

Mid North Coast Event Network

Regional event marketing Recommendations 2007-2010

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Executive Summary

Events throughout the Mid North Coast region (Coffs Harbour to Port Stephens) contribute to one of the region's key industries of Tourism which contributed an estimated \$1.655bn in 2005 (National Visitors Survey) to the regions economy.

Events play a role in attracting tourists to the region, can increase the duration of visitor stays and as a result enhance overall tourism yield. Events can support thematic images of areas, provide employment and training opportunities and boost the moral of the host community. Yet, there is very little data to support the involvement of events throughout the region.

The Mid North Coast Event Network project identified an emerging events industry which is greatly fragmented throughout the region not only geographically but also by the great diversity in the types and genres of events offered throughout the region.

Regionally there is no centralised connection point for event managers. At a localised level event managers are most likely to connect with local government, however many Councils within the region do not have the capacity nor scope to build events which work collaboratively rather than individually within the community.

The project identified a clear need for the establishment of an entity whose role is to consolidate events activity throughout the region. This entity will simultaneously be responsible for bringing recognition to the events industry, increasing skill development opportunities, developing a strategic approach to collaborative marketing and resource sharing as well as facilitating linkages between tourism, community, local government, events businesses and event managers.

As tourism markets change throughout the Mid North Coast events can play a pivotal role in establishing and growing new markets which in turn offers a multiplier effect throughout the region.

To achieve this event managers must be able to work with formal tourism organisations to understand the needs and wants of tourism markets as well as the benefits in developing events which have tourism appeal.

The proposed Mid North Coast regional events marketing plan addresses three broad objectives which are the enhancement of event product, collaborative marketing and improving impacts of events on North Coast tourism. The objectives are actioned over a three year plan (2007-2010).

A consolidated events industry holds many potential benefits. These benefits affect not only tourism but also economic development, community development, employment and capacity development of the region.

Situation analysis

Tourism structures in the Mid North Coast

As the entity responsible for the promotion of the Mid North Coast in a Tourism context, North Coast NSW Tourism's Charter is "to partner with the eight local Councils of the region, industry sectors and government agencies, such as Tourism NSW, to grow tourism and the benefits it brings to commerce and communities in the North Coast region".

The Mid North Coast Tourism Region runs from Coffs Harbour in the North to Port Stephens in the South and West to the Great Dividing Range. In all this includes eight Local Government Areas (LGA's) which are branded by tourism as Coffs Coast, Bellingen, Nambucca Valley, Macleay Valley Coast, Greater Port Macquarie Hastings Council, Manning Valley, Great Lakes and Port Stephens.

The regions tourism model connects with community, local government and industry and promotes throughout and outside of the region. This structure is ideal support the events industry, however the existing model is not equipped to provide the structure the industry needs to adequately establish and work to its full potential in the Mid North Coast.

The concept of a formal events association throughout the region which reports to and works alongside tourism, community, local government, events businesses and event managers provides a conceptual model which will grow event yield throughout the region while saving money in the form of collaborative marketing and resource sharing.

Events in the Mid North Coast

There are literally hundreds of events which are held throughout the Mid North Coast region every year. These events range in size and genre from arts and cultural events, sporting activities, community festivals and markets, major events, food and wine, business events and meetings, enthusiast events and activities.

Of the 65 events surveyed throughout the Mid North Coast Event Network (MNCEN) project 83% of surveys completed by event managers indicated they attracted less than 5,000 people each year. Most of these events were coordinated by volunteers only. (See appendix one)

This research also identified many gaps in the level of understanding of event managers in marketing activities as well as other functional areas of event management.

Many research participants also identified gaps in linkages between tourism organisations and their events. Many indicated while they desired more involvement with tourism in the region they were confused about how they could be involved, or where to go.

The main control of events throughout the region is currently undertaken by local government. For many smaller local government areas throughout the region this is a cumbersome and lengthy task for which the resources are not available. This is likely to be a contributing factor to the feelings of isolation expressed by many of the research participants regarding the level of local government support for their events.

Not only does the workload of local governments increase in overseeing events, management of events at a local level also reduces opportunities for collaborative marketing throughout the region. Therefore events remain at a local level with little to no formalised involvement with tourism.

Market Segmentation

The North Coast Tourism Regional Tourism Plan 2004-2007 (ATS Group) identifies two broad segments of tourists to the area:

1. **The destination specific tourist** – described as including the “traditional domestic family and empty-nester” markets who return to the same location on an annual basis by ritual. The plan suggests that tourism initiatives for this market have traditionally been driven at a local level.

This market is most likely to participate in local community based events such as markets, community festivals and in-house activities offered by clubs and hotels.

2. **The Regional Traveller** – A segment more apt to experience the region as a whole the Tourism Plan (ATS Group) divided this segment into two sub-sectors:
 - a. **The in-transit traveller:** traveling through the region to another destination
 - b. **The experiential traveller** – including self-drive, and ‘niche markets such as backpacker, nature based, ecotourism, food and wine and cultural heritage travellers.’
3. Another potential market is that of the **business tourism** this market is largely untapped in the current environment and is currently marketed to by individual resorts and hotels, corporate event planners and some LGA’s. Business events and business tourists have the potential to impact the region on two levels:
 - a. Attracting business events including meetings, conferences and seminars to the region
 - b. Developing a program of events which may encourage business travellers to the area to bring the family and stay for the weekend.
4. Extend the scope of event promotion within the region to encourage the incidence of day trippers and overnight stays. The regions residents are a strong yet largely untapped mechanism for promoting events to visiting friends and relatives (VFR).

