Sunshine Coast

Events Board Annual Report 2024-25

Sunshine Coast COUNCIL

Edition October 2025

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Acknowledgements

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved in the development of this document.

Reference document

This document should be cited as follows:

Sunshine Coast Council Events Annual Report 2025-2030

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Cover image

Big Pineapple Festival

Traditional acknowledgement

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Sunshine Coast Country, home of the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples, the Traditional Custodians, whose lands and waters we all now share.

We recognise that these have always been places of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance. The Traditional Custodians' unique values, and ancient and enduring cultures, deepen and enrich the life of our community.

We commit to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians and the broader First Nations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) communities to support self-determination through economic and community development.

Truth telling is a significant part of our journey. We are committed to better understanding the collective histories of the Sunshine Coast and the experiences of First Nations peoples. Legacy issues resulting from colonisation are still experienced by Traditional Custodians and First Nations peoples.

We recognise our shared history and will continue to work in partnership to provide a foundation for building a shared future with the Kabi Kabi peoples and the Jinibara peoples.

We wish to pay respect to their Elders – past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the important role First Nations peoples continue to play within the Sunshine Coast community.

Together, we are all stronger.

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Image: Australian Wearable Art Festival

John Williams
Sunshine Coast
Events Board Chair

Chairperson's address

It is with great pride that I present the 2024–25 Annual Report of the Sunshine Coast Events Board. This year has been marked by continued strategic refinement, ensuring our region remains at the forefront of event delivery in Australia.

In 2024–25, the Events Board and Council supported a balanced portfolio of 57 major events, delivering an estimated $106 million in direct economic return and supporting more than 1,100 full-time equivalent jobs. These outcomes reflect the strength of our partnerships and the effectiveness of our sponsorship framework, which continues to evolve.

The Board considered 40 major event sponsorship applications during 2024-25, securing 79 individual events to the region. The Board's role in assessing sponsorship applications has also grown in scope and complexity. This year, we reviewed a significant number of proposals, reflecting both the competitiveness of the program and the increasing interest in hosting events on the Sunshine Coast.
The calibre of applications continues to rise, and our decision-making is guided by a robust framework that prioritises strategic alignment, economic and community benefit, and long-term value.

It is an exciting runway ahead for the Sunshine Coast region before we co-host the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. With new venue infrastructure and upgraded stadium on the horizon, we are well positioned to grow our reputation as a major events destination.

I extend my sincere thanks to all Board and Working Group members Council, and industry partners for their commitment and expertise. Their contributions have been instrumental in shaping a dynamic and resilient events portfolio that reflects the diversity, ambition and identity of our region.

Joe Natoli Sunshine Coast Council Economy Portfolio Councillor

Foreword

The Sunshine Coast continues to strengthen its reputation as one of Australia's leading regional destinations for major events.

Through the implementation of Council's refreshed Major Events Strategy, we are seeing tangible outcomes that extend beyond economic return – enhancing community and local business engagement, supporting the local and growing events industry, and showcasing the unique strengths of our region. Major events are a cornerstone component to our tourism strategy, filling holiday accommodation and in return supporting local businesses directly and indirectly.

Importantly, the strategy continues to evolve in response to industry trends and regional priorities. The refinement of sponsorship categories and the adaptation of a new online application tool are examples of how we are adapting to ensure our program remains fit-for-purpose and future-focused.

I would like to acknowledge the Sunshine Coast Events Board, and our many industry stakeholders for their dedication and collaboration. Their efforts ensure that our events portfolio continues to deliver meaningful outcomes and reflects the values of our community.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to supporting events that inspire, connect, and create lasting impact across the Sunshine Coast, particularly as we edge closer to the biggest event in our lifetimes - the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Major events held here on the Sunshine Coast help establish our region as a viable and suitable training location for various Olympic and Paralympic sports leading up to 2032.

Image: Australian Wearable Art Festival

Image: Sunshine Coast Marathon

Image: The Big Pineapple Festival

Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy

The Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's fastest growing regions and its thriving economy benefits from a strong tourism industry. As one of Australia's most popular visitor destinations, major events are highly important economic drivers for the region.

Council adopted the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-27 to support the region's economy, and with the vision to be recognised as the premier regional events destination in Australia – where major events deliver maximum results.

A 'refreshed' strategy was adopted by Council in August 2023, to address the changing needs of the region over time and encompass a broader range of event benefits that consider more than the economic outcomes of major events.

The Sunshine Coast Events Board ('the Board') is required to report progress on the implementation of the strategy to Council on an annual basis. The following report is the first under the new refreshed strategy, with a number of new Key Performance Indicators developed to monitor the achievements of the strategy.

Alignment to the regional strategies

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-28 (2023 Refresh), aligns with Council's key strategic elements and intent of other policies crucial to the development of the region and its major events, ensuring that major events contribute fully to the vision for the Sunshine Coast region to be recognised as Australia's most sustainable region – Thriving. Connected. Liveable.

- Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-41
- Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017-41
- Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-33

→ Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2025-30

→ **Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-28 (2023 Refresh)**

Sunshine Coast Events Board and Working Groups

The Sunshine Coast Events Board and its supporting working groups were established to advance Council's commitment to economic development and position the region as Australia's leading destination for major events.

The Board provides strategic advice to Council on enhancing investment in existing events, attracting new opportunities, and guiding the implementation of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy.

In 2025, the two working groups (Existing Portfolio and New Major Events) were merged to improve efficiency across the sponsorship process.
Their consolidation supports a more integrated and effective approach to event strategy and delivery.

