivals that activate our outdoor, public and natural environment.	KPI – Minimum of 120 events and festivals of all scales delivered within the City.	Ongoing	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	NTE Working Group Arts, Culture & Tourism Community Services External partners
49			Develop and/or partner with unique and bespoke events that attract niche markets – prestige car shows, go-carts, sailing, geocaching	For example, Hillsborough Dog Showground, Go Carts Go, motorbike and pistol clubs	2020 ongoing	Sponsorship, partnership	External partners
50	AHC 8.2 KFA and Strategy 2.3.1		Develop, in conjunction with performing arts groups, a One Act Play Festival		2019-2020	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Major Projects Lifelong Learning
51	AHC 8.2 KFA and Strategy 2.3.1		Develop and implement poetry and creative writing events for aspiring writers	KPI: Two a year	2019-2020	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Major Projects Lifelong Learning
52	AHC 8.2 KFA and Strategy 2.3.1		Develop and implement writers events for young people	KPI: Two a year	2019-2020	Grants	Major Projects Lifelong Learning Youth Council
53			Undertake a music revival program including live music events	KPI: Minimum four a year		Operations, grants and commercial approaches	
54	3.7		Deliver a music festival event for upcoming and well-known artists to showcase original music	KPI: Minimum of 3 per year	Long-term	Operations, grants and commercial approaches	NTE Working Group
55		Include opportunities for artists to be involved with Council events	Incorporate an artist in residency program as part of Living Smart Festival, Float Your Boat and other Council events. Actively seek Expressions of Interest from the commercial community.			Operations, grants and commercial approaches	Contractors

STRATEGIC GOAL 6

Communicate our culture: Be local, aim global

Celebrate and promote creativity, innovation and uniqueness through engaging and active events, festivals, programs and exhibitions for the community and visitors to our City.

A CITY OF CULTURE AND INNOVATION

Strategic goal	Strategy	Deliverable actions	Detail	Timeframe	Resources	Teams
56	AHC 6.2 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2		Seek opportunities to enhance productivity and strengthen offerings through a comprehensive review of systems and processes			Ongoing Operational Events Team
57	AHC 6.4 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Review staff capabilities and plan a comprehensive development program to build the capabilities needed to achieve the outcomes envisaged in this Plan	Review event and festival governance, PDs and processes			Review existing team structure and align PDs with Strategy 2019 ongoing Operational Events Team
58	AHC 6.9 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Invest in quality infrastructure that meets community and economic aspirations	Complete a Performing Arts, Hall and Theatre Review and implement recommendations. Investigate improvements to the Toronto foreshore to accommodate evening and night-time events and pop up activation opportunities			Develop and implement contemporary performing arts, halls and theatre operational models, subscription seasons and industry partnerships. For example, Rathmines, Speers Point Multi Arts Space and Lake 2019-2020 Operational Events Team
59			Complete a feasibility study and, if viable, develop concept designs for a new performing arts centre			2020 Operations, grants Events Team
60			Complete a feasibility study and develop programming for our major sporting and leisure facilities			Pasterfield Sports Complex, Charlestown Skate Park Lake Macquarie Football Facility 2020 Operations, grants Events Team Asset Management
61		Build on events and festival equipment as a resource	Incorporate events supporting infrastructure within all recreational parks including new capital and redevelopment works			Includes, if suitable, three-phase power in strategic locations, food van access etc. Upgrade the stage at Speers Point Park Operations, grants and commercial approaches Asset Management
62			Develop Plan of Management and Operational Strategy and programs for the Morisset Showground as a key event and festival location			2019-2020 Operational Asset Management Arts, Culture & Tourism
63	AHC 6.13 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2	Achieve national event and festival professional standards in governance, operational responsibility and integrity	Continuously review service delivery for excellence, efficiency, cost management, sustainability, programming and resource use			Complete monthly, quarterly and annual reporting against KPIs and industry benchmarking Operational
64	AHC 6.15 KFA and Strategy 6.1.2		Actively seek sustainable funding partners and sources for project and program delivery			2019 ongoing External funding
65			Actively seek funding sources and sponsorship for major and significant events			Develop a sponsorship prospectus for iconic events 2019 ongoing External funding Communications Arts, Culture & Tourism
66			Embrace sustainable and environmentally responsible practices, such as UN Sustainable Development Standard Actions, into our planning and programming of events and festivals			Actively work to achieve objectives outlined in Councils ESSAP 2019 - 2027 Plan (Environmental Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan) by taking the lead in waste avoidance, repair, reuse and recycling, in the purchasing and disposal of assets, resources and wastes. Ongoing Operational
67	AHC 6.20 KFA and Strategy 5.2.2	Grow the capacity and impact of our volunteers working within the cultural sector	Support the wider volunteer program for Council with an events volunteer stream			KPI: engage a minimum of 30 volunteers to assist with community liaison 2019 Operational