The regions tourism markets are also segmented according to The Australian Domestic Market Segments (2000). Some opportunities have been noted below. Each requires further market research:

- **Compatriots:** 25-44 year olds who travel with their family. The key motivation of this market is children and while on holiday they like to relax and unwind. The compatriots are likely to engage in event activity offered by the host community in which they are staying. They will attend local markets, art shows, community festivals and perhaps New Years Eve, Easter and Christmas themed events. This market is not likely to have the resources to attend high priced ticketed events and is not likely to visit the region specifically for an event. However, there is potential to create a festival which is marketed specifically for families. While many parents of small children would love to attend music festivals they are not prepared to deal with their children at the event. An weekend event which combined children’s activities, low cost family accommodation such as camping, musical performances and sports could attract families to the region.
- **Pampadours:** 45-61 year old couples whose key motivation is pampering and rejuvenation. While this market segment may attend events such as markets, arts and cultural festivals and concerts or culinary events once in the area it is unlikely existing events will attract this market to the region. This market is difficult to attract to the area for the sake of events alone. Living primarily in city areas this market has ongoing exposure to fine wine and food, art and culture, health and relaxation opportunities. An event which may attract this market would be a low impact activity which is authentic and unique to the region and could be contained within a short stay.

- **Wanderers:** 54-75 year old couples whose key motivation is observation. The wanderer can easily be reached at visitor information centres and this market would be most likely to benefit from and engage in collaborative marketing of events which produces collateral distributed at VIC's throughout the region. This market will attend events which are free to moderate ticket cost which correspond to their travel itinerary.
- **True travellers:** Under 45 with no children whose motivation relates to adventure and cultural immersion. While the true traveller may attend markets, community festivals and concerts while passing through an area this segment is most likely to visit the area for an event that doesn't exist elsewhere. Events such as the Stroud International Brick and Rolling Pin Throwing Contest, Back to Bowra, Camp Creative, The Bellingen Markets, Festival of the Sun, the Coffs Harbour International Buskers and Comedy Festival and the Handmade Houses Tour (Bowraville) all hold appeal for this market. For many of these events transport is an issue, however with marketing which incorporates this factor the appeal for this market may increase.
- **Groupies:** males aged 15-24 who travel for fun, parties and surf. With the exception of Festival of the Sun, Port Macquarie which has in recent years been established as part of the summer music festival circuit with the assistance of Triple J sponsorship there are few events which attract this market to the area.

The over 18 component of this market is otherwise catered to by events within hotels and nightclubs. The younger, underage component of this segment are catered to, to some extent by local government youth workers, PCYC organisations, religious groups and Indent committees which are often attached to local government. Youth based events are most often developed to cater to local markets and don't take tourism into account.

The demography of the Mid North Coast is changing, particularly in light of the 'Sea Change' concept. Many retirees have moved to the area as have young families in search of cheaper housing and improved lifestyles. In contrast the Mid North Coast also hosts some towns such as the Nambucca Heads and Kempsey which have high levels of unemployment and low average incomes.

Enhanced education as well as availability of relevant market research will give event managers throughout the region more scope to cater to the demands of the demographic makeup of the area and its visitors.

In any case, having ongoing access to tourism data will allow event managers to be more savvy in planning events which address tourism markets as well as local markets.

Market Size

Tourism in the Mid North Coast contributed an estimated \$1.655bn in 2005 (National Visitors Survey) to the regions economy. No formal statistics currently exist to show the contribution of events to this figure.

Current marketing performance

Visitor Information Centres (VIC's) are the primary point of contact between tourists and tourism information. VICs are located throughout the region at major tourist thoroughfares.

The internet which is an important tool in attracting both business and experiential travellers offers browsers many gateways to the region. The North Coast NSW Tourism website (www.midnorthcoastnsw.com.au) provides links to the eight websites which represent each LGA. Additional websites are facilitated by local government, other regional organisations, non-profit entities, local media and other local and national private concerns.

While this wealth of information offers the consumer a comprehensive amount of research, it is also detrimental to the promotion of the region as a whole. This is particularly evident in regards to event calendars. There are dozens of event calendars offered on-line and within print media. Unfortunately none of the calendars offer a full and comprehensive account of events throughout the region.

To maximise the use of an events calendar a consolidated approach must be taken to either develop and promote an existing database or develop and promote a new database which event managers can access to make contributions and potential tourists can access to gain information. There are opportunities to form partnerships with existing online event calendars such as www.regionaleventslive.com.au which offers a free basic service to events throughout the region and is equipped to deal with the 'backend' development of the online database.

With the exception of several larger flagship events throughout the region events are generally marketed within their host communities with little attention to areas outside of the region. Those events who do market outside of the region do so through their own capabilities and budgets with little to no external support.

The Mid North Coast Event Network project indicated marketing as being a primary concern of event managers particularly in regard to an events calendar, distribution of media releases, marketing services and networking (see appendix one).

Competition

Further deterring the concept of collaborative marketing is the idea of other events being in competition. There is some degree of education within the marketplace that is required to bring events together in sharing resources, information and marketing. This requires an ongoing and consistent approach as it deals directly with the changing attitudes of the human element of events.

There are very few flagship events in the area and there is much scope to develop events which attract substantial amounts of tourists to the region.

Political and legal forces

The increased attention to areas such as public liability insurance, risk management, occupational health and safety, child protection which effect events are all reasons for the increased difficulty of operating events in today's climate.

This is also the reason or excuse for many event cancellations. Again, access to up to date and relevant information both as formal education and advice provided online or by associated experts will greatly benefit the regions events.

There is also a level of leverage to be gained in acquiring public liability and other such insurance policies as a network rather than singular event.