All members contribute independent advice on sponsorship applications and outcomes, playing a vital role in supporting the events industry and local economy.

Sunshine Coast Events Board member bios can be viewed by visiting Council's website **sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au**

John Williams
Chairperson

Scott Hoskins
Deputy Chairperson

Stacey Buckley
Local Business representative

Kylie Ezzy
Tourism representative
Appointed July 2024

Cr Terry Landsberg
Portfolio Councillor for the Economy representative

Kim McCosker
Community representative
Term concluded December 2024

Cr Joe Natoli
Portfolio Councillor for the Economy representative

Ultan O'Dwyer
Local Business representative

David Ryan
Tourism representative
Term concluded December 2024

Matt Stockel
Tourism representative
Appointed January 2025

Combined Working Group

The following membership came into effect January 2025 with the merger of the two working groups; Existing Portfolio working group and New Major Events working group.

Scott Hoskins
Chairperson
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Kylie Ezzy
Deputy Chairperson
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

Jon Coghill*
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

Tatiana Day*
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Scott Derwin*
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Fraser Green*
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Maya Gurry*
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

Nicole McNaughton*
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Ultan O'Dwyer
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Daryl Raven*
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

Zoe Sparks*
Previously Existing Portfolio Working Group Member

Ali Thompson*
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

Lenny Vance*
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

John Williams
Previously New Major Events Working Group Member

*Non-Board member representative

Major Events Sponsorship Program

The Major Events Sponsorship Program plays a critical role in advancing the region's broader tourism strategy. Major events serve as key drivers of visitation, enhance the Sunshine Coast's destination appeal, and contribute significantly to long-term brand development.

As the program continues to evolve, the sponsorship process has become increasingly competitive. Council's priority is to ensure a maximum return on investment is achieved from the limited funds available and supported applications need to demonstrate a strong alignment to the outcomes of the refreshed strategy.

Sponsorship categories

Council introduced a refined framework for categorising major events in 2023. These updated definitions were developed to broaden the eligibility criteria for sponsored events and to clearly demonstrate how each event type contributes to a strategically balanced portfolio.

Sponsorship Category	**Signature Events** are considered transformational for the region—true 'game changers'. Each financial year, approximately 4 to 6 Signature Events are supported at a high level of investment, with the aim of generating the most significant outcomes. These events provide the most promotional value for the Sunshine Coast from a strategic and marketing perspective.	**Economic Drivers** form the foundation of the region's economic return from the major events portfolio. Between 30 and 50 Economic Driver events are supported annually, collectively delivering the majority of the targeted direct economic impact.	**Emerging Events** align with broader regional objectives, contributing to a diverse events calendar and supporting the growth of specific local industries. Only a limited number (3 to 5 annually) are supported.
Target Outcomes	• National scale and awareness • Very high economic impact (and/or) Very high-profile impact • Regional / industry opportunities • Significant promotional value • Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ) / Government major partnerships • Olympic and Paralympic strategic alignment	• Strong return on investment • Spread across calendar year • Bed nights / direct visitor spend • Outcomes as assessed in existing event strategy and process • Reach yearly economic and strategy goals	• Build diverse calendar (content and location) • Profile new and emerging content • Demonstrated growth potential • Assist in event and industry growth • Meet community and visitor expectations
Number of events supported annually (target)	4–6	30–50	3–5

Sponsorship Applications

The Board considered 40 major event sponsorship applications during 2024-25.

Thirty-seven applications were supported and endorsed by Council, with 35 applications contracted to secure 79 individual events for the region. Of those applications contracted 20 were across multiple years.

Events secured include:

AFL Queensland Schools Cup Finals 2025 - 2027

Accelerate Conference 2026

Basketball Queensland U14 Girls State Championships 2026

Big Pineapple Festival 2025 - 2027

Bluff Fest & Alex by the Sea at Alex Surf Club 2025-26 - 2026-27

Coastrek Sunshine Coast 2025

Dance X Competition QLD State Finals 2025 - 2027

Downunder Beachfest 2025 - 2027

Gymnastics Queensland State Championships 2026 – 2028

Hayden Kenny Classic 2025 - 2027

IRONMAN 70.3 Sunshine Coast 2026 - 2028

Kite Karnival ft. Australian Freestyle Nationals 2026 and 2027

Mooloolaba Mile Ocean Swim Festival 2025 - 2027

National Junior Rugby Union Championships 2025

Netball Queensland Junior State Age Championships 2025

Over 60s Winter Cricket Carnival 2025

Over 70s Cricket National Championships 2025

Pacific Club Championships 2025 - 2027

Queensland Garden Show (former Expo) 2025 - 2027

Queensland State District Sides Championships & State Championships 2025 and 2027

