

Events Action Plan

2025 – 2035



Bangalow Billycart Derby



BYRON
SHIRE
COUNCIL



Jingi Walla – Welcome

Acknowledgment of Country

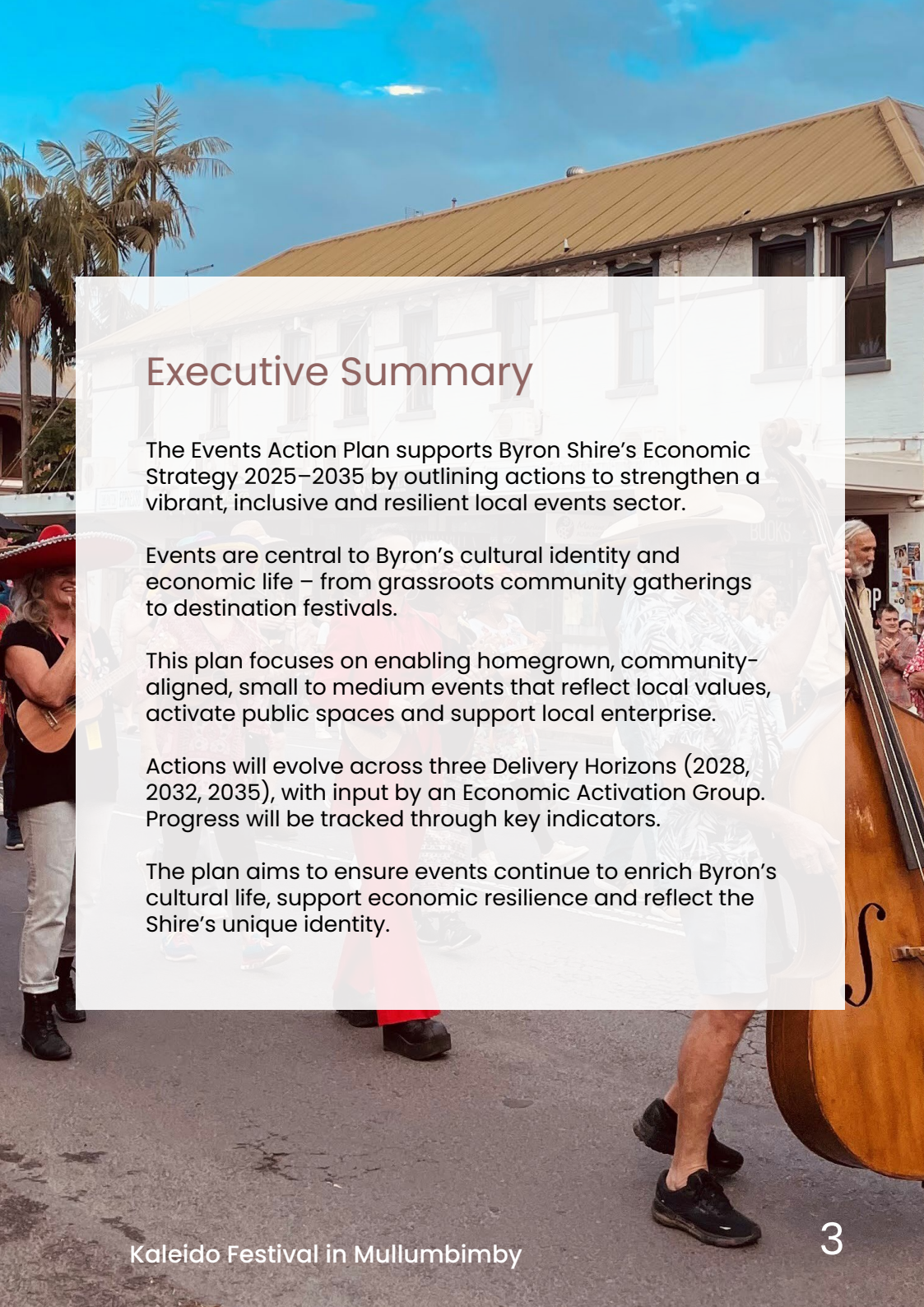
Byron Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Aboriginal Custodians and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and country.

We recognise and respect the Bundjalung of Byron Bay – Arakwal and the Widjabul Wia-bal Peoples native title rights and interests within the Shire.

Byron Shire Council also acknowledges the Tweed Byron, Jali and Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Councils under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act NSW 1983.