SWOT analysis (Marketing of MNC events by North Coast Tourism)

Strengths	Weaknesses
Existing support network in Tourism industry	Event Managers who don't identify with Tourism
Existing infrastructure for tourism	Lack of formal training of event managers
Existing flagship events which are recognised outside of the area and currently act as Tourist attractions	Event managers lack of understanding regarding tourism facilities and processes
Existing events which cater to the needs of identified tourism segments	Decline in traditional visitor segments (families)
Growth in new markets experiential travellers	Traditional difficulties in creating regional partnerships (ATS Group)
	Lack of resources in current tourism model to adequately support events industry
	Lead time required to establish new events
Opportunities	Threats
Establishment of a formal MNC Events Association to report to and act as an intermediary between tourism, community, local government, events businesses and event managers	Ongoing budgetary constraints
Develop new events to appeal to new segments and better cater to existing tourism market segments	Increased marketing from other destinations
Educate event managers regarding tourism facilities and processes	Decline in visitor numbers
'Piggy Back' smaller events with larger ore recognised events	
Leverage gained in collaborative marketing	
Create fringe activities to compliment sporting, business and community events	
Create and sell packages which include event tickets, transport and accommodation	
Build recognition of the region as an area to host events	
Attract traditional travellers to events in surrounding districts	
Development of businesses which support event activity in the area (such as carnival facilities, sound and lighting, event management, performance based activities, theming and props)	
Create partnerships with online event calendar businesses such as www.regionaleventslive.com.au	

Marketing mix

Product

Events throughout the region are generated by community groups, government organisations, schools, sports clubs, local government, social groups and committees, arts associations, enthusiasts and hobbyists, businesses and individuals.

The events industry is emerging within the Mid North Coast and many of the event managers mentioned above do not identify as being part of the events or tourism environment. To further grow the industry while maximising the impact of events in the tourism environment it is imperative that event managers gain an awareness of the capacity of their events. This will only come through networking, education and nurturing within the industry.

While events throughout the region identify with many different genres (sports, culture, community, business etc.) distinctions within the existing industry are more easily made by classifying events as community focused events and business focused events.

The main distinction being that community focused events are primarily about the community in which they are hosted, attention is paid to their capacity to build social capital, foster community spirit and to showcase local talent and culture. They are coordinated by volunteers with little to no formal events training and they operate on a small budget. Any revenue raised by events within this category is used to refund the event or is donated to charitable causes.

Events defined as having a Business focus most often have larger budgets, are operated by experienced and paid events staff, have a clear purpose, direction and knowledge of their contribution to the region and events sector. Revenue raised within this area is generally used for personal or organisational gain.

Impacts that further development of the events industry throughout the region may have on these two markets are discussed below.

Community focused events

The category of community focused events clearly serves to gain the most from a formal Events Association as it is this area that requires the most support and has the smallest amount of capital to acquire it.

Community events are operated by volunteers who participate in event development activities for numerous reasons. While the volunteers often have a wealth of life experience and work experience outside of the events industry they tend to have little to no formal training within events or tourism.

Greatly because of this lack of training, recognition of the benefits community focused events bring to a community are not measured.

This lack of training also becomes evident in marketing approach, the ability to address business planning, risk management and other legal issues as well as financial planning.

Much of this lack of experience is currently supported by Local Government which neither has the staff nor resources to adequately support these needs, particularly in smaller LGA's.

Lack of co-operation and collaboration between community focused events also brings about difficulties, particularly in the use of community resources, sponsorship and marketing.

Community based events can put a great strain on local business in terms of sponsorship requests. Collaboration between events could ease the sponsorship burden on a number of levels, firstly events could work together to identify target businesses rather than canvassing whole areas and secondly collaboration could increase the buying power of individual events who would as a result require less sponsorship revenue to operate.

In terms of marketing events tend to compete rather than collaborate. This is unproductive both in terms of overspending on marketing collateral and missed opportunities in the tourism market.

For an Events Association to succeed it would need to appeal the needs of participants in the events industry. Characteristics of people involved in community focused events are identified below:

- Many community event volunteers who engaged in the project were aged 55 plus. They are retirees (or early retirees) and volunteer primarily for social reasons. These people may be part of social or recreational groups (CWA, Lions, Rotary etc), they may support charitable causes or be part of support groups, they may also be members of interest groups (arts and cultural associations, hobbyists and enthusiasts). While this group do not have work commitments they often volunteer on a number of activities and tend to keep very busy in this manner.
- Volunteers are also mothers (and to a lesser extent fathers) aged 25-40 who organise school fetes and fundraising activities and sports activities. This group may also work full or part time and are busy tending to family requirements outside of volunteering.
- For younger event volunteers aged 35 and under volunteering may be perceived as a pathway to employment and a means of gaining work experience.
- A rapidly growing demographic in volunteering are those people forced through Federal Government Mutual Obligation requirements (aged 18-49). There is great potential for the events industry to harness this group of people who would benefit from work experience within the diverse industry. In the case of Work for the Dole participants funding can also contribute to and in effect sustain under-funded events activities. Evolve Network Australia has extensive experience in the coordination of Work for the Dole activities, particularly in the area of events.
- While projects such as those supported by Indent (Music NSW) work very well in engaging youth participation in events this age group are traditionally difficult to engage in the organisation of activities. Youth are more likely to be motivated by Council Youth Development Officers, Youth Workers and to a growing extent involvement in Church and other religious groups and their associated activities. There is potential to grow this area of volunteering.

While volunteers and their organisations cannot bear excessive fees for networking and educational opportunities, they are prepared to travel and pay for opportunities which meet their perceived needs. This was clearly illustrated in the Tiona experience where people travelled from throughout the Great Lakes and Hastings Region to pay for an educational experience as opposed to attending the free Event Network Project Forum the following day.

