

Event Management Strategy

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This document has been designed to assist Council, Sporting and Community Groups and other organisations in the running of public events within the Shire of Irwin.

The purpose of this Strategy is to maximise the probability of a successful event and minimise the risk of negative outcomes such as reputational harm, injury to persons or damage to property.

This Strategy aims to provide a clear framework for Council assistance and support to events that enables them to be better guided by the potential value and benefits that events provide to both the community and local economy. It also adheres to a guiding principle that realising Irwin's potential to be a vibrant, successful and sustainable events destination will involve the input, support and energy of all stakeholders.

The Shire of Irwin recognises there are significant community benefits in the staging of events. Anyone who organises an event, regardless of whether it is managed by an individual, volunteers or professional event staff, has a responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of those who may be affected by the event. It is also the responsibility of the event organiser to ensure he or she is aware of, and complies with all relevant legislation.

The Shire of Irwin plays a diversity of roles and functions related to the accommodation of and support for, events.

What is an Event?

Events create opportunities for people to connect with an area, spend time together, celebrate and experience the diversity of cultures and foster creativity and innovation. They allow a community to come alive and provide an opportunity for a destination to showcase its tourism experience and increase economic activity. Events contribute significantly to community building, lifestyle and leisure enhancement, cultural development, tourism promotion and increased visitation, volunteer participation, fundraising and economic development.

For the purpose of this Strategy the view is taken that an '**event**' is a single themed activity designed to attract public audience or participation. A '**festival**' is a group of activities related by theme, time span or other common factors united under a single entity.

Most importantly, events create a sense of fun and vibrancy, resulting in a strong sense of community connectivity, pride and a sense of place.



Context

Shire events come in all shapes and sizes. Understanding the value and worth of different types of events is a critical step in developing strategies for growth and development. To effectively focus direction it is helpful therefore to look at the various event types and their worth on a local stage, as well as to analyse the current strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of events in the Shire.

Council's continued support and commitment for events is reflected in the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012 -2022, Tourism Development Plan 2013 – 2018 and the Community Development Plan 2014 – 2019.

Historically events in the Shire have grown from passionate members of the community. This evolution is a double-edged sword, providing an authentic local character and grass roots sustainability but often lacking a commercial approach and strategic focus. Currently there is limited strategic intent for events development as well as a lack of clarity regarding the types of events Council wants to encourage, support, develop and attract within our Shire.

In broad terms there are 3 main categories of Shire involvement:

- **Managed** events are coordinated and funded entirely through Shire resources;
- **Supported** events are usually organised by community groups and involve a degree of financial, operational, venue or other in-kind support from the Shire;
- **Hosted** events are where the Shire 'hosts' an event and provides a negotiated level of support and/or involvement of Shire resources.

Festivals and events are key cultural development tools that bring locals out into their communities. They can provide cultural enrichment and a broader social outlook through interaction with other people, ideas and cultures. They present opportunities to enhance awareness of cultural heritage and the conservation of the natural environment. Events are also important for capacity building within the community, offering fundraising opportunities for local groups and organisations and the chance to improve the skills base through volunteer work.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder consultation forms a key part of this strategy. The diversity and range of events points to there being many individuals and groups who either have an interest in, or are affected by, events in the Shire and therefore who have a role to play.



Why an Events Management Strategy

Events are widely acknowledged as presenting opportunities as a strong economic and tourism generator as well as bringing a range of community and social benefits to their host destination.

Events within our Shire are important as not only do they attract local residents but visitors from surrounding towns, events also promote Dongara and Port Denison and are potential windfalls for all local businesses.

The Shire is also fortunate to have a supportive Council who are committed to developing this growing sector and a community willing to give their time and energy to coordinating local events.

The major drivers of this strategy are the cultural, social and environmental benefits of community events. A clear vision is needed to provide direction to activity in the future, hence the development of an Events Management Strategy for Irwin. In developing this Strategy our objectives are to:

- Gain a sound understanding of existing events and venues;
- Achieve clarity regarding the role and responsibilities of the Shire of Irwin in managing, supporting and hosting events;
- Develop a sustainable, outcome focused events programme which maximises the potential of our involvement in events;
- Incorporate the cultural, lifestyle and environmental factors unique to the Shire into the events programme;
- Pursue campaign which support events and which contribute to overall destination marketing;

What is Community?

A strong, connected community is something all localities strive to achieve. This may involve a community which has strong networks, shares common goals and values, is supportive of cultural expression and diversity, cares for its people and provides opportunities for residents to be involved in decisions which affect their lives.

The term community is broadly used to define groups of people, whether they be stakeholders, interest groups or loosely connected individuals with a joint interest. There are three main types of communities, including:

- Community of place: a group of people connected by a region or location.
- Community of interest: a group of people connected by a shared interest.
- Community of affiliation: a group of people connected by an affiliated profession or connected through family and friends.

Within the Shire of Irwin there are many types of communities, including residential communities, sporting clubs, online communities and communities of interest. As a result, there is a complex web of communities located within our Shire, all having their own communication networks and affiliations. This has been recognised when planning and developing the Events Management Strategy.