Contents

Acknowledgment	2
Contents	3
Executive Summary	3
Context	4
Economic Snapshot	5
SWOT	6
Our Response	7
Council’s Economic Development Roles	7
Targeting Small to Medium Events and Festivals	8
Priorities	9
Implementation	10
Monitoring and Review	14
Sources and Endnotes	15
Document Tracking	15



Executive Summary

The Events Action Plan supports Byron Shire’s Economic Strategy 2025–2035 by outlining actions to strengthen a vibrant, inclusive and resilient local events sector.

Events are central to Byron’s cultural identity and economic life – from grassroots community gatherings to destination festivals.

This plan focuses on enabling homegrown, community-aligned, small to medium events that reflect local values, activate public spaces and support local enterprise.

Actions will evolve across three Delivery Horizons (2028, 2032, 2035), with input by an Economic Activation Group. Progress will be tracked through key indicators.

The plan aims to ensure events continue to enrich Byron’s cultural life, support economic resilience and reflect the Shire’s unique identity.

Context

Byron Shire has long been a place of gathering. For thousands of years, it has been a site of ceremonial gatherings, cultural exchange, and storytelling – first for Bundjalung people, and continued through festivals, markets and community events.

Events and activations are woven into the cultural and economic fabric of the region. From iconic music festivals to grassroots community gatherings, these experiences reflect Byron's unique identity and contribute to its vibrancy, social cohesion, and local enterprise. Events in Byron are more than entertainment – they are expressions of inclusion, creativity, and care for Country.

The Shire is home and host to a diverse mix of event types, including local homegrown community events, destination events, business and industry gatherings, and cultural festivals. These events offer opportunities to showcase local talent, foster community pride and attract visitors in ways that support local business and activate public spaces.

The sector, however, faces growing challenges including rising costs, limited infrastructure, regulatory complexity, and volunteer fatigue. Accessibility and inclusion remain essential to ensuring all members of the community can participate and benefit.

Byron Shire is also a popular regional destination for weddings and filming – both of which contribute significantly to the local economy and creative identity.

While large and major festivals are less frequent, they are well-known globally and remain part of the region's event landscape. When these, or events of any size, align with community values, they can deliver significant cultural and economic benefits, including opportunities to disperse visitation and support enterprise across the Shire. However, they also face growing challenges – rising insurance and operational costs, climate-related risks and shifting audience behaviours.

State and federal governments play a key role in shaping the broader policy and funding environment for events, including through initiatives such as the National Cultural Policy: Revive as well as the NSW Government's Vibrancy Reforms which brought about fast industry changes including with Special Entertainment Precincts. These frameworks support a more inclusive, creative and resilient events sector – principles that underpin Byron Shire's approach.

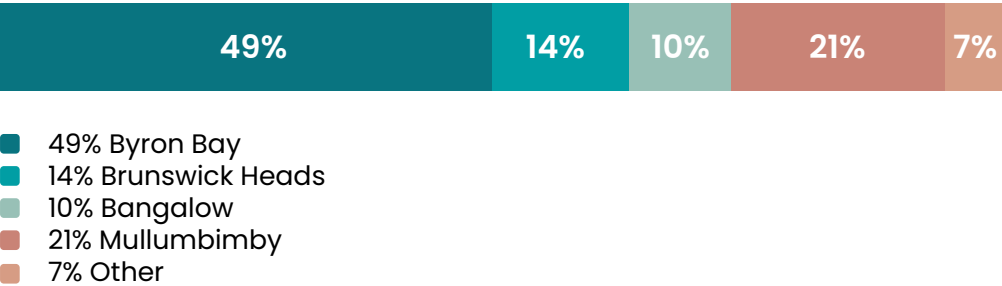
This economic focus area for action focuses on enabling small to medium events and local activations that are inclusive, resilient and community-aligned – supporting homegrown creativity, strengthening local enterprise and ensuring events contribute meaningfully to Byron Shire's cultural life and economic resilience.

Economic Snapshot

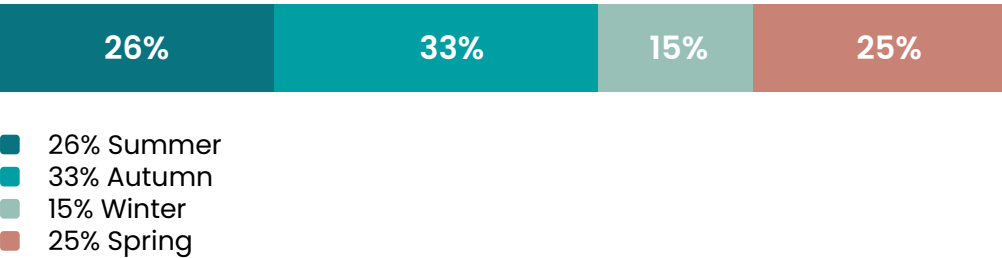
Data supports an economic baseline for Financial Year 2024.