Supporting events at a community level is supporting the development of the events industry from grass roots level. Community events provide an accessible industry entry point which would otherwise be very difficult to attain in this industry.

Business focused events

Recognised by the Department of State and Regional Development as “one of the fastest



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growing sectors of the Australian Tourism Industry” (2005), Business Tourism is a growing part of the region’s event sector.

The business events market, involving conferences, meetings, workshops, forums and incentives is primarily serviced by small business owners, venue employees and local council staff.

The business events market is well serviced by the tourism industry, economic development and other private providers and is promoted both within and outside of the region.

Businesses involved in these events also have budgets to pay experienced marketing staff or are part of formal and informal networks which aid business development.

Working together business focused events and community focused events can bring about great change within the region’s events industry.

Community focused events provide a training ground for future events staff who are more likely to experience sustainable employment opportunities within the business events environment.

There are also great opportunities for other events to ‘piggyback’ these activities providing entertainment and experiences for both guests to the region and families who travel with conference delegates.

Price

While most of the events who participated in the research are free there are also events which are ticketed. Many events throughout the Mid North Coast are free for visitors and rely on funding and sponsorship to operate.

Events must undertake further action to both save money and make money which may involve retaining profits to reduce the burden placed on sponsors and local business.

On a social level this is very relevant to events such as annual agricultural shows which cost families large amounts of money to attend mainly because of the scores of external carnival operators who take money outside of the community. Events must be mindful of the capacity of their audiences. The heavy financial burden placed upon families at these events can discourage families to participate in other events throughout the year.

The development of carnival type activities and businesses within the region also has the potential to extend employment and small business opportunities and keep income within the region.

Opportunities exist for packaging event product with other tourism attractions and facilities.

Place

Events are scattered throughout the region and often transport is an issue in attracting visitors to attend. There are opportunities to connect visitors who fly to Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie with events in smaller areas such as Bellingen, Nambucca and Wauchope with more effective use of public and private transport systems. Again the concept of resource sharing is of great value in this case.

Promotion

Little is currently done to identify the areas of commonality for events throughout the region. These include geographic, target market, genre, type and timing. Successful identification of these areas can enhance levels of collaborative marketing offered.

Generally the message does not escape local surrounds. Publicity skills are often lacking as is the network required to generate publicity.

The production of marketing collateral which covers the regions events would aid this process. Marketing materials which coincide with the regions tourism plan could include:

- self-drive tours
- brochures / an events calendar which addresses the regions event needs rather than that of one area assisting the development of VIC's as 'one stop shops' for information

Vision

To create sustainable marketing collateral and procedures to promote Mid North Coast events throughout the region and beyond to attract new visitors and extend the experience of existing visitor segments.

Marketing objectives

The marketing plan encompasses three broad objectives which are to recognise and network the events industry, effective collaborative marketing and to attract new visitor segments to the area utilising events as attractions.

Marketing Strategies

1. improve event product throughout the region:

Without a regional overseeing body the events industry throughout the Mid North Coast is greatly fragmented. A Mid North Coast Events Association seeks to create linkages between tourism, community, local government, events businesses and event managers. Establish a formal Mid North Coast Events Association while improving the industry through training, research, increasing opportunities for resource sharing, cooperation and collaboration.

Strategies which meet this objective are:

- 1.1. Establish a formal Mid North Coast Events Association (MNCEA)
- 1.2. Create an online presence for MNCEA
- 1.3. To better understand and adhere to volunteer policies and procedures
- 1.4. Professional development opportunities for volunteers and paid events staff in terms of education and networking
- 1.5. Expand accessibility of information and training for event staff and volunteers
- 1.6. Encourage and enhance opportunities for collaboration and co-operation between events, tourism and local government
- 1.7. Conduct resource audit of the regions events industry
- 1.8. Work towards implementing consistency in templates required by event managers when working with local government – integrate promotion with tourism in this approach.
- 1.9. To undertake research regarding events throughout the region, their impact on tourism, economy, employment and community
- 1.10. To establish framework for event managers to gain access to research data

2. Effective collaborative event marketing:

Most events throughout the region are currently promoted by local government and event coordinators who often focus marketing activities within the host community. For events that do promote outside of the area the onus is often placed upon event volunteers who have no formal marketing training and limited contact networks. Effective media buys can also be hampered when advertising is purchased by singular events.

Collaborative marketing serves to save the events regions and ultimately LGA's advertising dollars as leverage is gained in group media purchasing. Events also stand to save in design and printing costs as well as costs incurred in direct marketing such as postage, database acquisition and e-promotional materials.

Working together the region has more scope to promote a consolidated product to its tourism markets.

Actions designated to undertake effective collaborative marketing are:

- 2.1. Create a comprehensive database of regional events

- 2.2. Develop and promote an events calendar which is easily accessed by event managers and is promoted throughout the region as a primary source of events information
 - 2.3. Establish links of commonality between events such as timing, genre, location
 - 2.4. Undertake an events marketing survey
 - 2.5. Develop generic marketing collateral and distribute throughout the region at VIC's.
 - 2.6. Development of regional events marketing database
 - 2.7. The establishment of 'street teams' to distribute marketing materials throughout the region
 - 2.8. Negotiate rates for regional media buy
- 3. Improve impacts of events on regional tourism:**
- 3.1. Assist event managers in planning dates for events to facilitate tourism flow throughout the year as well as providing opportunities for the creation of fringe events for larger sporting and corporate activities.
 - 3.2. Extend and create opportunities for smaller events to 'piggy back' larger events.
 - 3.3. Promote the Mid North Coast to business markets.
 - 3.4. Create channels for distribution of tourism data
 - 3.5. Establish funding opportunities to provide seed funding for development of new events to fit North Coast Tourism target markets
 - 3.6. Establish funding opportunities to improve marketing of existing events
 - 3.7. Package key and niche events
 - 3.8. Review regional tourism marketing plan to combine events where applicable