KPIs

	Current	Goal	Examples
Number of iconic events each year	6*	12	Float Your Boat, Living Smart Festival, Surf Life Saving Championships, Lake Mac Festival, Superboats
Number of major events each year	12*	20	Surfest, Loop the Lake, Belmont BBB, regional sporting competitions, Speers Point Food and Wine Festival
Percentage of population attending Council events annually	50%	70%	Surveys conducted at selected events to gauge participation demographics
Attendance at programs within cultural venues	150,000	250,000	Art Gallery, Lake Macquarie Centre for Performing Arts, Speers Point Multi Arts Space, Rathmines Theatre
Number of cultural programs and events	3000	3500	Lake Mac Libraries, Art Gallery and Cultural Development
Number of community events funded through community grants and Sponsorship program	69	80	Within the City
Number of Chamber/Town Centre events funded	5	12	Within the City
Increase in social media reach and engagement at LMCC iconic events	0	10%	Increase of 10 per cent per annum depending on event and interest
External funding/sponsorship received each year for events and festivals	\$40,000	\$120,000	
Increase in bookings of Lake Macquarie Centre for Performing Arts	75	90	

*based on existing definition of iconic and major events. It is anticipated this will change when new events occur within the City.

INVESTMENT

Funding for events and festivals

Criteria and features	
<p>Iconic Council events and festivals</p> <p>This type of event or festival identifies with the spirit of the City and plays a significant role in building destination awareness and driving economic development, social inclusion and community wellbeing. Iconic events and festivals attract large participant numbers and may have a regional, state, national and international profile.</p>	<p>Events identified by Council</p> <p>Up to \$30,000 investment, 20,000 participation, region/ state/ national or international promotion, events identified by Council. Eg: Float Your Boat, Living Smart Festival</p>
<p>Major Council events and festivals</p> <p>This type of event or festival is major in terms of its scale and level of media interest. It is usually a one-off or occasional event that may not be unique to the region but features a unique and interesting aspects of the City, with social, tourism and economic benefits.</p>	<p>Up to \$20,000 investment, >5,000 participation, region/state or national promotion, events identified by Council. Eg: Belmont Beers, Blues and Barbecue, WRITEPad Literacy Festival</p> <p>Includes \$50,000 for special events and festivals and \$50,000 contribution from Arts, Culture & Tourism operations</p>
<p>Partner events and festivals</p> <p>A pure partnership approach with co-brand opportunities. This type of event or festival will showcase the City and create interest and attention from attendees outside the region.</p>	<p>Up to \$20,000 investment, >5,000 participation, state or national/international promotion, grant application process or EOI from Council. Eg. Surf Life Saving Championships, Deaf Games</p>
<p>Sponsored events and festivals</p> <p>Sponsored events and festivals encourage visitation to the City from outside the region, help raise the City's profile and drive economic development. Sponsored events encourage residents and visitors with opportunities across sporting, recreational, cultural or community-based activities.</p>	<p>Up to \$20,000 investment, >5,000 participation, state or national/international promotion, biannual grant application process. Eg. Port to Port MTB, Surfest</p>
<p>Community events and festivals</p> <p>Community-based events that encourage and facilitate community pride and connectedness between residents and local businesses. This type of event or festival will make a positive and ongoing contribution to the community's wellbeing and will have a range of social benefits.</p>	<p>Up to \$10,000 investment for a program/schedule of events, <5,000 participation, local/regional promotions, grant application process. Eg. Music in the Podium, Opera Hunter, Loop the Lake</p>
<p>Local events and celebrations</p> <p>(Combines Neighbourhood/Identity and includes the Lake Macquarie Sports Program). Local-based events staged for local audiences. These events celebrate locations or themes relevant to the local population.</p>	<p>Up to \$2,000 investment, <2,000 participation, local or regional promotion, grant application process Eg. Anzac ceremonies, Men's Shed, Neighbourhood groups</p> <p>Included as part of local events and celebrations</p>
<p>Lake Macquarie Sports Program</p> <p>This program provides cash assistance to local sporting and recreation clubs to purchase awards, medals and certificates.</p>	<p>Criteria: Up to \$2,000 investment, local promotion, grant application process</p>
<p>Other</p> <p>Conferences, niche events and corporate functions managed by Council.</p>	<p>Events identified by Council</p> <p>g. GLAM Symposium, Tourism Network Breakfast, citizenship ceremonies, new facility openings</p>

