8. TOURISM

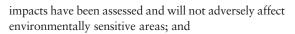## 8.1 Explanation

"Tourism" is the activity of promoting visitation to an area and accommodating and servicing the visitors en route and in the area.

8.2 Key Issues

The key issues forming the basis for a Tourism strategy include:

- the diversified tourism base of Maroochy Shire (including high rise and low rise tourist resorts by the sea, country villages with cottage industries, bed and breakfast accommodation and tourist oriented rural industries, rural retreats and host farms, and trails and walks through extensive tracts of National Parks and State Forests);

- the concentration of tourist accommodation and facilities in Mooloolaba, Coolum and Montville, which are representative of a specific tourist experience;

- the trend throughout the Shire to stand-alone destination resorts and tourist activities, such as tourist parks, providing a special part of the tourist experience and exhibiting different landscapes;

- theme parks, resorts, caravan parks, tourist routes, beaches, art and craft workshops and galleries which account for 1 to 2% of the area of the Shire, but which are the Shire's largest employer and industry sector;

- the number of visitors to the Shire which is growing at a faster rate than the growth rates for permanent residents;

- the recognition that the majority of visitors to the Sunshine Coast are day trippers while the most significant section of the market is the domestic family market, most of which are from Brisbane;

- the increasing percentage of overseas visitors;

- the fact that tourism will not only remain the most important single employer and industrial sector within the Shire, but is expected to increase proportionally in importance, ensuring strong growth in the coastal population centres and driving other strong sectors, such as the building and retail and commercial sectors.

- the importance of Maroochy Shire's natural and rural character and relaxed lifestyle, reflected in its beaches and hinterland landscapes to the maintenance of a strong tourism base;

- the natural and rural resources which may be appropriately and sustainably exploited by encouraging more eco-tourism, off-road trail networks linking natural features, and rural type accommodation where

impacts have been assessed and will not adversely affect environmentally sensitive areas; and

- the importance of the settings and character of the rural towns and their environs along with that of the rural roads which link them as an important part of the overall tourist experience.

8.3 Tourism Strategy

The following outlines the planning strategy developed to address the issues raised above.

8.3.1 Central to the tourism strategy is the protection of the Shire's natural, rural and tourist areas across the Shire. This includes the establishment of a stronger environmental framework and maintaining the village character of the rural towns and their environs, particularly those on the Blackall Range, and the protection of the amenity of rural roads.

8.3.2 The role of the larger coastal communities as the dominant tourist Precincts is recognised through identification and promotion of specific tourist nodes enabling the concentration of tourist facilities and minimising the impact of tourist areas on other residential areas.

8.3.3 The establishment of stand-alone tourist facilities is encouraged in appropriate locations throughout the Shire where they contribute to the whole-of-Shire tourist experience and their development and use is ecologically sustainable.

8.3.4 Tourist facilities will be required to be compatible with surrounding development and display an affinity for the character of the Sunshine Coast.

8.4 Objectives and Implementation Measures

8.4.1 To Promote the Growth of Tourism in Recognition of its Importance to the Shire's Economy in a Manner Compatible with the Natural Environment and the Existing Amenity

The long-term future of the tourist industry in the Shire and on the Sunshine Coast requires a commitment to enhancing the Shire's image. The image which appeals to tourists is that of a broad range of good quality accommodation, commercial facilities and tourist facilities and the preservation of the integrity of the natural environment and its precedence over the built environment.

Tourist facilities should exhibit characteristics of scale, site planning and design which are compatible with the natural features thereby taking advantage of the inherent tourist attraction and compatible with the developed amenity of an area.

Implementation

(1) The Council will preserve and retain the context of the Shire's natural features by:

- implementing the relevant criteria in Section 7.0 of this Volume of the Planning Scheme;

- assessing the impact on the character and identity of a natural feature having regard to a proposal's scale, site planning and proximity, particularly in relation to the stated desired character and intent for the Planning Area and Precinct in which the development site is situated, and the environmental values intended to be protected by any Special Management Area relevant to the site;

- assessing the need for buffering or setting back development on lots adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas;

- where appropriate, requiring the surrender or alienation of land supporting environmentally sensitive areas; and

- with respect to development in the immediate vicinity of water bodies, encouraging the establishment of vegetated riverine corridors which reduce sediment run-off, increase streambank stability and act as biological filters which in turn reduce run-off of nutrients, pesticides and weedicides.