. Marketing tactics

Objective 1 Improve event product throughout the region

<u>Action</u>	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
1.1	Establish a formal Mid North Coast Events Association (MNCEA)	* Work with identified steering committee to determine framework for implementation * Determine and access funding requirements for successful implementation	Year 1	Time: 75 hours Resources: Administrative resources including telephone, stationery and postage approx \$300, Meeting venues and catering \$250	RTO, Arts Mid North Coast, Evolve Network Australia	* Steering committee is formed * Framework for Events Association is developed * Funding is secured
1.2	Create an online presence for MNCEA	* Create a website for MNCEA to host database, resources, event calendar, Association information * Maintain website	Year 1-3	Time: 50 hours development Resources required: Website development costs approx. \$5000 to establish then \$1000 per annum (unless continue to use freeware such as current site www.mncen.blogspot.com)	MNCEA	Website is online
1.3	To better understand and adhere to volunteer policies and procedures	* Establish links with Volunteering and employment services organisations to gain involvement of participants from this area. * Work with Volunteering Australia to ensure events address National Standards of Volunteering therefore enhancing the	Year 1:	Time: 60 hours Resources required: Administrative resources as part of the project	MNCEA	* Increased amount of volunteers within the events industry * Increased employment opportunities identified within the events industry * Increased amount of training opportunities available throughout the region * Increased amount of Work for the Dole projects which incorporate events activities thereby recognising the capacity of events as a means of developing identified skills shortages

<u>Action</u>	<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Actions (tactics)</u>	<u>Timing</u>	<u>Resources required</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes</u>
1.4	To create professional development opportunities for volunteers and paid events staff:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Consult in the development of community projects such as Work for the Dole * Facilitate mentoring and opportunities for work experience * Establish links between official volunteering organisations and events creating long term partnerships * Develop case studies and present online to encourage experience sharing between events 	Year 1-3	Time: 200 hours per annum Resources required: Administrative requirements, website (1.2), Cost of networking meetings (1.6)	MNCEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attendance at monthly networking meetings * Development of educational components of website (facilitated by Evolve Network Australia) * Schools incorporated to network and work experience commences
1.5	Expand accessibility of information and training for event staff and volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Lobby for increased educational opportunities in organisations such as TAFE and Adult Education * Provide tutorials at monthly networking meetings (1.4) * Provide information and tutorials at annual conference * Include educational component on MNCEN Website * Provide event industry pathway information in 	Year 1-3	Time: 200 hours per annum Resources required: Administrative requirements, website (1.2), Cost of networking meetings (1.6)		

Action	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
		schools throughout the region *Develop partnerships with TAFE and other Training organisations throughout the region				
1.6	Encourage and enhance opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between events, tourism and local government	* Coordinate and promote monthly networking meetings throughout the region * Create an online message board and facilitate online meetings to encourage its use * Provide an online database of the regions facilities * Facilitate mentoring and opportunities for work experience	Year 1-3	Time: 550 hours per annum Resources: \$9240 per annum (venue hire, tutorial, materials, catering)	MNCEA, LGA's, RTO	* Events promote utilisation of local services * Tourism more able to connect with events throughout community *Attendance at monthly networking meetings by representatives throughout the region
1.7	To conduct a resource audit of the regions events industry	* Create a survey and distribute throughout MNCEN database * Promote resource audit throughout media network * Collate information * Present information in database made available online	Year 1	Time: 100hours Resources required: Administrative resources and database application development \$1000		* Entities contribute to development of database * Database available online
1.8	Create consistency in templates required by event managers	* Create network of appropriate local government representatives * Present concept and obtain support where	Year 2-3	Time: 100 hours Resources required: Administrative resources		* LGA's support project * LGA's adopt new templates

	working with local government	possible * Obtain event application forms from each LGA * Combine information to create consistent templates including tourism information * Make new templates available online and throughout the region by each LGA				
Action	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
1.9	Undertake events research	* Identify research priorities * Identify potential partnerships to undertake research (TAFE, SCU) * Develop survey and distribute * Collate information	Year 1-3	Time: varied, approx 100 hours per annum Resources: Administrative resources	MNCEA, RTO, LGA's	* Research priorities are identified * Events industry research conducted * Research is available to industry
1.10	To establish framework for event managers to access research data	* Collate and enhance MNCEA database * Create MNCEA website or enhance existing site * Update information at interim periods * Publicise information	Year 1-3	Time: approx 50 hours per annum Resources:	MNCEA	

Objective 2 Effective collaborative event marketing

Actio	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
2.1	Create a comprehensive database of regional events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Develop a database (or amend existing database) to collate regional event information * Utilise existing MNCEN data, LGA event calendars and RTO event calendar and extend MNCEN research to create comprehensive database * Development of survey to send out to network annually 	Year 1-3	Time: 10 hours to collate information, 40 hours/year to update database Resources: Administrative resources	MNCEA	* at least 80% of events of all genres throughout the region are listed in database
2.2	Develop and promote an events calendar which is easily accessed by event managers and is promoted throughout the region as a primary source of events information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Feed events database (2.1) to create events calendar * Distribute events calendar throughout the region using: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * MNCEA database * RTO mechanisms * LGA's * The Internet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * create a 'one stop' internet site for regional event information * Include links to dedicated event website on all existing online tourism collateral 	Year 1-3	Time: 20 hours to create calendar, contribute to website concept development and identify online links. 30 hours per annum for updates Resources: Administrative resources, Web design (see action 1.3) – consider option of creating partnership with existing online events calendar	MNCEA, RTO, LGA's, Design contractor – possibly existing online events calendar	* A 'one-stop shop' is created for regional event information