- **220k+** Annual Attendance¹
- **\$197.3m** Visitor Expenditure²
- **155,175** Visitors²
- **212, 589** Visitor Nights²
- **96,208** Daytrip Visitors²
- **799** Jobs Supported⁴

Share of Events Across the Shire¹



Seasonal Split of Events¹



90% of events are Homegrown, meaning they are organised by locals.
Most events are organised and run by volunteers.

Attendance¹

Event Size	#	%
Micro events	1,755	1%
Small events	19,300	9%
Medium events	51,623	23%
Large events	18,000	8%
Major events	122,000	55%

Number of Events¹

Event Size	#	%
Micro	16	22%
Small	32	44%
Medium	17	24%
Large	3	4%
Major	4	6%

SWOT

Based on the research and engagement conducted for this project, the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) have been identified.

Strengths

- Strong community support for homegrown events that reflect local identity and values.
- Rich cultural heritage and creative talent base.
- High levels of community participation and volunteerism.
- Significant contribution to the visitor economy and local businesses.
- Established calendar of diverse events across towns and villages.
- Council commitment to social, environmental, and economic outcomes.
- Alignment with strategies supporting inclusion, sustainability and creativity.
- Strong regional identity attracting visitors and event organisers seeking values-aligned destinations.

Weaknesses

- Complex, resource-intensive and fragmented event approval processes with multiple pathways depending on land zoning.
- Limited fit-for-purpose accessible and weather resilient event infrastructure.
- Inadequate parking and transport options during peak periods.
- Volunteer fatigue and limited delivery capacity in smaller communities.
- Inconsistent access to sustainable event equipment and resources.
- Gaps in data collection and post-event evaluation.
- Varying accessibility and inclusion practices.
- Limited coordination and visibility of a busy events sector in the Shire.
- Comparatively low Council funding pool for events and activations.

Opportunities

- Strengthen support for homegrown events through mentoring, funding and shared resources.
- Expand inclusive and accessible infrastructure and practices.
- Activate underutilised venues and public spaces.
- Foster collaboration and cross-promotion with tourism and creative industries.
- Position Byron as a leader in values-aligned event delivery.
- Leverage events to support the night-time economy and local businesses.
- Bundle events with local experiences to increase visitor yield and dispersal.
- Align with the unique character of each village or locality, guided by Place Plans.
- Increase Council collaboration in producing or co-delivering activations.
- Facilitate industry networking and knowledge-sharing.
- Grow business events to boost low impact, high yield visitation in off peak periods.

Threats

- Rising costs, insurance premiums and climate-related risks.
- Infrastructure strain from large and major events.
- Loss of local character or community support if events seem misaligned with local values.
- Competition from regions with more streamlined support or better infrastructure.
- Not meeting sector needs without additional funding.
- Regulatory complexity and planning constraints.
- Organiser burnout without long-term support or succession planning.
- Loss of local events and talent to other regions with higher funding and streamlined support, impacting Byron's unique cultural identity and economic return.



For example lists, see the Byron Shire Economic Strategy 2025-2035.

Our Response

This Action Plan reflects the Economic Strategy's commitment to a targeted, integrated and collaborative approach. It identifies priority actions for the events sector in Byron Shire, guided by the strategy's overarching economic Vision, Objectives and Principles. These actions are designed to align with and complement, not duplicate, existing initiatives across Council and beyond.

Council's action will evolve across three Delivery Horizons: from strengthening to scaling and ultimately enabling long-term transformation of Council's enabling role and as outcomes for the local economy.

Implementation will be staged and adaptive, with actions delivered through a suite of evolving activities. These will be designed to be ready to benefit from funding opportunities, collaboration and a variety of roles of Council.

Action Plans for each economic focus area complement and overlap. This integrated approach means that the Byron Shire Economic Strategy 2025-2035 should be read alongside its supporting Action Plans for a full picture of activity.

Council's Economic Development Roles



Advocate: Champion local needs to attract funding and policy support.



Promote: Share Byron's story and celebrate local success.



Support: Back local initiatives with funding, advice or resources.



Collaborate: Work with partners to deliver shared outcomes.



Facilitate: Bring people together and support collaboration.



