



# 5 Year Events Strategy

**Central Goldfields Shire Council**

**April 2014**

Supported by funding from the Victorian State Government's  
Putting Locals First program



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## Report statement

The information contained in this document has been gained from anecdotal evidence and research. It has been prepared in good faith and is based on review documentation and data as well as interviews with Council staff, community members and event organisers.

Neither SED Advisory nor its servants, consultants, agents or staff shall be responsible in any way whatsoever to any person in respect to the report, including errors or omission therein, however caused.

## Acknowledgements

SED Advisory would like to acknowledge and thank the organisations, groups and individuals who were part of our consultation and project activities and who contributed their expertise and ideas to this report.

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## Document version

Version 0.2	Fiona Davey	9 Oct 2013	Robert Lane	11 Oct 2013

## Executive summary

The Central Goldfields Events Strategy (Strategy) has been developed to support the retention and growth of existing events and enable the attraction of new events to deliver economic, social, visitation and investment benefits to the community and region. The Strategy has been developed from a program of consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders and community representatives, analysis of socio-economic and visitation trends and data and analysis of best practice in event planning, management and delivery.

The key findings that informed the development of the Strategy highlighted the following issues and opportunities for events in the region including:

- ▶ The focus of regional and state tourism and event policy towards development of events in rural and regional locations and increasing visitor dispersal from Melbourne and regional centres;
- ▶ The importance of the heritage assets built and natural environment as a major drawcard and backdrop for events and visitation;
- ▶ Ensuring Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC) resources including funding and event support services are appropriately allocated and utilised;
- ▶ Enhancing visitor yield and community participation in events through improved marketing, brand consolidation and strategic investments; and
- ▶ Identifying a strong commitment by CGSC and event stakeholders to retain and enhance events and their social and economic benefits.

Priority actions focus on achieving the following outcomes:

- ▶ Optimising existing events including consolidation of the vision for events, supporting event organisers with improved planning and delivery expertise and ensuring that major events are not only retained but the participant and visitor experience is enhanced;
- ▶ Developing events and regional leverage through active participation in Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive and other peak bodies to build on the regional strengths of heritage, tracks, trails, built natural environment Sporting facilities and strategic location;
- ▶ Ensuring event policy and processes provide greater clarity around decision making and optimise the resources available from CGSC and other sources;
- ▶ Marketing of the region as an events destination including improved marketing through web-based and social media channels and better utilisation of marketing plans and strategies; and
- ▶ Maximising Investment and assets to build on strategic advantages and enhance Central Goldfields as an event location and visitor destination.

The Strategy therefore recommends the following as priority focus areas for CGSC and stakeholders:

- ▶ Work closely with the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive (VGTE), the two Ballarat and Bendigo Tourism Boards and other peak bodies on the development of the proposed Regional Events Strategy and events development programs.
- ▶ Improve web and technology-based promotion and management of event information. This should include provided a dedicated 'tab' for events on the home page, improve the functionality of the events calendar and highlighting forthcoming events. Also the use of web and social media marketing by event organisers for event promotion should be supported and encouraged;
- ▶ Support events with the provision of event planning and management templates funding, information and event planning advisory services and timely briefings on tourism and events information and trends;
- ▶ Assess the benefits, opportunities and barriers to further development and utilisation of Station Domain buildings. This could include relocation of the VIC and the Art Gallery, improved amenity and utilisation of the Station as the backdrop for heritage and interpretation related events; and
- ▶ Develop event policy and procedures in relation to funding grants and other allocations of CGSC resources.

The Strategy has taken a practical approach to providing recommendations and direction for CGSC and stakeholders that recognise and respect the resources available for event delivery and management and the skills and expertise that are evident in the organisation and community. There is a focus on fostering partnerships, enhancing processes and realising strategic priorities through a process of continuous improvement.

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*The RACV Energy Breakthrough Event won the 2009 Tourism Victoria Award for Major Festivals and Events.*

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## 5 Year Events Strategy



### Events vision

*Central Goldfields will build its profile as an event friendly location and host events that promote and showcase our community, heritage, culture and the natural and built environment.*

*We will support events that provide economic, social and cultural benefits to our residents and businesses and that aim to improve community wellbeing through participation and activities for all.*

### Strategy purpose

The Events Strategy (Strategy) highlights that Central Goldfields and the wider region is host to a number of hallmark, regional and community events that provide a range of social, economic and community benefits. Current events cover a range of themes including family, sports, recreation, arts and culture and community held across the calendar year. In most cases, these reflect regional economic, tourism and community strengths and profile of the region.

Key requirements of the Strategy were to provide stakeholders with recommendations for enhancing the sustainability and potential of existing and new events support economic and social outcomes and identify avenues for developing new events and festivals to complement existing events and community activities. Strategy recommendations will deliver a range of economic and social opportunities through enhancement of existing events, increased visitation and yield and the potential attraction of investment. Economic and social outcomes have been incorporated into Strategy directions, recommendations and the implementation plan.

A Background Report to the Strategy was developed through an analysis of policy, regional strategies and data supported by a program of consultations with stakeholders and community. The Background Report also considered the role of events in delivering economic and social indicators and measurements for events and provided a range of findings and considerations that were used to inform the development of the Strategy.