Actio	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
2.3	Establish links of commonality between events	* analyse event database (2.1) to establish links based on: *timing *genre / theme *target audience *host community	Year 2-3	Time: 20 hours Resources required: Administrative resources	MNCEA	* Common event components are recognised * Potential connections between events are established
2.4	Undertake an events marketing survey	* Create a questionnaire to ascertain regions event industry support regarding collaborative marketing concepts including: Attitudes to sharing materials, joint media buys, sharing database information, promoting a regional image etc * Conduct additional qualitative research involving attitudes of LGA's, events industry and other key stakeholders to collaborative marketing concept	Year 2	Time: 450 hours Resources required: Administrative resources, meeting room hire, catering	MNCEA	* Questionnaires are developed, distributed and collated * Information is obtained regarding regions attitude to collaborative marketing * Database is gathered of supporting evens and industry
2.5	Develop generic marketing collateral and distribute throughout the region at VIC's.	* Develop concepts for generic marketing materials for event marketing including: *printed event calendar (what's on this month) *Event trails which incorporate built attractions of similar themes	Year 3	Time: 60 hours Resources required: Administrative resources, graphic design, printing budget \$10,000 annually	MNCEA, RTO, LGA's, contract graphic designer	* marketing materials are produced and made available in VIC's

Actio	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
2.6	Development of regional events marketing database	<p>* Other concepts identified in process of action 2.4</p> <p>* Collate media contacts throughout region including mainstream, niche and community media</p> <p>* Collate key community based contacts throughout region</p> <p>* Add additional key contacts including Chamber of Commerce, Event industry etc</p> <p>* Maintain accuracy of database</p>	Year 1-3	Time: 20 hours establishment, 20 hours per annum to update Resources required: administrative resources	MNCEA	Marketing database is collated and accurate
2.7	The establishment of 'street teams' to distribute marketing materials throughout the region	<p>* Utilise MNCEA database (2.1) to identify key distribution points throughout region</p> <p>* Advertise for street team throughout local media and MNCEA network (2.1)</p>	Year 3	Time: 10 hours initially, 20 hours per annum ongoing Resources: Administrative resources, Classified advertising \$200 per annum – potential sponsorship arrangement	MNCEA	Street team is developed throughout region

Actio	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
2.8	Negotiate rates for regional media buy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Utilise information from events marketing survey (2.4). Questions regarding actual and potential media spend and feelings towards joint purchasing (including potential logo acknowledgement requirements) * Identify key media groups throughout region (i.e. Rural Press) * Discuss joint buy concept * Research event industry support * Develop event marketing packages for events * Sell packages 	Year 2	Time: Year 1: 450 hours following years 150 hours Resources: Administrative resources	MNCEA / RTO	Media groups support concept Regional media packages are developed Events purchase media packages

Objective 3 Improve impacts of events on regional tourism

Action	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
3.1	Assist implementation of event timing to facilitate tourism flow throughout the year (as per Regional Tourism Plan Section 7.4.1 Action 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Promote access to one regional events calendar throughout the region * Utilise MNCEN database to distribute information related to tourism data 	Year 1-3	Time: 20 hours Resources required: Tourism data, database	MNCEN, RTO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Events are developed for low seasons * Tourism participation at events reduce clashing of events throughout the region and "spread of events throughout the year and in particular during low seasons" (ATS Group, 2004)
3.2	Extend and create opportunities for smaller events to 'piggy back' larger events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Utilise events database and links made to identify events with timing and geographic commonality. * Facilitate meetings between event organisers to negotiate event cooperation 	Year 2-3	Time: 100 hours per annum Resources required: Administrative resources, Meeting facilities approx \$200 per annum	MNCEN – seek support from LGA's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Events work together to produce more comprehensive programs
3.3	Promote MNC as a region to business markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Utilise resource audit (1.5) to identify key venues and industry businesses to participate in the development of the business events industry * Create marketing materials to promote the Mid North Coast region to business and trade markets * Coordinate marketing channels for distribution of information 	Year 3	Time: 450 hours per annum Resources required: administrative resources, marketing materials, promotional materials for trade shows, online development	MNCEN, RTO, LGA's, existing business events industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attract new business and trade events to the region * LGA's and business events industry work cooperatively and market collaboratively

Actio	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
3.4	Create channels for distribution of tourism data	* Distribute data to events database (2.1) * make events data available online at MNCEA website	Year 1-3	Time: 10 hours per annum Resources required: Administrative resources, database (2.1), MNCEA website	MNCEA, RTO	* Event managers access tourism data
3.5	Establish funding opportunities to: provide seed funding for development of new events to fit identified growing tourism markets	* Identify primary funding bodies concerned with supporting events * Identify potential corporate sponsors for events within and outside of the region * Establish framework for event criteria * Access pool of funding * Advertise and implement first round of funding	Year 2 Year 3	Time: 200hours per annum Resources required: administrative resources Time: 50hours per annum Resources: funding		* Organisations engage in supporting funding pool * Events apply for funding
3.6	Establish funding opportunities to improve marketing of existing events	As 3.6	As 3.6	As 3.6	As 3.6	As 3.6
3.7	Package key and niche events	* Review external ticketing and packaging models * Develop framework for model throughout MNC region * Implement pilot ticketing exercise which incorporates events / built attractions / transport, accommodation and	Year 3	Time: 500 hours initial research, ongoing time requirements unknown at this stage Resources required: administrative resources, (marketing materials required for pilot and rollout not included)	MNCEA, RTO, LGA's, Event Database	* Development of event packaging processes * Implementation of pilot package

		tickets to other tourist attractions * Amend framework and prepare to rollout packaging				
Action	Strategy	Actions (tactics)	Timing	Resources required	Responsibility	Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) i.e.: measurement indicators/ expected outcomes
3.8	Review regional tourism marketing plan to combine events where applicable	* MNCEA and RTO marketing manager integrate Regional event marketing plan with Regional tourism marketing plan	Year 1	Time: 50 hours Resources required: administrative resources	MNCEA, RTO	Develop marketing plan which integrates events to regional tourism marketing

