

GO6 – Tourism Promotion in Wollondilly

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267933

TRIM 1457

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents options for advancing the delivery of Tourism Promotion and recommends that Council agree in principle to the proposed decentralisation of the provision of visitor information services subject to further consideration of this option in the forthcoming budget estimates.

REPORT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

As identified in the Economic Development Strategy – The Tourism industry in Wollondilly if further expanded and developed holds the outstanding potential to contribute to the Economic Development of the Wollondilly Shire.

Current forecasts and modelling indicate that with the right products, brand, and marketing strategy, it is possible to increase the total value added to the local economy by tourism and hospitality significantly over the next three years.

To assist in facilitating sustained tourism growth, it is important that we periodically review and adjust our approach. An opportunity now exists to adjust our approach and improve outcomes. **(See Attachment 1)**

It is requested that Council consider options related to the delivery of Tourism Promotion within the Shire to contribute towards the delivery of the Economic Development Strategy goals.

Options include:

- 1) The Picton Old Post Office
- 2) Resourcing of Tourism Promotion Activities
- 3) A new approach to Delivery of Tourism Promotion.

1.2 OPTIONS

1) The Picton Old Post Office

The Picton Storm event of 2016 forced the closure of the Council owned asset – ‘The Picton Old Post Office’ and the relocation of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) to the main Council building.

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The VIC operations at The Old Post Office is also generally constrained due to some weaknesses and requires significant renovations.

As the Old Post Office is being repaired there has been strong interest from Private operators in utilising the building for commercial purposes that would contribute to the employment and general amenity of Main Street Picton.

2) A New Approach to Delivery of Tourism Promotion

With Visitor numbers to VIC's declining throughout the Country, the operating environment in which Visitor Information Centres operate has changed dramatically. Some VIC's throughout the state are closing, transitioning to technology and online platforms or investing heavily in creating modern and large VIC centres.

Due to the change in circumstances as a result of the Storm Event in Picton, it is no longer recommended the continuation of the VIC at the Old Post Office be considered as the preferred option of use for the asset; and that other options for the delivery of VIC services be pursued.

In order to achieve the identified growth in Tourism it is proposed that Wollondilly's approach to Tourism be transformed by:

- Decentralising the Visitor Information Centre
 - Discontinuing VIC operations at the Old Post Office.
 - Utilisation of an appropriate location as a drop in point for collection of brochures, materials and use of a computer to access online information.
 - Expand the number of Level 3 VIC's (Store Owner/Shop Front) Strategic locations that allow for greater contact points throughout the Shire.
- The tasks and responsibilities of our traditional 'Visitor Information Centre' role be transformed to focus on activities (**See Attachment 2: Identified programs and Potential Actions**) that allow staff to be mobile and proactively pursue Tourism Marketing campaigns and promotions focused on:
 - Destination Development – encourage the development of product and infrastructure
 - Destination Management – enhance the quality of the visitor experience
 - Destination Marketing – strengthen partnerships to maximise product development and visitor potential.
- Please Note: The AVIC Network (the organisation that licences the use of the 'i' and Visitor Information Centres) has been consulted but have not confirmed whether they support or do not support the proposed decentralisation.

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3) Additional Resources Required

As referenced in the Economic Development Strategy, increased resources in the Annual Tourism Marketing Budget are required to allow for dedication to the advancement of Tourism in the Shire.

To deliver the ambitious goal for Tourism Delivery in the Shire it has been calculated that the following indicative additional resources may be required:

	Current Budget	Required Budget
Staffing Adjustment: (One Full Time – Tourism Marketing Officer and Part Time Campaign assistant)	\$130,000	\$145,177
VIC administration costs and materials	\$8,750	\$5,000
Advertising	\$5,000	\$20,000
Sponsorships/ Seed funding	\$0	\$10,000
Promotional Campaigns	\$0	\$20,000
Special Projects	\$0	\$20,000
Technology (VIC)	\$0	\$10,000
Total Budget	\$143,750	\$220,177

In perspective, the requested budget is conservative in comparison to neighbouring LGA's which spend considerably more on Tourism promotional activities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To be further considered in the forthcoming budget estimates.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED IN A SEPARATE BOOKLET

1. Tourism Snapshot
2. Identified Programs and Potential Actions
3. Visitor Information Centre Review (2016)

RECOMMENDATION

That Council agree in principle to the proposed decentralisation of the provision of visitor information services subject to further consideration of this option in the forthcoming budget estimates.