Queensland Surf Life Saving Championships 2026 & 2028

Rugby Australia Next Gen 7s 2025

School Sport Australia 12 years AFL National Championships 2025

Sculpture on the Edge 2025

Suncoast Spinners Wheelchair Basketball Tournament 2026 - 2028

Sunny 80 Quad Crown Mountain Bike Adventure 2025 - 2027

Sunshine Coast Golf Classics – Autumn and Winter events 2025 - 2027

Sunshine Coast Open House 2025 - 2027

Sunshine Coast Winter Bowls Carnival 2025 - 2027

The Curated Plate 2025

Trans-Tasman Throw Down Basketball Tour 2025-2027

UCI Para-Cycling World Championships 2028

Under 19 State of Origin 2025

VQ Queensland Country Championships 2025

Water Polo Queensland State Titles 2026, 2028, 2030

Image: The Curated Plate

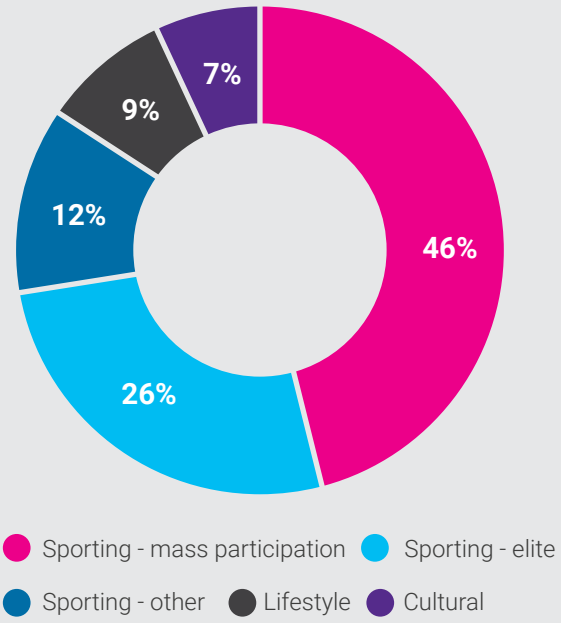
Image: Surfing Queensland Series

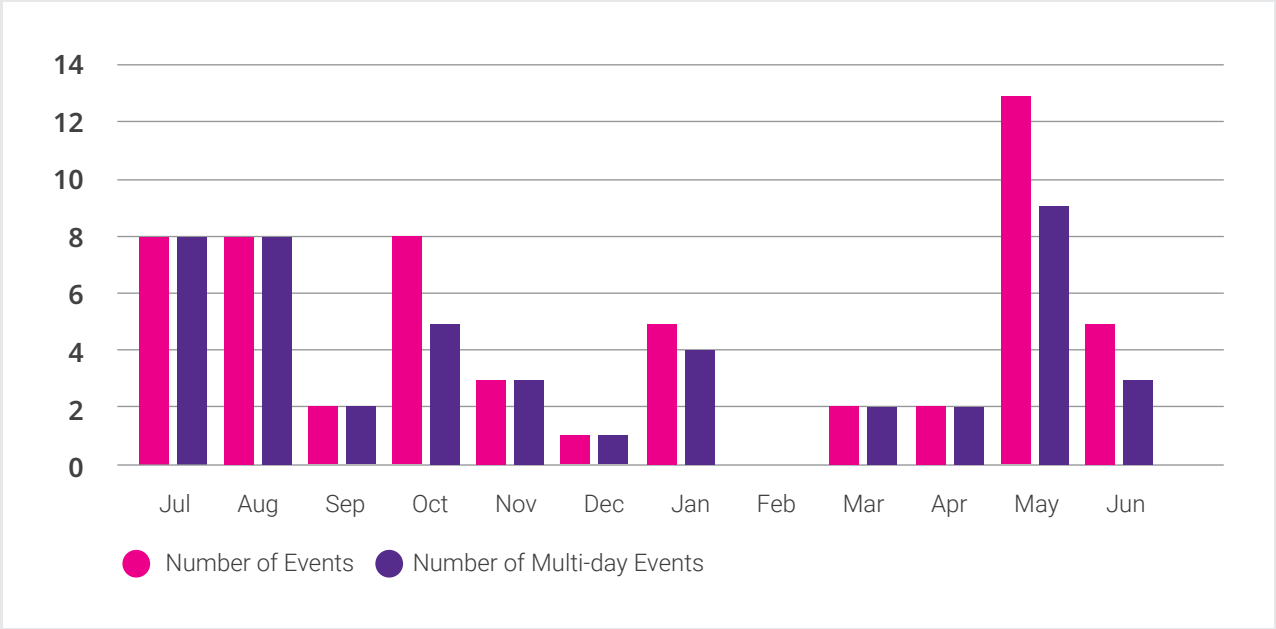
Major Events hosted

The Major Events Sponsorship Program supports a balanced calendar of events – diverse in content, location, and timing – to maximise regional benefits. Guided by the refreshed strategy, the program aims to deliver strong economic outcomes while enhancing the Sunshine Coast's lifestyle appeal, community engagement, and regional identity.

In 2024–25, Council supported 57 major events, with 47 spanning multiple days. The program prioritises multi-day events and those scheduled during off-peak tourism periods to optimise economic impact and avoid scheduling conflicts.