Events Committee

The Shire of Irwin Events Committee (Events Committee) was created with the purpose to plan, develop and administer community, recreational, and cultural events for the Shire of Irwin within budgetary guidelines approved annually by council and to provide advice to Council on short term issues and long term planning related to these events.

The Events Committee strives to stimulate and encourage events that meet the needs of the community and offer the best opportunity to provide economic benefits and potential to market Dongara and Port Denison outside the Shire.

Functions and Responsibilities of the Committee

The Events Committee is to:

- Advise Council on recommendations for Council Expenditure prior to the annual budget cycle;
- Fund or co-fund any capital and maintenance improvements, within agreed budgets and delegations of staff;
- Develop and attract new events;
- Seek partnerships to develop new events;
- Provide advice when required regarding Council's major events;
- Ensure events meet the requirements of the Shire of Irwin *Event Application Package*; and
- Evaluate events at their completion and make recommendations to Council if required.

Key Observations

The Shire has a major and critical role in the successful staging and promotion of both community and tourism events encompassing the functions of Community Services, Environmental Health, Planning and Infrastructure, Recreation and Tourism Services. The task of having all of these services coordinated in their approach to specific events and the event operators should not be left to chance and will be addressed with the development of the **Event Application Package**.

Events are an area of great potential but come at a cost to the Shire and it is recommended that decisions need to be made on the priority of events for support with both resources being cash or in-kind.

If the Shire and its event partners can promote events and festivals effectively then economic benefits will start to emerge. With the development of this Events Management Strategy it will provide an Action Plan for the future for key areas.



Goals

Realising Irwin's potential to be a vibrant, successful and sustainable events destination will involve the input, support and energy of all stakeholders.

Goal 1 Support Local Event Organisers	Goal 2: Develop and Promote Events	Goal 3: Grow the Shire as a Premier Event Destination
Process Develop Processes to support the Shire's involvement in events	Events Calendar Enhance and promote the Shire's event calendar	Major Events Develop partnerships and processes to support the retention and attraction of major events
Resources Develop resources to support the delivery of local events	Destination Marketing Develop and position Irwin as a destination of choice for events, tourism and investment.	Key Markets Investigate opportunities for key event markets
Training Advocate professionalism and excellence through skills development of event organisers	Economic Impact Raise awareness of the volume and value of events across both internal and external audiences	Investment Proactively influence and attract potential investment to the Shire



A Strategy for Action

Objective	Action	Key Indicator	Start	Finish
Goal 1: Support Local Event Organisers				
Process Develop improved processes to support the Shire's involvement in events	Development of a step-by-step guide that assists organisers with applying for Shire support and funding	Guide developed and distributed to organisers, stakeholders and community and sporting groups	April 2013	Completed
	Adopt a consistent application process that guides the Shire's decision making in providing support to internal and external event/organisers	All applications received are evaluated using the agreed process		
	Development of a policy and approvals checklist to ensure that events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet criteria/outcomes; • Have adequate planning and reporting capabilities 	Policy and checklists developed, endorsed and implemented	August 2015	December 2015
	Promote Community Assistance Scheme rounds linked to the Shire's budget process	Volume and quality of applications received	April 2013	Ongoing
	Develop a measurable evaluation and feedback framework to ensure accountability and value for money	Provide information on events in the Information Bulletin		



Objective	Action	Key Indicator	Start	Finish
Resources Develop resources to support the delivery of local events	Audit, develop and maintain a register of venues and facilities within the Shire	Register of all potential event venues	August 2015	December 2015
Training Advocate professionalism and excellence through skills development of event organisers	Develop training opportunities for event organisers including advice and workshops on topics such as event planning, risk management, funding	Training Hours Feedback/Evaluation of satisfaction levels	December 2015	Ongoing
	Develop opportunities to encourage information sharing, communication and networking for the events and tourism industries	Brilliant Blend Bulletin Community Sign, Information Bulletin, Facebook and Local Rag		Ongoing
Goal 2: Develop and Promote Events				
Events Calendar Enhance and promote the Shire's events calendar	Review the current programme to identify opportunities and address gaps	Review Completed	September 2015	December 2015
	Further develop the concept of an event calendar based around 'festival' themes	Event calendar concept refined and implemented	January 2016	June 2016
	Identify funding and sponsorship opportunities for Shire events	Conversion of funding and sponsorship opportunities	April 2013	Ongoing
	Develop and implement a communications plan for the events calendar	Communications plan implemented and evaluated	April 2016	June 2016
	Ensure the Shire's events web pages and use of social media are key promotional tools for both residents and visitors	Website evaluation data and measurable impacts of social media		Ongoing