The key objectives for the development and outcomes of the Strategy are summarised as follows:

<b>Optimise the potential of existing events and opportunities for co-ordination and collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recognise and support our community groups and volunteers and facilitate resourcing for community events.</li> <li>▶ Support strategic planning and review of events to foster event sustainability.</li> <li>▶ Provide a supportive environment for the creation, delivery and development of events.</li> <li>▶ Foster information sharing and develop the skills and capabilities of our events industry and community.</li> </ul>
<b>Identify possible new events and leverage off regional events</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build upon the strategic strengths of the region and enhance the profile of the region through marketing, promotion and branding.</li> <li>▶ Align to regional and state event and tourism policy and support strategic, regional relationships.</li> <li>▶ Identify resources required and event risks.</li> <li>▶ Integration into community capacity planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Maximise economic, social and environmental outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Encourage innovation, investment and co-operation.</li> <li>▶ Utilise sporting, cultural and tourism assets to maximum benefit.</li> <li>▶ Promote sustainable tourism and enhance tourism outcomes.</li> <li>▶ Promote the region as a place to live, work, invest and visit and enhance our quality of life, health and liveability.</li> <li>▶ Foster a sense of community and civic pride and ensure opportunities for participation.</li> <li>▶ Recognise diversity and the individual and allow for a range of cultural and creative expression.</li> <li>▶ Support events that recognise and protect our natural and built environment and assets.</li> </ul>
<b>Build visitation and investment attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify funding opportunities for the local events industry.</li> <li>▶ Strengthen partnerships with State, regional and local tourism bodies.</li> <li>▶ Enhance the event profile and brand of the region to support increased visitation and visitor yield.</li> <li>▶ Support the attraction of private and public sector investment in infrastructure and assets to enhance the event experience and liveability for residents.</li> </ul>



## Summary background framework

The Strategy has been developed using the following framework. The framework ensures that the Strategy:

- ▶ Aligns to key local and regional events and tourism strategies and policies;
- ▶ Addresses the stated aims and objectives including delivering economic, social and marketing benefits; and
- ▶ Recognises the capacity and resources available to deliver successful, sustainable events over the longer term.

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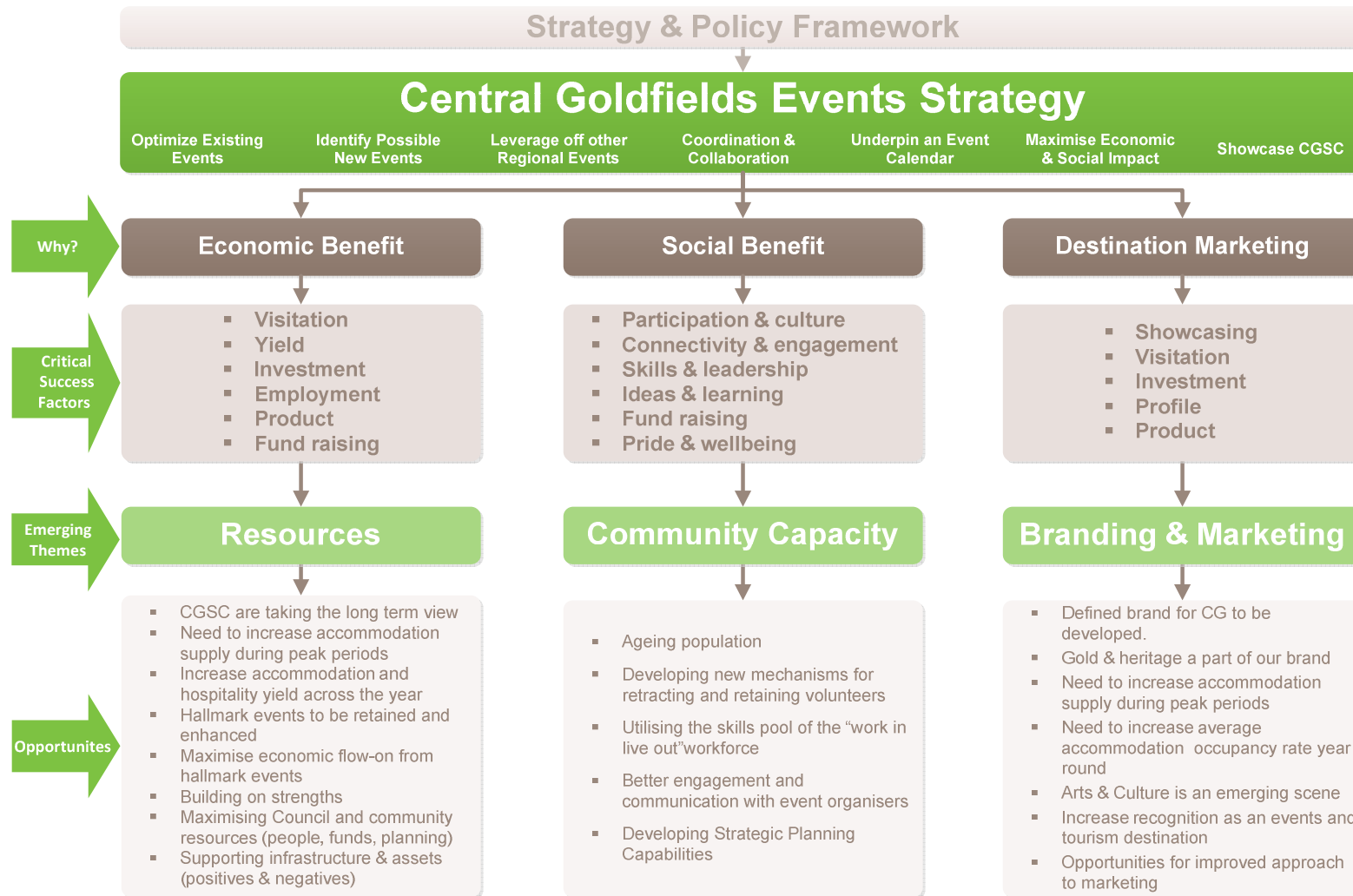
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*Events enhance our quality of life,  
health and liveability  
of our communities.*

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Figure 1: Strategy framework



## Comparative strengths and opportunities

The region has a range of competitive strengths that underpin opportunities to grow and enhance events and support economic and social outcomes. These are summarised in Table 1. These comparative strengths and opportunities have been considered as part of the development of the key directions and recommendations of the Strategy.