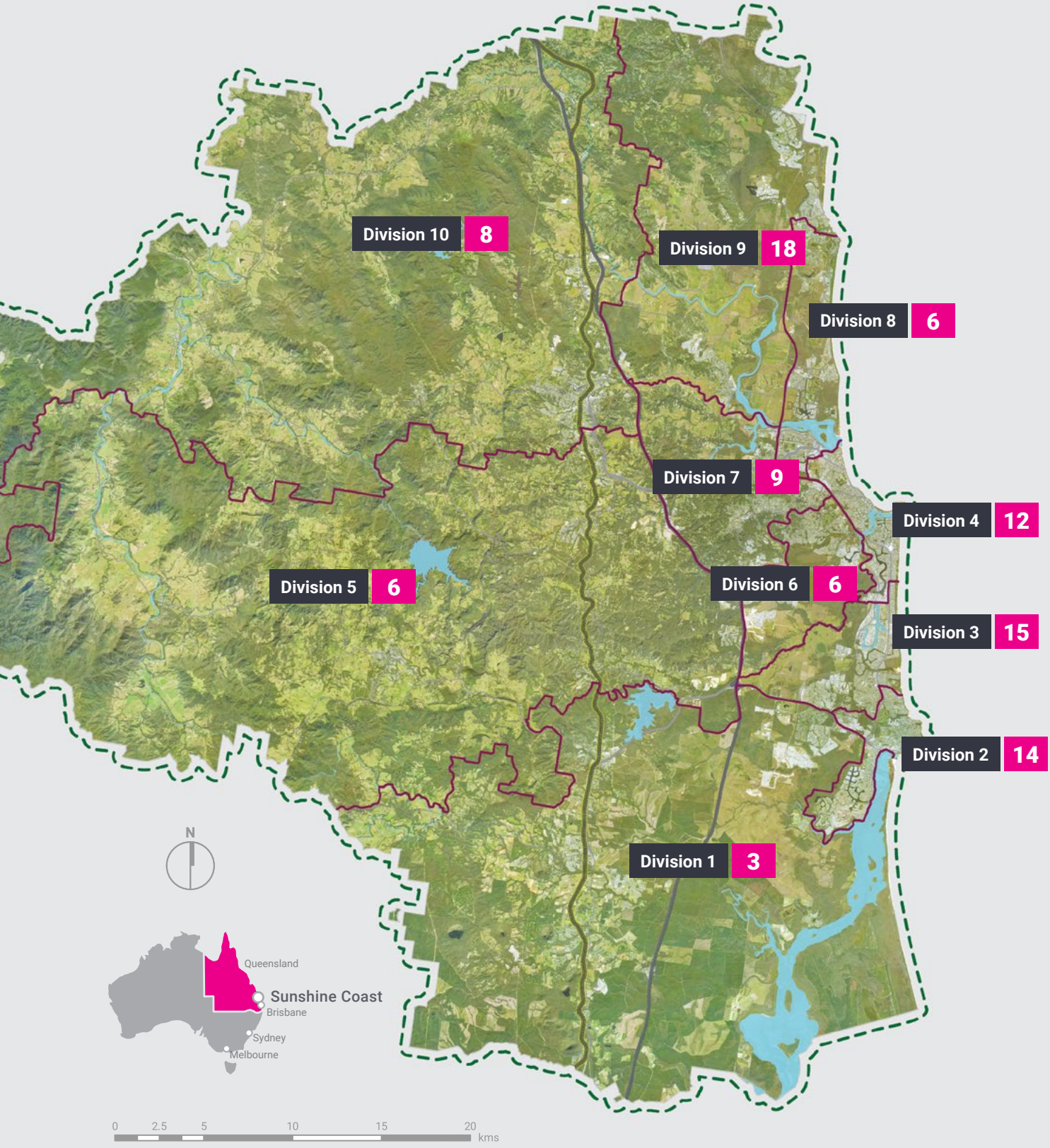
While the majority of supported events are sporting in nature – reflecting their strong economic return – 16 per cent of the portfolio comprised of cultural and lifestyle events. With the introduction of broader sponsorship categories, the event calendar is expected to diversify further, reflecting a wider range of community and strategic benefits.





Major Events by Division:

During 2024-25, 57 major events were hosted and supported through the sponsorship program, with a number of these events hosted across multiple divisions.



2024-25 Outcomes

The Major Events Sponsorship Program seeks to achieve significant and immediate economic benefits such as visitation and direct business from major events whilst also attracting, supporting and leveraging events that:

1. Build a diverse calendar of events that spread the benefits as widely as possible across the region and the calendar year
2. Use the wider audiences of events to build reputation and perception of the Sunshine Coast's lifestyle, environment and ongoing opportunities
3. Showcase the Sunshine Coast as a destination and increase the region's appeal to potential visitors
4. Align the targeted outcomes of the 'Signature', 'Economic Driver' or 'Emerging' event funding definitions and demonstrate the maximum potential return on investment
5. Promote and engage the region's high value industries
6. Are in keeping with the Sunshine Coast community values and Council's vision to be Australia's most sustainable region, Healthy. Smart. Creative

Building on the strong performance of the previous financial year, the 2024–25 major events portfolio continued to deliver substantial economic and community benefits for the Sunshine Coast.

During the year, the region supported 57 major events, aligning with the target of 40–60. This included six Signature Events, 49 Economic Drivers, and two Emerging Events, reflecting a more balanced distribution under the refreshed sponsorship framework.

The number of Emerging Events fell below target due to the withdrawal of one event from the program; however, the overall portfolio continued to perform strongly.

The estimated economic return for 2024–25 was $106 million, exceeding the target of $86 million and reinforcing the value of strategic investment in major events. While this figure was lower than the record $112.6 million achieved in 2023–24 which was largely driven by the inclusion of the 2024 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships ('the Aussies'), which contributed approximately 18 per cent of that year's total impact – the return on investment improved significantly, rising from 1:36 in 2023–24 to 1:48 in 2024–25. This uplift reflects strong performance across the broader portfolio, despite the absence of a single high-impact event.

The portfolio also supported an estimated 1,181 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs, exceeding the employment target and contributing meaningfully to regional economic activity.

Visitor numbers from outside the region totalled 153,538, slightly below the target of 160,000. This shortfall may be attributed to cost-of-living pressures influencing travel decisions, as well as the impact of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, which led to the cancellation or postponement of several events and may have further affected visitor numbers.