Financial information

The primary sources of expenditure throughout the three year marketing plan (2007-2010) are:

- MNCEA operational costs
- Project costs (shown below)

Cost summary

While there is not enough information at this stage to produce a full and concise budget, estimated costs of operating the MNCEA and conducting its core activities follow:

Item	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Coordinator for core activities (3 days/week/48wks) including office facility	43000	43000	43000
Administration			
Stationery and postage	1000	1000	1000
Telephone	2400	2400	2400
Internet connection	600	600	600
Travel	2500	2500	2500
Networking meetings (12/year)			
Venue hire	1200	1200	1200
Catering	3000	3000	3000
Guest speaker (tutorial)	4800	4800	4800
Website			
Development and maintenance	5000*	1000*	1000*
Hosting	140	140	140
Marketing	Marketing budget tbc	Marketing budget tbc	Marketing budget tbc

* internet maintenance costs could be reduced via use of 'freeware' and creating online partnerships

Core activities Mid North Coast Events Association:

- Networking meetings
- Updating and maintenance of website
- Distribution of research and events opportunities
- Ongoing dialogue with event network (including LGA's, tourism, community, events workers)
- Ongoing building of events network
- Lobbying for events industry (e.g. increased opportunities for education)
- Promote and distribute events calendar
- Create, update and maintain events database
- Communicate with steering committee
- Source revenue for ongoing operation of organisation (beyond year 2010)
- Utilise leverage to negotiate cost saving for event managers within network (including public liability insurance, equipment hire, art supplies)
- Identify and maintain marketing channels for events
- Work towards implementing consistency throughout MNC region in event production (i.e. council application templates)
- Establish and grow industry partnerships

**** Mid North Coast Events Association Project costs**

- Establish Association, determine membership requirements, implement membership
- Creating opportunities for event packaging (Year 3)
- Negotiate rates for joint media buys (Year 2)
- Establish funding opportunities for events (Year 2-3)
- Develop marketing collateral for events (Year 3)
- Undertake various research projects:
 - Event marketing survey
 - Resource audit
- Develop an annual regional events conference

Associated costs will greatly depend on the reach and scope of the projects. These projects can be funded individually on a project to project basis. There is great scope for creating partnerships to undertake many of these projects, particularly research initiatives.

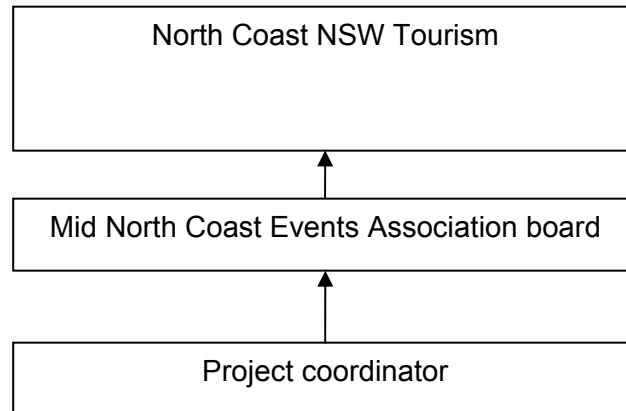
Revenue potential

1. Commission gained from media buys
2. Commission earned in selling event packages
3. Tourism membership sold to events (key events)
4. Auspice fee for unincorporated events (if MNCEA is an incorporated entity)
5. User-pays service for training, networking meetings
6. Event industry sponsorship
7. Event industry marketing fees at events such as monthly networking meetings (fee to host market stalls, distribute information)
8. Annual Mid North Coast events conference (stall holders, advertising)
9. Coordination and administrative fee for involvement in community events based projects such as Work for the Dole
10. Funding and sponsorship (including funding for research projects)

Monitor and control features

The MNC Events Association would compliment the objectives of Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) in the context of bringing together private sector tourism operators, local business leaders, tourism associations, and local government with particular emphasis on the regions events industry.

Organisational structure



Staff

The Association would be managed by a part time coordinator over an establishment period of three years. The coordinator would answer to a board who would provide interim reports to key stakeholders in the project.

Objectives of the proposed Mid North Coast Events Association

The primary objectives of the proposed Events Association would be:

- To provide professional development opportunities for volunteers and paid events staff.
- To promote awareness of the region's events resources within and outside of the region
- To encourage and enhance opportunities for collaboration and co-operation between events
- To improve and create new communication mechanisms between events and tourism organisations and businesses
- To improve existing and establish new marketing channels for events
- To establish sponsorship and funding opportunities throughout the region
- Increase the capacity of existing events thereby developing more events of regional significance

Appendices

Appendix one

Mid North Coast Event Network project summary

Project brief

The initial research component of the Mid North Coast Event Network project was funded by NSW Tourism, the Department of State and Regional Development and North Coast NSW Regional Tourism. The project is supported by Arts Mid North Coast and coordinated by Evolve Network Australia.

The five month research project aimed to identify ways in which the events industry throughout the region could be supported to “improve the viability of events and their contribution toward tourism growth by enhancing the skills of event managers with focus on the areas of marketing, resourcing, co-operation and collaboration.”