**Table 1 – Comparative strengths and development opportunities**

Built heritage, natural environment assets, landscapes and tracks and trails	Development of the Goldfields Heritage region and strategic event and tourism priorities for the region
Quaint and attractive heritage villages and the history of the region	Building on existing events to leverage benefits including strategic planning for specific events
Strong, hallmark major events	Building strategic relationships with regional and State tourism bodies
Strategic location in central Victoria	Building a motivated volunteer base
Volunteer skills and capacity including business and community knowledge and networks.	Growth in recreational and competition cycling in the region and more widely
Community infrastructure and facilities	Support organisations with event funding application, strategic planning and risk analysis
Strong sporting background	Support and develop emerging events with the potential to attract greater visitation and which provide community benefits
Demonstrated capacity to attract government funding	Utilisation and promotion of the Maryborough Station Domain and its facilities
Community aspirations and commitment	Emerging arts and cultural activities
Peaceful and relaxing environment	Improved events marketing, branding and packaging including regional cross promotion to increase visitor yield and dispersal
Village markets	Building on regional food and wine
Profile of other events in the region	Develop of pre-event 'taster' activities
Improvements in the performance of tourism and visitor markets	

## Optimising existing events

A consistent thread from the research conducted indicated that many stakeholders believe the primary focus of the Strategy should be on events that are already in place. Factors contributing to this view include:

- ▶ The need to nurture existing events so that they don't decline and emerging events can reach their potential;
- ▶ Economic pressures washing through into event attendances and event content/programs;
- ▶ Opportunities to strengthen partnerships and co-operation between existing events to support growth and viability;
- ▶ Increased competition for funding and sponsorship dollars across not only existing events but a range of other community activities; and
- ▶ Supply of and demands on volunteers that may not be sustainable.

CGSC can help foster sustainable events through supporting strategic reviews of existing events to ensure that they continue to provide rewarding experiences for attendees and participants and that emerging events also adopt strategic development principles to help foster their growth and reduce the likelihood of these events not continuing into the longer term. In particular, CGSC can provide an important level of expertise and knowledge in terms of event and tourism policy and strategy and as well as guidance and avenues for event marketing and promotion. This is not to say the CGSC should take primary responsibility for event delivery and it is noted that this is not an expectation of event stakeholders.

Therefore a sustainability focus should be encouraged within the local events industry including:

- ▶ Linking complementary local events under key themes, regional strengths and/or the seasons;
- ▶ Delivering high value experiences to attendees and visitors;
- ▶ Improving marketing to target markets, sponsors and the community;
- ▶ Ensuring event organisers focus on core event objectives; and
- ▶ Encouraging event best practice through event planning and management systems.

Although covered in more detail under the visitation section, marketing and branding of existing events could be enhanced to develop a stronger product and supporting profile of existing events. The Spring Fling is an example where this approach has been adopted and can be further extended through to other events and their marketing. This would assist with efficiencies and leveraging of existing marketing and delivery resources and support increased stay and yield.

*Established in 1857, the Highland Gathering is an annual event held on New Year's Day and is Australia's oldest continuous running sporting event.*



## Co-ordination and collaboration

It is acknowledged that there is a considerable commitment to the delivery of event management and delivery best practice within the local events and business sector. There are also a number of community groups and associations that work very hard towards providing economic and social benefits to their communities through events and have acquired events skills and expertise. There are opportunities to promote the sharing and learnings across the local events and tourism sector to ideas, partnerships and efficiencies in resourcing.

A key issue (and opportunity) to emerge from consultations is the importance of volunteers to event delivery and also their participation in community associations. Significant community goodwill exists and this presents opportunities for stakeholders to promote the benefits of participation and collaboration in events and community activities.

## Establishing aims and objectives

In order to support existing events to be sustainable and deliver high value experiences, there needs to be a greater understanding of the aims and objectives of individual events in the region. Some existing events have been running for long periods of time and may benefit from a review of their purpose, outcomes and benefits. Establishing aims and objectives for individual events increases the capacity to direct resources where they may be needed, allows for equitable and objective decision making in relation to priority support. Having event aims also help to ensure events deliver and align to the overall vision for events in the region. Working with local event managers on establishing their vision could be an important catalyst for developing the strategic approach that will assist with event sustainability and growth.

A decision making process, based on event aims and objectives ,can be more readily applied for identifying events for priority support, In addition to event aims, they can then be assessed against a number of guiding principles that include how the event aims to :

- ▶ Provide clear and measurable community, cultural and/or economic benefits that align to our vision, goals and objectives;
- ▶ Celebrate our community, economy and environment;
- ▶ Make effective and efficient use of our assets and facilities;
- ▶ Encourages strategic alliances with community, agencies and businesses; and
- ▶ Identify and manage expected roles and responsibilities in event management and delivery such as CGSC, other agencies and the wider community.

Without established aims and objectives based upon a vision for events, equitable and objective decisions relating to event support and development will be difficult for CGSC and other stakeholders to make, particularly under an increasingly competitive local and regional funding environment. Therefore this process will enable CGSC and other stakeholders to identify which events best fit the vision, the level of social, economic and environmental benefits that can be anticipated from the event and encourage continuous improvement in planning and delivery.

## Measuring success and driving improvements

Continuous improvement is recognised as a key success factor for events within the region. This is particularly highlighted in events that have been delivered for some time and where strategic reviews have been identified as a priority activity by event managers. The capacity to measure success and identify areas for improvements is an important part of building event sustainability and should be linked to event aims and objectives. Assessment of how an event has delivered against key performance indicators (KPIs) enables appropriate reviews of outcomes against objectives and will also identify where perhaps performance can be improved. KPIs should not be viewed as being a measure of failure versus success; rather they should encourage strategic and operational 'stretch' to foster continuous improvement.

Although there do not appear to be industry standards for event KPIs a review of a number of event strategies and policies have been used to inform the development of the example KPIs presented. The following table presents a number of KPIs that link to the Strategy’s event vision, goals and objectives. These can also used to help external event organisers develop their own KPIs for their events.