EventsConnect, a local events industry supplier directory and business-to-business portal designed to help support local businesses and the events industry continues to grow, with 79 new supplier listings added during the year – up from 52 in 2023–24, demonstrating increased industry participation and support for local businesses.

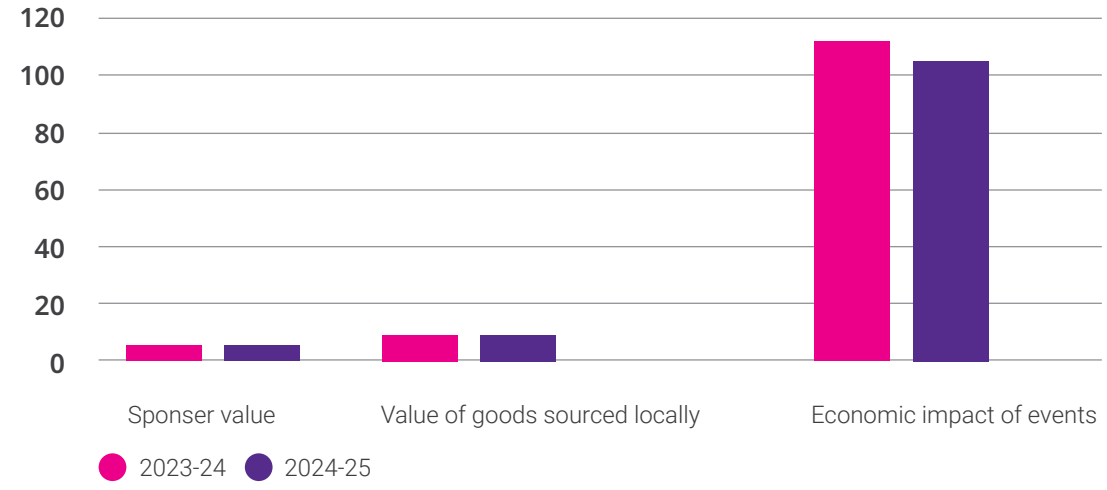
Image: Volleyball Australia

Image: RoboRave

	2023-24		2024-25	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Estimated economic return on regional investment in major events	$106m	$112.6m	$86m	$106m
Number of primary purpose event visitors from outside the region	160,000	178,728	160,000	153,538
Estimated number of total Full Time Equivalent jobs supported	1,000	1,250	1,000	1,181
Number of:				
Supplier listings on Events Connect	30	52	30	79
Major events in portfolio	40-60	72	40-60	57
Signature events	4-6	6	4-6	6
Economic drivers	30-50	63	30-50	49
Emerging events	3-5	2	3-5	2

* The major event outcomes for 2024-25 have been calculated from event acquittal reports where available. In the absence of an acquittal report, the result has been assessed against sponsorship application data or past performance.

Results from Council's investment in major events*



*The sponsorship value reflects the total funding paid by Council during the term and not the overall budget for the financial year. The major events sponsorship budget is allocated against deliverables for each sponsorship agreement and paid accordingly rather than in one lump sum.

Pathway Outcomes

The Major Events Sponsorship Program delivers for the region by attracting, supporting and leveraging events that deliver maximum results as per the six priority pathways as identified in the refreshed strategy.

Pathway 1: Showcase the region's strengths

Continue the development of the Sunshine Coast destination profile, using major events to showcase the full range of the region's natural, physical, community and industry assets

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
1. Target new event acquisition opportunities which align with the full range of the region's assets and unique advantages	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** During 2024–25, 16 new events were delivered, and the Board reviewed 18 new applications for event sponsorship
2. Incorporate alignment with the event destination brand into event selection and assessment criteria	**Achieved** Sponsorship assessment criteria have been aligned to incorporate the benefit an event provides to the destination brand. Representatives from Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC) actively contribute to the assessment process through their roles on the Board and the supporting Working Group
3. Partner with specific 'signature events' with the greatest capacity to demonstrate and communicate regional strengths, assets and opportunities	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** In 2024–25, six signature events were hosted across the Sunshine Coast, with promotional content capturing both the events and the destination's appeal
4. As a means of understanding the potential brand-led opportunities, conduct an annual scoping review of new and emerging event trends to assess fit with the Sunshine Coast brand, and how these trends might appeal to target audiences	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Event trend analysis in 2024–25 revealed gaps in arts, cultural events, and large-scale music festivals, driven by rising operational costs and cancellations. Council is actively pursuing new opportunities and enhancing existing events to address these gaps. The Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association in collaboration with Council drafted a 'Venue Audit and Event Trends' report, detailing regional venues and industry insights to guide future event attraction
5. Working closely with VSC and event operators, ensure that destination brand values and visual assets are reflected in event promotion, signage and captured imagery	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** VSC supports Council-sponsored major events by providing access to visual assets and promotional content aligned with the destination brand. Event organisers also receive destination signage, with Council collaborating to ensure relevant imagery is captured for promotional use
6. Build opportunities to promote additional community and regional goals (beyond just tourism) that showcase the true value of the Sunshine Coast.	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council works closely with event organisers and other stakeholders to promote the benefits events bring to the region and to the local community. In 2024-25: • 109 news stories were published about major and emerging events and tourism • 72 social media posts regarding Council sponsored major events were published across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn resulting in 525,000 impressions, 330 comments, 290,000 engagements and 654 link clicks.