Model: Demonstrate and pilot best practice as a local business.



Deliver: Provide services, infrastructure and programs.



Plan: Provide a clear, enabling planning and regulatory framework.

Targeting Small to Medium Events and Festivals

Action emphasis is on small to medium events that are inclusive, resilient and community-aligned events and which deliver positive social, environmental and economic outcomes for Byron Shire.

Event Types

- **Homegrown Community:** : These events are locally owned and add to the culture and liveability of the Byron Shire and have a focus on community engagement and enrichment. They include emerging and established events.
- **Homegrown Destination:** These events are locally owned and managed and bring to life the essence of Byron Shire. They connect community and generate pride; as well as attract visitors and their spend in the community. They include emerging and established events.
- **External:** Events that are owned and managed by an external event company but still aligned to the values and local community identity. They ideally are held in shoulder or low season with the objective of attracting overnight visitation.
- **Business:** These events are aligned to the industries within Byron Shire. They are typically high yield and hosted in private venues and are ideal to fill gaps in the calendar, particularly mid-week. They provide an important opportunity to showcase local industries and talent.

While weddings and filming are acknowledged as an important part of the broader event landscape, they are not included in this economic focus area for action.

Event Sizes

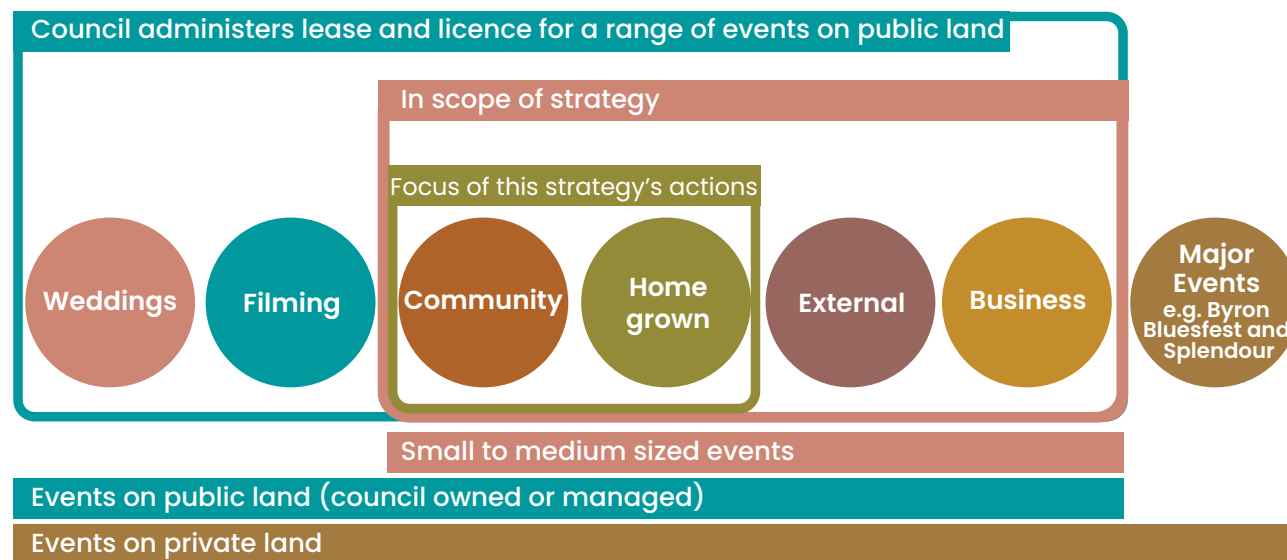
For the purposes of this economic focus area for action, event sizes are defined as:

- **Micro:** Fewer than 200 attendees (e.g. pop-ups, workshops, small activations)
- **Small:** 200 to 1,499 attendees (e.g. community festivals, markets)

- **Medium:** 1,500 to 5,000 attendees (e.g. regional or destination events)
- **Large:** 5,000 – 14,999 attendees (e.g. touring or ticketed events)
- **Major:** 15,000+ attendees (e.g. multi-day festivals, national events)

Event Locations

Events held on both public and private land across the Shire.



Priorities

The following provides examples of what strategic actions looks like. They were informed by the Economic Activation Group and will be refined through their ongoing input.

Event Funding: Advocate and apply to government and industry for increased funding and sponsorship opportunities for local events and activations while enabling organisers to be investment ready. This aims to help strengthen the sector's capacity, support diverse and inclusive programming and ensure events continue to deliver cultural, social and economic benefits across the Shire.