**Table 2 – Event goals, objectives and measures**

<p><b>Optimise the potential of existing events and opportunities for co-ordination and collaboration</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Recognise and support our community groups and volunteers and facilitate resourcing for community events.</li> <li>▶ Support strategic planning and review of events to foster event sustainability.</li> <li>▶ Provide a supportive environment for the creation, delivery and development of events.</li> <li>▶ Foster information sharing and develop the skills and capabilities of our events industry and community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Attendee / participant event satisfaction</li> <li>▶ Level of increased participation by community members</li> <li>▶ Increased level of grants, sponsorship and other revenues</li> <li>▶ Improved perceptions towards events / level of positive community feedback</li> <li>▶ Number of events that have a strategic plan</li> <li>▶ Number of events that have stated aims and objectives</li> <li>▶ Participation rates in formal event networks and development activities.</li> <li>▶ Number of events grown from local community activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identify possible new events and leverage off regional events</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Build upon the strategic strengths of the region and enhance the profile of the region through marketing, promotion and branding.</li> <li>▶ Align to regional and state event and tourism policy and support strategic, regional relationships.</li> <li>▶ Identify resources required and event risks.</li> <li>▶ Integration into community capacity planning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Participation in regional marketing and event development activities.</li> <li>▶ Return on investment such as a cost/participant ratio</li> <li>▶ Level of marketing and brand exposure achieved</li> <li>▶ Increased utilisation of community skills and expertise</li> <li>▶ Increased visitor dispersal into the region</li> <li>▶ Level of support from regional agencies and funding streams</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maximise economic, social and environmental outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Encourage innovation, investment and co-operation.</li> <li>▶ Utilise sporting, cultural and tourism assets to maximum benefit.</li> <li>▶ Promote sustainable tourism and enhance tourism outcomes.</li> <li>▶ Promote the region as a place to live, work, invest and visit and enhance our quality of life, health and liveability.</li> <li>▶ Foster a sense of community and civic pride and ensure opportunities for participation.</li> <li>▶ Recognise diversity and the individual and allow for a range of cultural and creative</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Number of supply contracts awarded to local businesses</li> <li>▶ % reduction of supply contracts awarded externally</li> <li>▶ Increased utilisation of community assets</li> <li>▶ % of young/senior/CALD/disabled/indigenous community participants</li> <li>▶ Attraction/retention of volunteers</li> <li>▶ Number of community cultural/social groups and/or projects supported by the event</li> </ul>

	<p>expression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Support events that recognise and protect our natural and built environment and assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ % of local artists/performers/participants engaged for the event</li> <li>▶ Communication/marketing that includes selling points on 'liveability'</li> </ul>
<p><b>Build visitation and investment attraction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Identify funding opportunities for the local events industry.</li> <li>▶ Strengthen partnerships with State, regional and local tourism bodies.</li> <li>▶ Enhance the event profile and brand of the region to support increased visitation and visitor yield.</li> <li>▶ Support the attraction of private and public sector investment in infrastructure and assets to enhance the event experience and liveability for residents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ % of return visitation</li> <li>▶ % increase in visitor yield / overnight stays</li> <li>▶ Increased visits to visitor website and VIC</li> <li>▶ Grants:budget ratio</li> <li>▶ Level of investment in priority assets/facilities</li> <li>▶ Reinvestment by groups in assets/facilities</li> <li>▶ Investment leads and or opportunities actioned/referred</li> </ul>

**Key recommendations**

- ▶ CGSC to promote its events vision, goals and objectives to event and industry stakeholders and to encourage external organisers to develop aligned aims and objectives for their events. This should include CGSC undertaking a 'stock-take' of its existing events utilising the Strategy's goals, objectives and KPIs.
- ▶ Support event managers and organisers to address event strategic planning gaps through the provision of relevant information, briefing, templates and resources. Also provide targetted assistance for organisations seeking funding, grants or the attraction of sponsors.
- ▶ Strengthen relationships and partnerships with event stakeholders in the region through the establishment of more formalised and continuance of current informal industry and network structures. This could be incorporated as a sub-group of the Tourism Association or via timely briefings, development workshops and networking functions. This will help to encourage event knowledge, information flows and enhance collaboration and partnerships.
- ▶ Facilitate two events and tourism development briefings and to include guest speakers to support networking and knowledge exchange activities. These could be delivered through the Tourism Excellence program.
- ▶ The role, services and resources of the CGSC to be more widely promoted. This could include the establishment of a 'library' of event and tourism related resources, documents and data to support event capability development internally and externally.
  - ▶ Utilising Strategy goals and objectives identify the priority existing events for further development and support..



*The Redwood Carnival attracts between 3,000 and 4,000 people and has a total prize pool of over \$225,000.*

- ▶ Promote the opportunities and benefits of volunteering and support volunteer recruitment efforts of local service clubs and organisations with businesses in the region. Investigate opportunities to establish a centralised, volunteer pool where people and resources can be shared across events and activities and foster community connections and participation. Key organisations, businesses and service groups should be encouraged to participate in the development, promotion and oversight of the pool.
- ▶ Consideration should be given to including a Business Volunteer of the Year Award as part of the Powercor Central Goldfields Business Awards or a Community Volunteer Award as part of Australia Day celebrations to encourage businesses to adopt and promote volunteer activities. This may also help businesses and organisations to encourage 'work in live out' workers to participate in community activities.
- ▶ Undertake a review of CGSC events and encourage external events organisers to review their events against key event success factors. Success factors that should be considered include:
  - ▶ Providing a positive experience for participants through good organisation and the event is run safely and is well supervised;
  - ▶ Delivering an event that provides something for everyone and are inclusive and accessible for all;
  - ▶ Incorporating characteristics of the communities/location in which events are held that profiles the region in a positive and authentic way;
  - ▶ Providing good facilities and amenities for participants; and
  - ▶ Recruit, train and support volunteers to be well informed, welcoming and enthusiastic.

## Developing new events and regional leverage

The development of new events should be built upon the key competitive strengths of the region. For the Central Goldfields, these include sporting and recreational facilities, history and heritage, , the natural environment and landscapes and the emergence of arts and culture. Local and regional tourism and event development aims and policy of the Victorian Goldfields Tourism Executive (VGTE) strategic plan also provide guidance on regional strengths and emerging product and market opportunities. Key relevant elements of this strategic plan include:

- ▶ Recognition of families, couples and western hemisphere visitors as strong segments for the region, whilst proposing that evidence suggest that potential growth market opportunities are:
  - ▶ Baby boomers and the socially aware;
  - ▶ Couples in their mid to late 30s and above;
  - ▶ GEN Y;
  - ▶ National and international sporting groups; and
  - ▶ Small group travel.