(2) The Council will provide for the enhancement of the character of tourist Precincts by:

- identifying tourist Precincts in which character requirements will be specified. codes, policies or other guidelines may be prepared in some instances;

- assessing whether proposals are compatible with that of existing development and the desired character of the locality, having regard to building height and bulk, street presentation and landscaping;

- assessing the likely traffic generating capacity of each proposal and the impact of the amount and type of traffic on the safety, character and efficiency of the access streets. Control over access points may be exercised;

- ensuring that pedestrian links are designed to be direct, safe, well lit, pleasant spaces;

- investing in street management and streetscape enhancement schemes; and

- recognising the role of Council provided services, such as swimming pools, parks and playing fields in creating a pleasant tourist environment.

(3) Council in considering applications for tourist facilities will have regard to the compatibility of these facilities with the amenity of the surrounding area and the character of the Sunshine Coast. Where the facilities involve Aboriginal cultural heritage, Council will also have regard to the cultural wishes of the relevant Aboriginal people who have an association with the area.

(4) Development of new premises along the State controlled road network, and in particular, on sites abutting the Bruce Highway and the Sunshine Motorway, is to recognise the potential impacts and provide means for attenuation of 'traffic noise' emissions and dust, and use building and site design and landscaping to improve visual amenity and minimise those impacts.

8.4.2 To Focus Tourist Activity into the Preferred Areas of Mooloolaba, Coolum and Montville

By promoting the concentration of tourist activity into a small number of nodes, the Strategic Plan intends creating compact and interesting tourist centres. It also signals the Council's intention to favourably consider development for tourism purposes in particular areas and to honour its commitments to the ratepayers to focus investments into high quality schemes, such as streetscape upgrading, which improve the Shire's tourist image. Within Mooloolaba, Coolum and Montville are relatively well established tourist nodes which best characterise the tourist experience of their respective localities without being unduly contaminated by non-tourist activities.

Implementation

(1) Council will generally support development applications for tourist accommodation and facilities in the identified Tourist Nodes and at Montville in accordance with the Blackall Range Local Area Code.

(2) Council will favourably consider development applications providing for the expansion or increased density of tourist or commercial centres in the identified Tourist Nodes where such applications are required to increase the area available for tourist activities.

(3) Council may prepare Local Area Codes or other Planning Scheme provisions to better manage development in such areas.

(4) Council may undertake local area improvement programmes in identified Tourist Nodes.

(5) The realisation of this objective means that some tourist facilities are incompatible with the tourist and urban development being encouraged in these locations. In such instances, Council will have

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regard to the proposal's theme, scale, character and compatibility with the existing or intended urban form and the relevant Planning Area intent and desired Precinct character.

8.4.3 To Provide Adequate Opportunity for a Wide Range of Appropriately Themed and Designed Tourist Developments within a Range of Locations and Environments Across the Shire

The Shire provides a wide range of tourist activities, including beaches and water-based activities, mountain retreats, drives in the rural hinterland, rainforest walks and 5-star self-contained resorts. Tourists participating in any one of these activities will require accommodation and a range of commercial and service activities in locations close to the principal activity.

Although there is a small number of well established tourist centres in the Shire, it is recognised that there is a legitimate demand for tourist facilities outside these centres, both in smaller centres and by way of stand-alone facilities. Stand-alone facilities may be supported in areas otherwise unsuited to urban development because of their overriding benefits to the Shire's tourist image. The concentration of such facilities is not encouraged, as the benefits of the stand-alone facilities stem from their contribution towards a network of facilities across the Shire. Concentration may highlight the disadvantages associated with dislocation from urban centres and minimise opportunities for whole-of-Shire tourist experiences to the extent where the advantages to the Shire's image would be overridden.