Pathway 2: Balance the portfolio

Continue to attract and support a diverse range of events — spread by content, location and timing that together form a calendar of maximum benefit to the region

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
7. Communicate and explain the use of, and opportunities created, by the major events 3-tier funding system	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The benefits of major events and the three-tier Major Events Sponsorship Program continues to be promoted through Council channels and to industry via the Sunshine Coast Events Board, and Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association
8. Confirm funding systems and criteria for 'emerging events', including ability to significantly increase funding available for successful applications, and process to approve fixed 3-year sponsorship deals	**Achieved** New assessment tools have been developed for the evaluation of emerging events which are used to determine the most appropriate level of funding for the applicant
9. Annual reports on calendar 'balance' - outlining number of events by type, location and annual timing – aligning with the major event categories and their associated objectives	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Refer to page 12 of the report
10. Promote opportunities for event creation in under-represented locations across the region	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council continues to engage with new and existing event promoters locally and nationally to support optimal event dispersal across the entire local government area
11. Through connections with VSC and other marketing partners, undertake promotional campaigns to outline new and emerging events within a diverse and engaging annual event calendar	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** VSC promotes a diverse calendar of major and emerging events year-round through its marketing programs, including but not limited to: • Promotional campaigns – featuring events in digital native and social media advertising • Public relations – promoting events via broadcast, advertorials, and editorials • Owned channels – showcasing events on the VSC website, eDMs, Visitor Guide, and social media VSC also shares the events calendar with industry stakeholders via corporate communication channels to support cross-promotional opportunities
12. Continue to assess and evaluate the return on investment into business events (currently funded and measured under the same system as other event types), and consider changes to operational, assessment and funding models.	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council continues to work with VSC on the assessment and funding model for business events, considering both financial and non-financial incentives to attract events to the region. Collaboration has also increased to target business events aligned with the High Value Industries identified in the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2023–2033

Pathway 3: Drive maximum return

Implement specific leveraging strategies to increase the benefits derived from individual events

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
13. Review the major events portfolio on an annual basis to assess those which best meet strategic objectives and offer the best growth/leveraging potential	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council regularly reviews its event portfolio in collaboration with the Sunshine Coast Events Board to identify events that best align with strategic objectives and offer strong potential for growth and leveraging
14. Concentrate practical and planning assistance that helps event organisers grow scale and visitor numbers to 'economic driver' events, and specific 'Signature' events with potential to drive maximum visitor night outcomes	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council has supported data collection for several major events, enabling organisers to better understand visitation patterns and identify growth opportunities. Additionally, Council offers planning and strategic advice through a mentorship program for events undergoing growth or transition
15. Develop and implement specific 'leveraging plans' for the targeted events in conjunction with VSC, and the event organiser	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** VSC and Council work collaboratively to identify a select number of major events each year, developing tailored leveraging plans in partnership with event organisers. These plans aim to maximise marketing outcomes for both the event and the region, supported by VSC's tiered event matrix and marketing resources
16. Post event, prepare specific leveraging reports for each targeted event to track outcomes and make future recommendations for support	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** As part of the event acquittal process, organisers are required to submit a marketing activities report detailing how the major event was promoted, the channels used, and post-event outcomes. This process enables Council and VSC to align their support across owned channels with the organisers' efforts, while also identifying opportunities to further promote and leverage Council's sponsorship for future events
17. Where possible, and in keeping with the goals and pathways of this strategy, sign events up to 3-year contracts to achieve maximum ROI over a longer cycle	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The Board considered 40 major event sponsorship applications during 2024-25. Thirty-seven applications were supported and endorsed by Council, with 35 applications contracted, of which 20 were across multiple years
18. Continue the development and knowledge of 'EventsConnect'– the Sunshine Coast 'supplier portal' – to create and connect opportunities for increased event delivery spend through local businesses and organisations.	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council works in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association to promote the local supplier platform and connect event organisers with the regional supply chain. During the year, 79 new suppliers joined the platform, bringing the total to over 227 suppliers as of 30 June 2025

Pathway 4: Best practice region

Be a leader in process and governance, sponsorship selection, and in support and leverage for major event projects

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
19. Review procedures in contracting, measurement and assessment to maintain the region's best practice status in these areas	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The centralised application tool, SmartyGrants, was launched during the year. Event organisers can now submit applications via online forms, streamlining the application, sponsorship management, and assessment process. Existing agreements are being transitioned to the new system
20. Undertaking annual reviews of governance procedures, building on change management and succession planning support where required	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Following the rollout of the new centralised application tool, internal processes were reviewed and refined to enhance efficiency. Updates to internal data dictionaries were also made to ensure consistency in reporting metrics. To improve efficiency, the Existing Portfolio and New Major Events Working Groups were merged, creating a unified approach to event strategy whilst maintaining independent advice from the Board and Working Group
21. Work with key industry stakeholders such as TEQ and VSC to share available data on the impact of major events and develop additional methods to track additional outcomes such as repeat visitation from event participants and audiences	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council holds regular monthly meetings with industry stakeholders such as TEQ and VSC. In response to rising accommodation costs and visitor spend, a new visitor night value was adopted from 1 July 2024 to align Council's economic calculations with TEQ's methodology
22. Council, Sunshine Coast Events Board and Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association to continue to advocate for improved regional coordination of major event operations and delivery services	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association held an event promoting the findings of the Sunshine Coast's nighttime economy research and the need for a unified voice in the growth and development of the events industry
23. Development of centralised online application tool to increase major event visibility across all of Council	**Achieved** The centralised application tool, SmartyGrants, was launched during the year. Existing agreements will be transitioned to the new system
24. Create and promote clear guidelines of Council's environment and accessibility expectation from major events, and the required post event reporting.	**Ongoing annually – in progress** The Queensland Government's ***Accessible Events Guide*** supports inclusive event delivery and aligns with Council's ***All Abilities Action Plan 2024–2028.*** Council is working with stakeholders to gather further information on sustainable and accessible initiatives delivered at events in the region. Both accessibility and sustainability expectations are outlined in the Major Events sponsorship agreement