The key strengths of the region which the VGTE strategic plan also identifies include history and heritage, arts and culture and festivals and events. Development opportunities are identified as being food and wine, tracks and trails and the natural environment. As part of the VGTE priority strategic actions, there are a number that are relevant to the Strategy including:

- ▶ Developing a region wide Events Strategy ;



- ▶ Increasing the awareness of the region's seasonal offerings with particular emphasis on festival and events;
- ▶ Developing a region wide Marketing Strategy and the Adoption of Goldfields Branding Strategy capitalising on destination strengths;
- ▶ Developing a suite of high quality events.

The direction and recommendation of the Strategy align to these elements of the VGTE plan.

The Strategy has also considered a number of other factors for attracting and establishing new events in the region. These factors include:

- ▶ Avoiding clashes with other competing events or building on existing local event and leveraging off existing regional events;
- ▶ Aligning with public holidays if an increase in patronage is expected or avoid public holidays if a patronage decrease may result; and
- ▶ Assessing the capacity to and mitigating development and delivery risk of establishing a new event.

It was not within the scope of the Strategy to undertake in-depth audits or develop detailed business cases for existing or suggested events. Rather the Strategy presents events that align to identified strengths and regional event policy and direction to enable stakeholders to further investigate and review these opportunities.

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*The first Dunolly Gilbert and Sullivan Festival attracted over 400 visitors and 40 performers in 2012.*

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*The Maryborough Railway Station buildings and surrounding precinct could be described as being the iconic symbol of Central Goldfields.*

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## Policy and process – a decision making framework

A key issue for local governments and funding bodies is how to decide which events to support with funding and resources. The decision-making process presented does not preclude providing support for particular events. Rather it provides a process for assessing funding and support for events upon which decisions can then be made and communicated.

### Guiding principles

The decision-making framework for CGSC is based on a number of guiding principles including:

- ▶ Does the event provide clear and measurable community, cultural and/or economic benefits that align to the vision, goals and objectives of the Strategy?
- ▶ Is there an anticipated return on investment, and if so, what return can be expected?
- ▶ To what extent does the event celebrate the community, economy and environment?
- ▶ Has there been sufficient event planning to help ensure event sustainability and potential growth opportunities?
- ▶ Does the event make effective and efficient use of our assets and facilities?
- ▶ Does the event encourage strategic alliances with community, business and agencies?
- ▶ What is the expected role of CGSC in managing and delivering the event and is CGSC willing to accept the role proposed?

### Key decision criteria

It is recommended that the event decision making framework be constructed upon the extent that an event aligns to the overall vision and in particular the four goals for events developed in this Strategy namely:

- ▶ Optimises the potential of existing events and opportunities for co-ordination and collaboration
- ▶ Identifies possible new events and leverage off regional events
- ▶ Maximises economic, social and environmental outcomes; and
- ▶ Builds visitation and investment attraction.

There are two main scenarios where CGSC and stakeholders will need to make decisions on event hosting, development and selection:

- ▶ When CGSC is asked to provide financial (and to a lesser extent in-kind) support to an externally managed event (existing or new); or
- ▶ When CGSC is asked to, or planning to, support or adopt a new internally managed event.

Although there are a number of factors to be considered, ultimately there are six key elements that will underpin the decision making framework for event selection and hosting:

- ▶ Alignment of event with the events vision, goals and objectives;
- ▶ Proposed event delivery model;
- ▶ Sustainability of the event;
- ▶ Key performance indicators for assessing performance of the event;
- ▶ Return on investment; and
- ▶ Event planning for event delivery and management that can be demonstrated by event managers.

In order to make informed decisions on when, how and to what extent to support an event, the aims and objectives of the event need to be clearly articulated. These should present on what the event is (overview), what the event expects to achieve for its constituents/stakeholders, the benefit/outcomes anticipated and how these will be achieved.

## The process

The following proposes a methodology for developing a decision making framework for CGSC and stakeholders to adopt when looking to support or develop events in the region.

- ▶ Events will be initially assessed against the Strategy vision, goals and objectives;
- ▶ Events will also be assessed objectively and equitably, recognising the different characteristics of events and their varying capacity to deliver on the vision, goals and objectives. This will require applying different sets of criteria, weightings and score thresholds to the different categories of events. For example these may include:
  - ▶ **Major events:** deliver significant economic benefits/return to the community; demonstrably enhances the profile of Central Goldfields Shire as a destination in key markets; demonstrates a quantifiable return on investment; meets or supports tourism and event products, strengths and opportunities; are clearly deliverable and have adopted event management and delivery best practice; have a capacity to stimulate investment;
  - ▶ **Regional events:** deliver a spread of economic, social and cultural benefits/return to the community; profiles assets and facilities; are complementary to existing events; have the opportunity to grow; can demonstrate a return on investment; support partnerships and collaboration with regional stakeholders; and
  - ▶ **Local/community events:** deliver a spread of benefits across the community; encourage participation and equitable access; demonstrate a level of return on investment commensurate with the size and nature of the event; support community groups and/or business participation; have a level of sustainability and/or capacity to grow.

Event criteria and assessments will need to be weighted by CGSC to enable an evidenced decision outcome. These weightings should reflect the strategic priorities and objectives identified in the Strategy and the degree to which they are important to the organisation.

As an example, a criteria matrix for achievement of economic, social and environmental advantages is presented in Table 3.