EVENTS MIX

2019-2020

	1. Iconic Council events and festivals ≥ 20,000 participation Investment determined by Council	2. Major Council events and festivals ≥ 5,000 participation Investment determined by Council	3. Partner events and festivals ≥ 5,000 participation Investment determined by Council			4. Sponsored events and festivals Up to \$20,000 investment, ≥5,000 participation	5. Community events and festivals ≤ \$10,000 investment for a program/schedule of events ≤ 5,000 participation	6. Local events and celebrations ≤ \$2,000 investment, ≤ 2,000 participation	Other Conferences and niche events
Application Process	Selection aligned with Strategy actions	Selection aligned with Strategy actions	EOI from Council			Biannual grant	Biannual grant	Biannual grant	Selection aligned with Strategy actions
Cultural celebration							NAIDOC Harmony Day		
Business, trade and conferences events		Boat and Sailing Expo (TBA)					Morisset Lake Macquarie Agricultural Show	Hunter Economic Breakfast series	GLAM Symposium Tourism Breakfast
Arts and entertainment events Tourism and nationally significant Community	Float Your Boat Morisset Showground Music Festival (TBA) Arts Biennale (TBA) Living Smart Festival	WRITEPad Literacy Festival Belmont Beers, Blues and Barbecue Sculpture Festival (TBA) Heritage Festival	Lake Mac Carols Lake Mac Festival Catalina Festival Medieval Festival			Music in the Podium Philharmonic Orchestra	Opera Hunter The Real Film Festival Speers Point Farmers Markets	Warners Bay Music in the Podium Toronto Foreshore Markets	
Sport and recreation Tourism and nationally significant	Attraction of nationally significant music and sporting events Sailing Regatta (TBA)	Attraction of nationally significant music and sporting events	Your Local Club Academy Games - April 2019 Lake Mac Big Weekend Superboats Lake Mac City Pro Junior NSW Surf Life Saving State Titles			Port to Port Hunter Academy of Sport Surfest (2017-2019) Hunter Track Classic Fernleigh 15 Lake Mac Running Festival	Lake Mac Running Festival Loop the Lake Fernleigh 15 Hunter Track Classic and Country Championships	Youth Week activities Town Centre Markets	
State events Anzac Day, Citizenship Ceremonies								Multiple Anzac ceremonies across the City	
Council functions Mayors Christmas celebration, Opening of new facilities, Council-sponsored events		Lake Mac Awards Lake Mac Business Awards						Openings of Council-owned assets	Citizenship Ceremonies
Commercial	Attraction of nationally significant music and sporting events	Attraction of nationally significant music and sporting events							
Bookings and permits	Licences for major events DA	Licences for major events DA	Licences for major events DA				Licences for major events DA	Licences for minor events approvals	
Fundraising/ Awareness									White Ribbon Day Reclaim the Night

CONCLUSION

This Strategy and Action Plan for the development and implementation of events and festivals in Lake Macquarie presents a new chapter in the growth of the sector not only as an economic driver but an key enabler for community identity and agent for engagement.

References

DANTIA, 2018, *Lake Macquarie City Economic Development Strategy 2018 – 2038*

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Lake Macquarie City Council, (2018) *Destination Management Plan 2018-2022*

Lake Macquarie City Council, (2018) *Lake Macquarie Economic Study – Informing the Vision of Lake Mac 2050: Planning for the Economy of the Future*



EVENT AND FESTIVAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2019-2024

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