Support Aboriginal-led events: Act on cultural protocols and promote Aboriginal-led event enterprises. Engage with Aboriginal stakeholders to support long-term self-determination and support embedding cultural leadership in the events landscape.

Improve event applications systems: CContinuously improve the event application process to enhance include an accessibility and inclusivity planning, and improve organiser support services. This will help ensure events are designed to welcome people of all abilities, backgrounds and ages, supporting broader participation and community benefit.

Improve capacity to host increased business events: Work with regional partners, local organisers, accommodation providers, hospitality venues, theatres and community halls to build knowledge and hosting capability. This will support greater collaboration, enable dispersed event models and help capture local and regional economic benefit.

Promote low-impact and circular event practices: Encourage sustainable event delivery by promoting zero-waste packages from local suppliers and showcasing events that support circular economy outcomes. Council will also build capacity to meet Council policies and investigate shared infrastructure options to reduce costs and environmental impact for organisers.

Strengthen collaboration across the event sector: Facilitate networking and collaboration between event organisers, volunteers and local businesses. This will help build sector capacity, share resources and foster a more resilient and connected events community across the Shire.

Activate underutilised spaces and precincts: Partner with local groups to deliver precinct-based activations and pilot pop-up events in parks, laneways and other underused spaces. These initiatives will support creative expression, local enterprise, visitor dispersal and community connection in diverse locations.

Launch an annual Events Insights Snapshot to share trends: Share an annual Events Insights Snapshot to highlight trends, outcomes and learnings across the Byron Shire events sector. This will support evidence based planning, transparency and continuous improvement for organisers, partners and Council.

Implementation

Implementation of the strategic actions will evolve across the Delivery Horizons, with activities staged over time to reflect available resources, emerging opportunities and community priorities. A new Business as Usual (BAU) will be implemented alongside a suite of identified change making projects. Some activities will overlap across actions and economic focus areas, reflecting the Economic Strategy's integrated approach and the interconnected nature of Byron Shire's economy.

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
A. Identity Driven	1. Strengthen homegrown events and local identity	1.1	Review and update the Events Guide as a digital resource for organisers.	Deliver, Support	1					✓
		1.2	Grow and improve the Events and Festivals Sponsorship Fund for financial support to homegrown events.	Deliver, Support	1				✓	
		1.3	Investigate options to expand support for events including funding and in-kind, emerging and flagship.	Plan, Support, Deliver	2					✓
		1.4	Support mentorship opportunities for emerging, community and volunteer event producers.	Collaborate	2					✓
		1.5	Explore Council's role in addressing gaps and opportunities in event programming.	Plan	3					✓
B. Local Opportunity	2. Disperse events across the Shire and seasons	2.1	Improve capacity to host increased business events.	Collaborate, Support	1				✓	
		2.2	Identify and promote seasonal event opportunities by locality for each event type.	Plan, Promote	1				✓	
		2.3	Improve events programming for off-peak activations.	Collaborate, Support	2					✓

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
C. Resilience & Adaptability	3. Bolster event sector capacity and collaboration	3.1	Continue to strengthen Council's event concierge and advisory support to guide organisers.	Support	1				✓	
		3.2	Encourage networking and collaboration between events, volunteers and business.	Facilitate, Support	1				✓	
		3.3	Promote what's on with an annual events snapshot and explore options for continuous improvement.	Deliver, Promote	1				✓	
		3.4	Support succession planning and volunteer engagement.	Support	2					✓
		3.5	Advocate for increased event funding and sponsorship to government and industry.	Advocate	2					✓
D. Regenerative Tourism & Events	4. Support sustainable and regenerative event practices that restore and improve environmental, social and economic systems.	4.1	Promote events that support local circular economy and zero waste outcomes.	Promote	1				✓	
		4.2	Enable events compliance on Council managed land including single use.	Support, Collaborate	1					✓
		4.3	Promote low-impact and zero waste event equipment and catering packages through local suppliers.	Promote	2					✓
		4.4	Investigate options for shared event equipment and infrastructure.	Support	2					✓