Pathway 5: Create industry demand

Grow the profile of the Sunshine Coast as a highly desirable host destination for the event and tourism industries

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
25. Actively promote the region's strengths and achievements in hosting major events of all types to key promoters, influencers and the wider event industry	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The region's strengths in hosting major events were actively promoted through targeted LinkedIn content and attendance at key industry conferences outside the region. These efforts enhanced visibility of the Sunshine Coast as a leading events destination and generated several new event leads currently under exploration with prospective operators
26. Improve outward facing event support information services (websites, social media platforms, etc.) to present clear and professional information to potential event promoters	**Ongoing annually (year 1 and 2) – achieved for the year** Outward-facing platforms Events.SunshineCoast and EventsConnect, were enhanced improving functionality and user experience. Additionally, a review of Council's corporate website is underway to further improve accessibility and presentation of event support information
27. Raise the profile of the Sunshine Coast Events Board and Council through participation and speaking opportunities at conferences, industry workshops and liaison with key partners (e.g., TEQ)	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Both Council and the Board attended a number of conferences and networking functions. All functions assisted with event lead generation and the promotion of the Sunshine Coast as a premier regional events destination
28. Develop case studies which can be used for future event attraction	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Refer to pages 22 and 23 of report
29. Develop additional opportunities for famil visits from key industry targets, and hosting of key industry events	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** A number of activities were conducted during the year to connect with key industry targets: • Council has engaged in numerous conversations with various event promoters with a view to securing new content • Council attends conferences where appropriate to engage with key industry targets • Council continues to advocate for the region through regular Linkedin activity to promote the region and has sourced new leads through promotional campaigns • Council continues to build strong strategic relationships with National and State Sport Organisation's to ensure it is considered for event placement in future years
30. Use EventsConnect and other related communication tools to promote and connect opportunities for event organisers to work with experienced local suppliers in the design and delivery of their event.	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** EventsConnect was actively promoted through Council's LinkedIn and Facebook channels, direct communication with supported event organisers, and via Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association marketing and networking activities, helping connect organisers with experienced local suppliers

Pathway 6: Engage the community

Drive continued business and community support through promotion of the outcomes and benefits from the region's hosting of major events.

Actions for 2023-28	2024-25 Outcomes
31. Include diversity of location, timing and event type as an influencer in the event selection process (where this is possible without jeopardising program outcomes)	**Achieved** Sponsorship assessment aligned to incorporate diversity criteria such as time of year, location and event type
32. Communicate to local community and businesses the overall impact of a 'balanced calendar' of major events across the region each year – rather than focusing on the actual local benefits or impact per event	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The benefits of major events and the three-tier Major Events Sponsorship Program continues to be promoted through Council channels and to industry via the Sunshine Coast Events Board, and Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association
33. Through the targeted local communication, create additional awareness of local supply and strongly promote opportunities for specific local business to leverage key event projects	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** EventsConnect is a dedicated platform that helps event organisers connect with experienced local suppliers to support the delivery of their events. It is actively promoted through Council channels and industry partners, including the Sunshine Coast Events Board and the Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association
34. Work with key event communication campaigns to, where possible, reduce the effect on businesses impacted by specific events	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council encourages event organisers to engage in early community consultation and provide clear communication about any potential disruptions to local businesses. Council also shares relevant messaging through its own channels, highlighting both the impacts and the broader benefits of hosting events in the region
35. Continue to implement specific communication programs – targeting business and community partners, existing event organisers and prospective event organisers to further promote the outcomes and benefits of the Major Events Sponsorship Program	**Ongoing annually – in progress** The Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association in partnership with Council hosted an event in Mooloolaba to engage local businesses on the benefits of leveraging major events, with a focus on increasing involvement ahead of Brisbane 2032. Council continues to liaise with local industry to promote these opportunities, with further workshops scheduled to take place in 2025-26
36. Ensure meaningful community engagement takes place as part of event planning	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** The Major Events Operations Committee, comprising key stakeholders such as the Queensland Police Service, Department of Transport and Main Roads, and Council, meets regularly to address planning and delivery issues for major events. The committee also ensures meaningful community engagement is undertaken throughout the process to address local concerns and promote transparency
37. Engage with businesses through feedback surveys (selected number of major events) to gauge direct impact, monitor community sentiment and collect testimonials on the positive impact of events.	**Ongoing annually – achieved for the year** Council engaged with local businesses to better understand the impact of major events through targeted post-event surveys and comparative data analysis. Ahead of the Mooloolaba foreshore development, a communication plan was developed to help businesses maximise event-related opportunities. Ongoing collaboration with the local chamber of commerce, including event organiser participation, strengthened relationships and visibility. These efforts supported meaningful business engagement and helped capture sentiment and testimonials to inform future event planning and support strategies

Case-studies

Mooloolaba Triathlon: A Signature Showcase of Adaptability and Impact

The 2025 Mooloolaba Triathlon proved itself a standout Signature Event, showcasing the Sunshine Coast's ability to deliver under pressure and reinforcing its status as a premier destination for world-class events. Despite major disruptions – including a last-minute reschedule due to Cyclone Alfred and the cancellation of the swim leg on event day due to poor water quality – the triathlon still drew over 7,000 participants and spectators, highlighting its national appeal and economic impact.