Objective	Action	Key Indicator	Start	Finish
Destination Marketing Enhance and promote the Shire's events calendar	Include Events in Tourism Marketing Plan	Branding identity agreed and strategy developed	February 2014	December 2015
	Develop a template under the Explore Rest Play brand focusing on the Play Dongara Port Denison for events	Template developed and used	August 2015	October 2015
	Consistently align all events and/ where relevant, Shire promotions with agreed branding and messages to reinforce Irwin's positioning as a destination of choice	Consistent use of agreed branding	August 2015	Ongoing
	Encourage event organisers, tourism providers, community groups and local businesses to use the destination branding in their own promotional activity eg. Through social media Events receiving Shire funding will be expected to use agreed branding	Level of support branding by external agencies	April 2013	Ongoing
Economic Impact Raise awareness of the volume and value of events across both internal and external audiences	Collate economic impact data for events and incorporate into relevant communications and activities	Annual collation of data and evaluation of trend information	June 2016	Ongoing
	Develop targeted communications and workshops for a range of internal audiences – Staff and Council	Communications plan implemented and evaluated	July 2016	December 2016
	Develop targeted communications for a range of external audiences – broader community, local business and visitors	Increased levels of support for Shire expenditure on events in Communities Perception Survey	April 2016	Ongoing



Objective	Action	Key Indicator	Start	Finish
Goal 3: Grow the Shire as a Premier Event Destination				
Major Events Develop partnerships and processes to support the retention and attraction of major events	Create an Event Application Package for organisers	Number of enquiries generated	August 2015	December 2015
	Proactively encourage partnerships with event organisers, media and other event support providers	Direct and indirect value of partnership activity	August 2015	Ongoing
	Develop a policy to manage event sponsorship and partnerships	Policy developed, endorsed and implemented	October 2015	December 2015
Key Markets Investigate opportunities for key event markets	Explore opportunities for hosting business and corporate events using Shire venues	Number of enquiries generated	August 2015	Ongoing
	Explore opportunities to link in with other neighbouring towns to create a Midwest event	Number of opportunities identified	August 2015	Ongoing
Investment Proactively influence and attract potential investment to the Shire	Identify other products, support services and infrastructure requirements and pursue identified investment opportunities	Number of opportunities identified	August 2015	Ongoing



Strategic Direction

Council's continued support and commitment for events is reflected in the Shire of Irwin Strategic Community Plan 2012 -2022, Tourism Development Plan 2013 – 2018 and the Community Development Plan 2014 – 2019.

Strategic Community Plan 2012 – 2022	
Outcome	Action
1.3.1	Develop and implement a Tourism Development and Promotion Strategy.
1.3.2	Partner and work with local businesses, state government agencies and other regional tourism organisations.
1.4.1	Develop and implement a Community and Economic Development Plan.
3.65	Continue to support and fund community events such as Larry Lobster Community Festival, Australia Day Celebrations, Kite Stock, Easter Saturday Races and others.
4.1.2	Implement and regularly review the Community Engagement Policy.
4.1.3	Continue to monitor and update communication strategies, including social media.
Tourism Development Plan 2013 – 2018	
Outcome	Action
3.1	Facilitate planning meeting with local event organisers/clubs to complete an audit and identify opportunities and challenges
3.2	Meet with Kitestock organisers and Race club to explore opportunities for growth and media exposure for their events.
3.3	Initiate liaison with Eventscorp and MWDC to identify event and funding opportunities
3.4	Develop Shire event criteria and processes
3.5	Investigate work on drive in film festival, South Beach sports and sand sculpting, Indian Ocean Drive or agreed priority events
3.6	Host annual event training workshop
Community Development Plan 2014 – 2019	
Outcome	Action
3.1	A vibrant community events calendar which celebrates the Shire of Irwin lifestyle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an Events Management Strategy; • Develop an event festival (series of events) which attracts visitors to town; • Attract funding for large events; • Develop an annual calendar of events publication; • Establish an Events Committee;
3.2	Local community groups have an active role in running community events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage local groups to apply for funding through Community Assistance Scheme for local events; • Provide training on event management for community groups; • Provide in-kind support for community groups to provide community events.



Classification of Events

Events provide a range of benefits to the local community and its visitors. The extent to which the benefits are realised will depend upon the type of event. Understanding the value of different types of events is therefore critical in developing strategies for growth and development of the events community.

Defining Features	Benefits	Shire Role(s)	Example
Managed Events – are coordinated and funded entirely through Shire resources			
Part of the Shire's commitment to the community as a civic body, often in response to dates of national significance for which the target audience is almost solely local residents	Community Spirit Community Entertainment	Organisation Funding Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia Day • Thank a Volunteer Day • Citizenship Cermonies • Senior Week • Youth Week • NAIDOC Week
Supported Events – usually organised by community groups and involve a degree of financial, operational, venue or other in-kind support from the Shire			
Primarily relevant to local residents but can attract visitors, often has a niche theme or specific geographical area focus	Community capacity building – local relevance or 'ownership' Entertainment Social and cultural benefits	Funding (part/none) Promotion (optional) In-kind assistance	Anzac Day Larry Lobster Festival Hanging of the Quilts Easter Races Monthly Markets
Hosted Events – are where the Shire 'hosts' an event and provides a negotiated level of support and/or involvement of Shire Resources.			
May take place over multiple days and be the headline event	Generate revenue for the local economy Some tourist visitation	In-kind assistance Negotiated level of support Funding (optional)	Kitestock

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