Events Action Plan

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
E. Creative Industries & Cultural Enterprise	5. Improve event accessibility and inclusivity	5.1	Update the events application process to require accessibility and inclusivity plans.	Deliver	1					✓
		5.2	Investigate improvements to collecting data on user experience with a focus on participation barriers.	Plan, Promote	1					✓
		5.3	Audit and improve accessibility and resilience of Council-managed event venues and sites.	Model, Deliver	2					✓
		5.4	Investigate opportunities in Council and partnered events for improved diversity, equity and inclusion outcomes.	Model, Deliver	3					✓
	6. Support Aboriginal cultural events and self-determination	6.1	Act on and promote cultural protocols.	Support	1				✓	
		6.2	Support Aboriginal-led events.	Support	1				✓	
		6.3	Engage to define Council's role in supporting cultural events for the Strategy's "transformation" delivery horizon.	Collaborate	2					✓
	7. Activate underutilised spaces and precincts	7.1	Advance activations in key precincts.	Facilitate, Support	1				✓	
		7.2	Partner on activations with local groups, including town centres, laneways, parks and community halls	Collaborate, Support	2					✓
		7.3	Map and promote underutilised venues for events.	Plan, Promote	2					✓

Events Action Plan

Objective	Action	Ref	Activity	Council Role	Horizon Start	Delivery Horizon			New BAU	Change Making Project
						1	2	3		
F. Informed & Impactful	8. Leverage events for economic, social and environmental benefit	8.1	Support local business partnerships and collaboration for event programming and promotion.	Support, Facilitate	2					✓
		8.2	Create an easy system for collecting and sharing event impact data to help organisers and Council measure success, strengthen applications and promote events.	Plan, Model, Collaborate, Promote	1					✓
	9. Improve systems, data and evaluation	9.1	Update the events licensing process for improved data gathering and risk management.	Deliver	1					✓
		9.2	Review and continue to deliver the Events E News	Deliver	1				✓	
		9.3	Report on annual events insights, trends and outcomes.	Promote	1					✓
		9.4	Investigate a Council event control group for regular streamlined cross directorate and agency advice and licence approvals.	Plan	2					✓

Monitoring and Review

Monitoring for this Action Plan will follow the overarching framework set out in the Byron Shire Economic Strategy. Progress will be tracked through quarterly and annual reporting, Economic Activation Group engagement and staged audits aligned with the Strategy's Delivery Horizons:

- **Horizon 1 (2028):** Strengthen: Early wins, system stabilisation, momentum builds.
- **Horizon 2 (2032):** Transition: Scaling, innovation, strategy review.
- **Horizon 3 (2035):** Transform: Long-term change, evaluation, strategy reset.

Outcome indicators will track changes in Byron Shire's Business and Industry environment. While Council is not the sole driver of outcomes, it plays a key enabling role.

To support this approach, the following indicators will help to monitor progress and outcomes over time:

Indicator	FY2024 (Baseline)
Events Contribution to GRP ³	\$88.1m
Jobs Supported ⁴	799
Small-medium events ¹	49
Percentage of events homegrown ¹	90%
Seasonal split of events ¹	26% Summer 33% Autumn 15% Winter 25% Spring
Share of events across the Shire ¹	49% Byron Bay 14% Brunswick Heads 10% Bangalow 21% Mullumbimby 7% Other

For full details, refer to the Monitoring & Review section of the Byron Shire Economic Strategy.

Sources and Endnotes

- 1. Byron Shire Council 2025; Events FY2024 Data (Internal Source). Based on applications for events in public spaces and funding support from Council.
- 2. Visitor and expenditure estimates use TRA national event travel data (NVS & IVS) due to low regional sample size in FY2024. This is combined with Byron Shire attendance per endnote 1. Assumptions: 30% locals excluded; visitor split 62% daytrip, 30% domestic overnight, 8% international; spend \$213/daytrip, \$1,139/domestic trip, \$9,975/international trip; nights 2.7 domestic, 7 international.
- 3. GRP contribution estimated as 45% of total visitor expenditure, based on ABS Tourism Satellite Account methodology and Economy ID event impact modelling benchmarks.
- 4. Lucid Economics modelling ratio for draft BIVE Strategy (385 jobs for \$94.3M visitor expenditure) applied to TRA visitor expenditure modelling (\$195.8M), resulting in 799 jobs.

Document Tracking

Doc No.	Date	Detail
E2025/121738	November 2025	Reported to Council for Adoption
E2026/52093	June 2026	Updated following prioritisation workshops with the EAG, reported to Council for adoption.

Thank You to Photo Contributions

Credit goes to Katie Holmes for Soul Street, Emily Cherie Read for the NSW Music Summit, and Flawless Imaging for most other photography



Soul Street – New Years Eve, Byron Bay

For more information

PO Box 219 Mullumbimby NSW 2482
(70 Station Street)

E: council@byron.nsw.gov.au

P: 02 6626 7000 | F: 02 6684 3018

www.byron.nsw.gov.au