The IRONMAN Group Oceania, in close partnership with Sunshine Coast Council, emergency services, and local businesses, demonstrated exceptional resilience and teamwork. Their ability to adapt quickly was underpinned by strong, long-term relationships and clear communication, ensuring a smooth pivot and successful delivery.

The event generated significant economic and promotional value, reinforcing the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a world-class destination. It also aligned with broader strategic goals, including potential Olympic and Paralympic pathways, and demonstrated the region's readiness for high-profile, transformational events. The Mooloolaba Triathlon not only met but exceeded the Signature Event sponsorship criteria, proving itself a true game changer for the region.

World Medical Football Championships: Driving Global Visitation and Economic Growth on the Sunshine Coast

The 2024 World Medical Football Championships, held alongside the 28th International Symposium of Medicine and Health in Sport, delivered a powerful economic boost to the Sunshine Coast. Drawing over 1,000 medical professionals, plus their travel companions from 18 nations – including Brazil, Canada, Ireland and Mexico – the event generated significant international visitation, bed nights and direct visitor spend across the region.

Hosted at Maroochydore Football Club and the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre, the event strategically aligned with the region's economic development goals. It showcased the Sunshine Coast's growing Health Precinct and positioned the region as a hub for medical innovation, sport, and lifestyle. The influx of delegates and athletes supported local accommodation, hospitality, and tourism operators during the winter season, contributing to a strong return on investment.

With healthcare now the region's largest industry, the event also created long-term opportunities by attracting global medical leaders and potential investors.
The Championships drove measurable economic impact, aligning with strategic priorities, and reinforcing the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a premier destination for international events and health sector growth.

Case-studies

The Rangebow Festival: A Colourful Addition to the Sunshine Coast's Emerging Events Landscape

The Rangebow Festival is a standout Emerging Event, enriching the Sunshine Coast's cultural calendar and supporting regional growth. Held across the region, the not-for-profit festival champions inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability through diverse arts, nature, and First Nations programming.

With detailed accessibility information and a strong focus on community wellbeing, the festival fosters connection, cultural expression, and respectful dialogue. It supports the growth of local creative industries and activates the Hinterland with vibrant, inclusive experiences.

Though still in its early years, the festival demonstrates clear growth potential, drawing increasing interest from visitors and locals alike.

By fostering respectful dialogue, celebrating diversity, and activating the region with vibrant programming, The Rangebow Festival meets the criteria for Emerging Event sponsorship – offering long-term value for both community and visitor engagement.

Priorities for 2025-26

Council will continue to progress the 37 actions outlined within the refreshed strategy. These actions aim to advance our goals by positioning the region to be **recognised as the premier regional events destination in Australia – where major events deliver maximum results.**

Further Information

For further information refer to the following resources:

Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 – 2023 Refresh
Sunshine Coast Events Board
Sunshine Coast Major Events Sponsorship Program
Events.SunshineCoast
EventsConnect
Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy
Sunshine Coast Council

Image: All Schools Tri

Image: CaliUnite

Image: QLD Garden Show

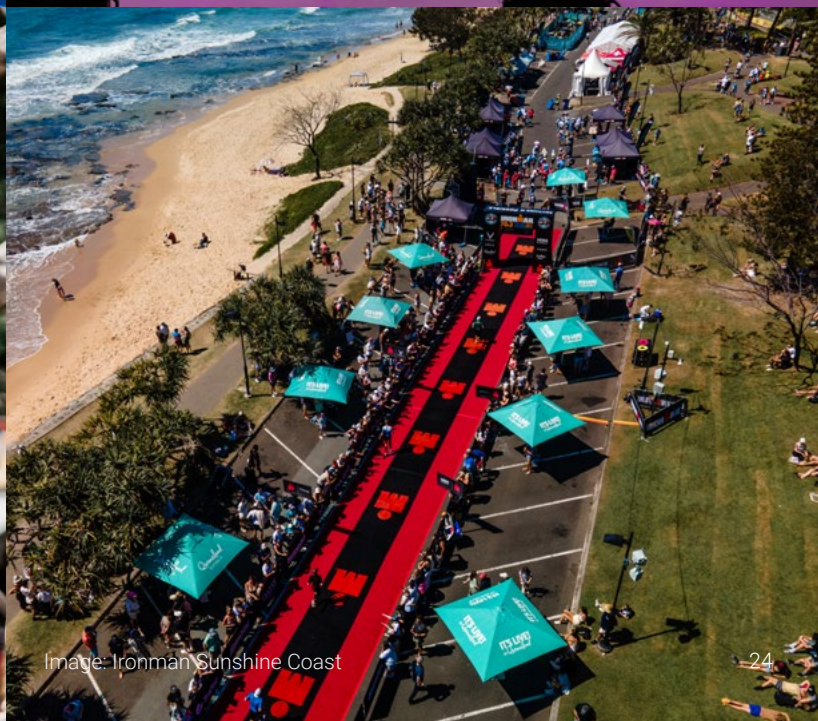


Image: Ironman Sunshine Coast

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