Implementation

(1) It is recognised that tourist development may be appropriate in a variety of locations throughout the Shire. In assessing relevant applications for such development outside identified tourist areas, the Council will have regard to:

- any impact on the dominance of important natural features;

- the ability of the natural environment to sustain the proposal and its impacts;

- the relevant Planning Area, Precinct and, if applicable, Special Management Area provisions of the Planning Scheme;

- the potential for traffic generation, particularly on arterial roads;

- the impact on the character of an area, the nature of which is important to the Shire's image, likely to be caused by the development itself, the premises or associated advertising devices;

- infrastructure demands;

- where appropriate, the role, intended character, and Statements of Desired Precinct Key Character Elements (in Volume 3) of the centre and the Planning Area in which it is located;

- whether the proposal implies the establishment of urban development where that would otherwise be contrary to the urban and rural objectives of this Strategic Plan;

- the potential for the loss of good quality agricultural and other rural land; and

- whether the proposal contributes towards the objective of providing tourists with a range of whole-of-Shire experiences.

(2) Rural towns have a valuable role to play in the Shire's overall tourist character. Council encourages suitably scaled and themed tourist development in the rural towns, but in assessing applications for such development, it will have regard to the overriding concern that their simple, peaceful character is intrinsic to their on-going appeal, particularly as expressed through the Planning Area intents and statements of desired Precinct character.

8.4.4 To Provide Interesting Road Links Between Rural Towns

Many rural roads within the Shire are an important part of the full tourist experience the Shire can offer. In the long term, their interest value can be sustained by their recognition and the management of land use along them and in areas visible from them.

Implementation

(1) In considering applications for development on land fronting or clearly visible from rural roads regarded as tourist routes, Council will have regard to the implementation criteria of Section 7.0 of this Strategic Plan, with a particular emphasis on their application to the preserving of the existing tourist character.

8.4.5 To Ensure that Development Proposed for Land Adjacent to a Major Tourist Facility is Unlikely to Detract from that Facility

Tourist facilities are generally reliant upon their inherent character and attractiveness. To this end, development which is contrary to the character displayed by a tourist facility or tourist area or is likely to be deleterious to the attractiveness of a tourist facility or tourist area should be discouraged from locating adjacent to such facilities or areas.

Implementation

(1) In assessing development in the vicinity of a major tourist facility, Council will have regard to:

- the visual impact of the proposal relative to the character and design of the major tourist facility;

- the impact of the proposal on the amenity of its surroundings; and

- whether the proposal is likely to negatively impact on the economic viability of the major tourist facility.

8.4.6 To Support the Strengthening of the Major Tourist Facilities as Needed to Cater for the Tourism Market

The Major Tourist Facilities have a high capital outlay and have developed a high profile in the tourism market place. The attractiveness of the facility to the tourist will dwindle if it offers no new incentives to encourage a revisit by previous patrons. To maintain its attractiveness to tourists the facility needs to undergo change to continually strengthen its place in the market and this should be recognised in the planning system.

Implementation

1. Council will generally support applications for the upgrading of or modifications to the Major Tourist Facilities subject to their retention of sensitivity to surrounding land uses and the adequate functioning of the facility in respect of environmental and land use planning issues.

8.4.7 To Encourage the Design of Buildings and Landscapes which Relate to their Physical Context and are User Friendly

Building design can produce a more livable building if the design has regard to local climate, effective use of passive (low energy) design principles, the appropriate use of native landscapes and the physical relationship to adjoining buildings or potential buildings. The visual character of the building is important if it is to be reflective of the Sunshine Coast and respect the immediate amenity in which it is to be located. The building design must not lose sight of its purpose and its accessibility to its users.

Implementation

(1) Development is designed to be in accordance with Council's Planning Scheme codes to ensure that:

- Site layouts, including building and landscape designs address local climate, and topography including such issues as the use of space, effective use of passive (low energy) design principles and site excavation;

- Landscape works appropriately incorporate the use of endemic and non-native species, and shade planting; and

- Pedestrian, disabled and vehicular access, vehicle parking and service areas are adequate, functional and do not unduly compromise other aspects of the development.

(2) Council in assessing applications will have regard to the visual character of a development to ensure that the character of the particular Planning Area, the immediate amenity and the historical and cultural character of the area in which it is located, has been considered. The visual character of a development will also integrate any associated infrastructure which must be designed as part of the total visual presentation.

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