*All weightings and scores shown are arbitrary and given as guide examples only.*

**Table 3: Decision making matrix**

Criteria Deliver economic, social and environmental advantages		CGSC weighting (1-5)	Score (1-10)	Weighted score	Score (1-10)	Weighted score	Benchmark
1	▶ Encourage innovation, investment and co-operation.	3	6	18	8	24	18
2	▶ Utilise sporting, cultural and tourism assets to maximum benefit.	5	3	15	6	30	30
3	▶ Promote sustainable tourism and enhance tourism outcomes.	5	7	35	5	25	30
4	▶ Promote the region as a place to live, work, invest and visit and enhance liveability	4	6	24	8	32	24
5	▶ Foster a sense of community and civic pride and ensure opportunities for participation	3	2	6	8	24	18
6	▶ Recognise diversity and the individual and allow for a range of cultural and creative expression.	4	4	16	4	16	24
7	▶ Support events that recognise and protect our natural and built environment and assets.	5	3	15	7	35	30
<b>Total</b>				<b>129</b>		<b>186</b>	<b>174</b>

The process involves CGSC attributing a fixed weighting to each objective and then assessing the degree to which a particular event contributes to that objective. For example, criteria 1 is weighted by Council as being a 3 in terms of importance. Event 1 is considered to achieve a score of 6 against this criteria. Therefore for event 1, the weighted score for criteria 1 is  $3 \times 6 = 18$ . The example shows that event 1 does not fully meet economic, social and environmental objectives, whereas event 2 does.

The system allows for decision making based on the level of score against objectives and the weighting that has been applied to those objectives. It also allows for identification of where an event may need to focus attention on particular objectives to achieve future funding or support success. For example, event 1 would need to improve in the criteria areas 2, 5, 6 and 7, and event 2 in areas 3 and 6. It would also be beneficial for CGSC to establish an overall benchmark score for their key criteria in order develop a minimum weighted score for an individual objective or a particular goal below which CGSC either rejects a particular proposal or which may act as a trigger for requesting further information. The example given takes the CGSC weighting and applies a minimum benchmark score of six to each criteria.

## Funding and support

It is understood that grant allocations to events are made on a relatively ad-hoc basis and would appear to lack some formal processes and procedures. Therefore, the present decision-making framework should be supported by a Council Events Policy that includes Strategy vision and objectives, details event support processes, outlines the decision-making framework and provides information on how Council manages grants for events. Such a policy will not only help to improve event outcomes for Council and organisers but also provide for greater transparency in the allocation of Council funding and resources to events (either internally or externally managed).

## Recommendations

- ▶ CGSC to undertake an internal review of the events managed by the organisation to consider the following issues:
  - ▶ Rationale for the event including any funding or other resources that may currently be provided by CGSC;

- ▶ Economic, social and environmental benefits/impacts;
- ▶ Opportunities to improve marketing including co-operative marketing;
- ▶ Opportunities to improve the event including event outcomes based on event objectives; and
- ▶ Key event sustainability issues.
- ▶ CGSC to enter into formal funding/sponsorship agreements with event organisers in terms of expectations, roles and responsibilities, required reporting and other matters relevant to the support they have provided.
- ▶ CGSC to consider a formalised approach to processing and providing funding support to external events. This may include:
  - ▶ Establishment of funding rounds. Some local government adopt a twice yearly or quarterly funding rounds or link into their wider community grants program. Applicants should be encouraged to discuss their event with event officers prior to submitting an application to ensure that all necessary documentation and issues have been identified and addressed. Applicants should then proceed to the application stage if appropriate to do so.
  - ▶ Funding guidelines including eligibility, criteria, what will and will not be funded, services/support that CGSC may provide, decision making processes and funding terms and conditions to be developed for the grants program and provided to all applicants.
  - ▶ All requests for funding need to be submitted via a documented application process which would require applicants to provide information on:
 

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Amount of funding sought and to what purpose the funding will be used;</li> <li>○ Applicant details including the governance structure or the applying organisation;</li> <li>○ Events details – what, where and when;</li> <li>○ Expected number of attendees and origin of attendees;</li> <li>○ Details of any other funding/sponsorship that has been secured or anticipated;</li> <li>○ Event objectives and KPIs;</li> <li>○ How the event will be evaluated;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Level of local content;</li> <li>○ Event business plan and budget</li> <li>○ Risk management assessments;</li> <li>○ Marketing plan;</li> <li>○ Recognition of CGSC's contribution;</li> <li>○ Economic, social and environmental impacts/benefits;</li> <li>○ Other non-financial CGSC services/support likely to be required/requested;</li> <li>○ Capability to manage and deliver a safe and professional event; and</li> <li>○ Any public assets/amenities that may be used or impacted on.</li> </ul>
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  - ▶ All successful funding applications to be formalised under a funding agreement between CGSC and the applicant and funds appropriately acquitted.
- ▶ Develop a guide to planning and managing events to support best practice event delivery, improve compliance, reduce risks and improve efficient uses of CGSC resources. The guide could also contain event planning and reporting templates (business plan, budget and finances, risk planning, permits and marketing strategies), case studies of good event management planning and delivery and sources of and contacts for further information and advice.

- ▶ The events unit to be established as the first point of contact within Council for all groups and event organisers considering or delivering an event in the municipality. This will allow for continuous improvement in internal and external processes and communication and enable the tracking and reporting on the types of events, related issues and opportunities they present to the organisation and the community, thereby creating a knowledge bank within Council. For example, the following provides an overview of the workflow for external stakeholders seeking funding support from CGSC.