Reach and scope

The project addressed events throughout the Mid North Coast Region (Coffs Harbour – Port Stephens) of all size, nature and genre.

A network which incorporates local government, arts councils, existing events, events related businesses, venues and community groups throughout the region has been identified and contacted by the project coordinator to participate in the project.

Research activities

Over one hundred people throughout the region participated in some level of the project. Participants engaged via a number of research mechanisms:

- A questionnaire which was distributed widely throughout the region generated 65 responses
- Forums were held in Wauchope and Bellingen. A total of 40 guests attended the groups. At the Forums there was stronger representation from both sporting and business events than shown in the survey.
- Additional information was gathered from Creative Volunteering workshops throughout the Great Lakes region, via e-mail, an Online Forum and conversations with the project coordinator

Research analysis

The following questions were developed to support the project aims:

- What are the support needs of events throughout the region?
- Is there support in the development of a formal Mid North Coast Events Association? What might the function of a formal event network be?
- What is the level of understanding of tourism processes in events throughout the region?

These questions were addressed throughout the research project with the following results.

What are the support needs of events throughout the region?

Surveys and Forums indicated strong support needs in the marketing environment. This primarily included support in marketing services, distribution of media releases and listing in an events calendar. Forums indicated more functional needs such as networking, mentoring, resource sharing and education.

Many event managers indicated feelings of isolation and lack of support from local government. They were unsure of the existence of any support mechanisms.

Support for a formal Mid North Coast Events Association

Support throughout the region for the concept of an Events Association was strong. Of 65 surveys collected throughout the region 38% said yes, 15% said no and 53% indicated 'maybe to joining a formal Events Association on a fee for service basis. The concept of a formal Association was further supported by additional industry and local government representation at Forums.

The survey respondents were asked to indicate if the following benefits were considered valuable attributes in a potential Events Association. Respondents could choose any of the following benefits and collated results were:

- Listing in a calendar of events 91%
- Distribution of media releases 89%
- Marketing services 78%
- Resource sharing 69%
- Networking with other events staff 62%
- Newsletter 55%
- Online networking 40%
- Volunteer training 46%
- Online training 35%
- Mentoring 35%
- Discount card 22%

It should be noted that a major proportion of events surveyed were small community events (83% of surveys completed were by events that attracted less than 5,000 people) these events have little revenue to pay for an Events Association on a membership basis. While a user pays system may be applicable for networking and educational events it is highly unlikely that membership fees will be enough to sustain the development of a formal Association.

Understanding of tourism processes in events throughout the region

Many project participants identified gaps in linkages between tourism organisations and their events. Many indicated while they desired more involvement with tourism in the region they were confused about how they could be involved, or where to go. The topic of an events calendar was continually in focus throughout the project.

Appendix two

Existing Australian Event Network models

Festivals and Events Association

The Festivals and Events Association (FEA) is the peak body representing events throughout Australia. The model is supported on a membership basis. Membership costs vary between entity. In summary they are:

Contact:

Web: www.fea.org.au

Tel: 92120817

Costs:

Group memberships	Single membership	Student membership
\$60 once off joining fee	\$60 once off joining fee	no joining fee
12mths \$550	12mths \$180	12mths \$66
6mths \$310	6mths \$110	6mths \$40

Benefits:

Members are entitled to:

- Networking opportunities
- Access to the "Members Only" area of the FEA website allowing you to:
 - post your organisation's profile for inclusion in the "Industry Expert" area of the site
 - post details of your events
 - post details of the "positions available" or "positions wanted"
 - post news of your organisation
 - search for other FEA members
 - access FEA material reserved especially for members (such as presentations from seminars and industry news)
- Special Member rates to educational seminars
- Special Member rates to the FEA Annual National Conference
- Access to exclusive FEA member benefits offered by FEA partners

Contact:

It is recognised that for many of the events the MNC Event Network would represent existing FEA membership would be neither affordable nor greatly valuable in terms of satisfying the described benefits.

Further to initial contact with Jane Shea I spoke with Gillian Miles (Vice Chair) on a number of occasions regarding the possible inclusion of a 'regional arm' of the FEA. These conversations are ongoing as the FEA has recently applied for funding for the extension of online services which may facilitate this possibility.

Events Tasmania

The role of Events Tasmania is to “stimulate event growth in Tasmania across five key areas: the attraction & retention of events to the state, growth & development of events and the event industry by providing access to updated event research and information”.

Contact:

Web: www.events.tas.gov.au

Tel: (03) 62 335946

Funding:

Except for specific events and resources there are no costs for users. A major partnership initiative was established between Events Tasmania, the Commonwealth Government through the Regional Assistance Program of the Department of Transport and Regional Services, in July 2003 creating three full time Regional Event Co-coordinator positions.

Structure:



Events Tasmania recognises the contribution of all events throughout the state and nurtures strong links between business, community, and all government sectors.

In this regard the organisation works between attracting events to the state to supporting, funding and nurturing community based activities.

Information found on the Events Tasmania website states: “A key to the successful development of the Tasmanian events sector, is the sharing and combining of knowledge and resources to build the capacity and sustainability of the industry. A collaborative approach will broaden the perspective of events and create new understandings and opportunities for all parties. An important goal in the ten-year events plan has been the establishment of partnerships with each of the three regional bodies who share our interest in the events tourism sector. The partnerships have been developed with the Cradle Coast Authority, Northern Tasmanian Development, and Tasmania's South Regional Tourism Association.

The goals of the regional event partnerships are to:

- Improve the planning of events in the context of both a business and creative framework
- Develop a comprehensive coordinated state-wide ten-year events plan
- Develop the skills of event organisers and administrators

Link financial support to recommended events of regional and state significance”
(www.events.tas.gov.au)