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*The South Pacific Veterans Cycling Championships attracts over 200 cyclists and around 1,500 spectators.*

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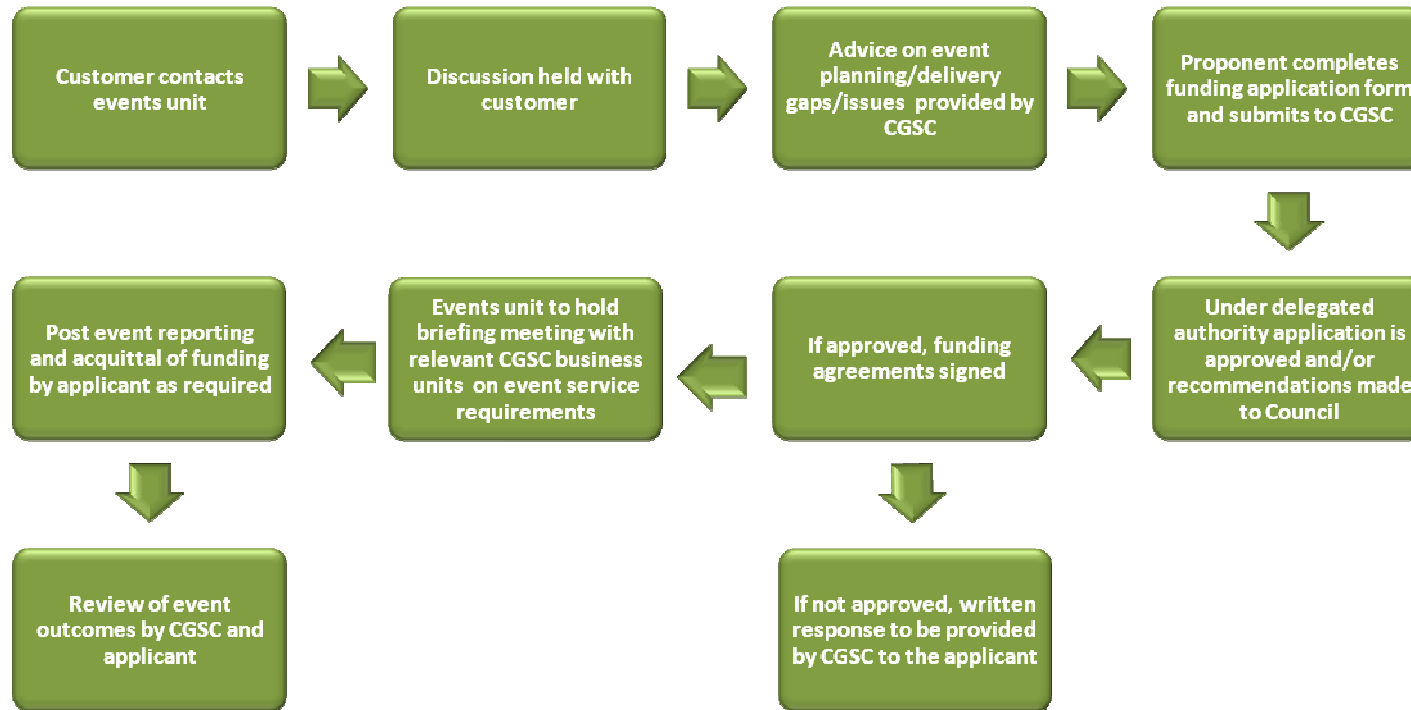


Figure 2: CGSC event support workflow



## Marketing and visitation

Based on the number of events, the hallmark events that are delivered and the various marketing channels employed by CGSC and other stakeholders, it can be reasonably assumed that considerable investment is made in marketing and promotion the local and regional events industry to enhance visitation and regional liveability. This potential critical mass of marketing resources, presents stakeholders with opportunities to adopt greater levels of co-operation or cross promotion of events to leverage efficiencies and outcomes. This can be fostered through co-operation and collaboration strategies, bundling of events under themes, seasons and target markets and through development of visitation packages.

Use of the web and digital technologies by event organisers and tourism operators has become industry norm, increasingly driven by consumer trends and advances in digital technologies. Industry and stakeholders must recognise that accelerated use of digital technology is driving marketing activity. Tourism Victoria recognises the need to support this digital uptake and adoption under its Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016 where developing digital capabilities is a strategic priority. Therefore the useability, accessibility and currency of marketing information provided will be critical for the region. For example, the functionality of online events calendars to display event information not only by date but by theme, activity and locationally mapped could provide competitive and user advantages.

Driving visitation to the region will not only support the sustainability of events, but also provide important economic flow-ons into the economy. Garnering input and participation from a range of other sectors and businesses will therefore be strategically important. Although accommodation capacity has been raised as yield constraint for the local region, there are opportunities to increase yield through spreading occupancy and improving marketing and packaging of accommodation and other support products with events.

## Recommendations

- ▶ The quality and presentation of event information provided on the web could be improved to be more motivational and user friendly. For example, the functionality of calendar of events on should be enhanced through allowing filtering by events by type, theme, location or attendee interests so that end users can filter information to get to the information they want more easily;
- ▶ Hallmark and forthcoming events should receive increased profile when visitors enter the events section of the website, and content and presentation of web pages for individual events could be provided;
- ▶ Increase the functionality of the website to give 'visitors' the opportunity to register their interest in an event and receive event updates, special offers and other event marketing and tourism information. Expand market capture and promotion activities through the use of social networking and media sites.
- ▶ In partnership with key event organisers, develop a Central Goldfields Events Capability Profile to promote organisational, local and industry strengths to host and develop events and to build a strategic position within the wider events industry and market place;
- ▶ Event stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve cross-promotional opportunities and activities. Analysis of the current calendar of events to identify potential event clusters under themes and/or seasons would help to inform marketing activities including timing, placement and target markets;
- ▶ Opportunities and mechanisms to develop inclusive packages around events could also be pursued with the local events, hospitality and related sectors. This will assist with increasing the visitor yield from events, foster greater co-operation and partnerships, and potentially identify local service or product gaps that could be filled by local businesses or could attract new investment. This will help to put local focus on the customer and their overall Central Goldfields event and tourism experience and the benefits that can be derived; and
- ▶ Encourage local event managers to develop marketing strategies for their events to include traditional and digital marketing channels and identify opportunities for providing cost and resource efficiencies through collaboration, website content and improved presentation of marketing collateral.

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*Estimated to attract over 3,000 visitors each month, the Talbot Farmers market is major drawcard for visitors from across the region and Melbourne.*

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### Investment and asset maximisation

Central Goldfields has been very successful in attracting investment in economic and social infrastructure and assets. This has been achieved through identifying need and the benefits that investment would accrue to the community and the economy. Similarly, investment in tourism and event infrastructure and assets is largely driven by regional and state policy and strategy, supported by the development of evidence of need and benefit. Utilising Destination Management Plans (DMPs), the VGTE strategic plan proposes regional integrated destination management planning to deliver “*focussed advocacy and clear articulation of the case for investment in terms of broader economic prosperity, liveability and regional development.*” As a significant portion of tourism infrastructure funding will be influenced by the DMPs and their assessment of how projects “*articulate the case for higher investment based on achievement, opportunity and need*”; CGSC is well placed to work with the VGTE on putting forward investment priorities that support the achievement of the Strategy.



The Strategy proposes that CGSC investment priorities should focus on key assets that have the capacity to not only further support and deliver events for the region but also improve assets for wider community benefit. In particular these assets include:

- ▶ Maryborough Station Domain;
  - ▶ The Harness Racing Club;
  - ▶ VIC and Art Gallery;
  - ▶ Track and trails; and
- ▶ Other assets including the Aerodrome, Princes Park and village and township heritage assets and interpretation.




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*In 2013, over 50% of the walk in visitors to the Maryborough Visitor Information Centre were from Melbourne*

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## Implementation plan

**Table 4 – Strategy implementation plan**

Optimising existing events	Promote the vision and objectives of the Events Strategy with key partners and stakeholders in the industry and the region.	Provides clarity on the strategic direction and outcomes that events should strive for.	Ongoing	
	Support events with the provision of event planning and management templates funding, information and event planning advisory services and timely briefings on tourism and events information and trends.	Address strategic planning gaps and improve information flows and knowledge.	Yr 1-2	
	In partnership with event partners and stakeholders, prioritise key actions identified under the RACV Energy Breakthrough review.	Ensures retention of the event and manage event sustainability, delivery and management.	Yr 1	
	Provide targetted support and resources to key existing events as identified in the Strategy		Yr 1-2	
	Recognise the important role of volunteers and promote the benefits and opportunities for volunteering with businesses and organisations under a community based partnership approach.	Supports the sustainability of events and community organisations and encourage participation in community activities.	Ongoing	
	Undertake a review of existing internally and externally managed events against Strategy vision and objectives.	Identifies priority areas for event review and development, and where resources would be best utilised.	Yr 1-2	
Developing new events and regional leverage	Work closely with the VGTE, the two Ballarat and Bendigo Regional Tourism Boards, and other peak bodies on the development of the proposed Regional Events Strategy. Opportunities to develop new events as highlighted in the Strategy include:	Ensures that CGSC opportunities are considered and incorporated into outcomes and recommendations from regional events planning and development and include opportunities to encourage dispersal from regional destinations and their events.	Yr 1-2 – also dependent on VGTE timeframes	
Policy and process	Develop the decision-making framework including weighted criteria and utilise for the recommended event ‘stocktake’ to identify priority focus for event support and resources for CGSC.	Improves decision-making processes, event outcomes and maximise CGSC and other event related resources.	Yr 1	
	Develop event policy and procedures in relation to funding, grants and other allocations of CGSC resources.	Provides formalised and transparent funding processes and improve decision-making. Enables forward planning of budgets and improve internal efficiencies and use staff time and resources. Improves funding and resource allocation outcomes to support event financial viability.	Yr 1-2	
	More clearly define the role and responsibilities of events related staff and establish the events unit as the ‘first point of entry’ for the majority of event enquiries.	Increases sharing of event knowledge, skills and capabilities and development of efficiencies.	Ongoing	
Marketing, and visitation	In partnership with key event organisers, develop a Central Goldfields Events	Elevates the profile of the region as the organisation	Yr 2+	

	Capability Profile to promote organisational, local and industry strengths to host and develop events and to build a strategic position within the wider events industry and market place.	as event friendly and event ready. Enhances utilisation of assets and increase economic activity.		
	Improve web-site promotion and management of event information. This should include provided a dedicated 'tab' for events on the home page, improve the functionality of the events calendar and highlighting forthcoming events. Also encourage and support the use of web and social media marketing by event organisers for event promotion.	Improves marketing effectiveness and brand and destination reinforcement. Enhances links between regional tourism and event marketing.	Yr 1-2	
	Improve marketing to target markets through collaboration and development of event marketing plans.	Improves information flow to the community on event activities, benefits and opportunities to participate. Increases visitor yield from event activities and improve the visitor experience.	Ongoing	
	Identify opportunities to enhance the value proposition to event attendees and participants via the development of all inclusive event packages including accommodation, attractions and retail.	Identifies opportunities to improve the local product and service offer.	Yr 2+	

Investment and asset maximisation	Assess the benefits, opportunities and barriers to further development and utilisation of Station Domain including underutilised Station buildings. This could include relocation of the VIC and the Art Gallery, improved amenity and utilisation of the Station as the backdrop a heritage related events.	<p>Enhances a major icon of the region into a visitor destination and increase utilisation of Domain amenities and assets.</p> <p>Increases patronage of the VIC to support additional yield from visitors.</p> <p>Expands the capacity of the Art Gallery for community and event activities.</p> <p>Provides a centralised hub of service provision around the current VIC and library facility.</p>	Yr 1-2	
	In partnership with the Maryborough Harness Racing Club, progress discussions on undertaking a master plan for the facility that will not only consider current usage and users, but also potential to create a more multi-purpose asset for events, visitors and the community.	<p>Allows for strategic planning and development of facilities and assets.</p> <p>Increases utilisation of assets and locations that can either host significant numbers of people for a variety of activities or increase dispersal.</p>	Yr 2+	
	Assess opportunities and benefits of investment in other key event, tourism and community assets including tracks and trails, Aerodrome and heritage assets and interpretation of heritage town and village.	<p>Supports the sustainability of the facility and its purpose.</p> <p>Maximises existing assets for a wide range of uses and outcomes.</p> <p>Aligns to regional tourism and event strategy and policy.</p> <p>Supports retention and growth of existing events and enhances event attraction capabilities.</p>		



SEED