

# Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028

2023 REFRESH



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[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

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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.

**Sunshine Coast Major Events  
Strategy 2018-2028.**

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## 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.

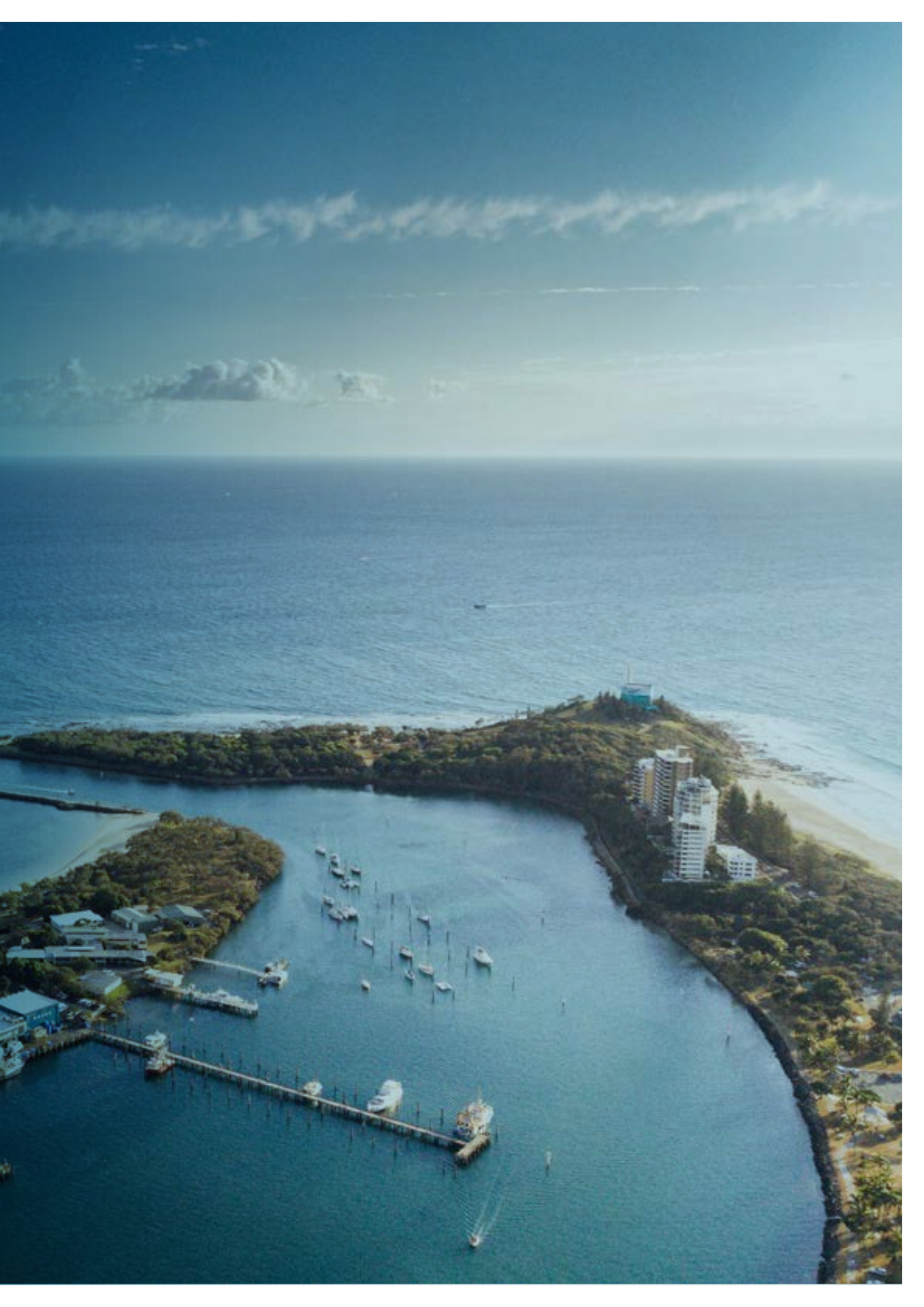




Photo: Barry Alsop — Eyes Wide Open.

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John Williams  
Sunshine Coast  
Events Board Chair

## Foreword

The region's major events portfolio has grown significantly over the past decade — achieving notable successes and making a significant contribution to Council's vision for the Sunshine Coast to be Australia's Most sustainable region: Healthy. Smart. Creative.

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2027 has been strongly supported by Council, key stakeholders, local industry, event organisers, attendees and the wider community. The strategy recommended a review and update of the plan after five years, in order to keep up to date in regional and wider events evolutions. This review has been undertaken, with the strategy now 'refreshed' for 2023-2028.

Many elements of the previous 2018-2027 strategy remain relevant, important, and aligned to Council and community values — and continue to be central elements of the region's major events plan. There are, however, a range of significant impacts and expanding opportunities that are now factored into the strategic plans.

Like the rest of Australia, the Sunshine Coast major events calendar was severely impacted between 2020 and 2022 by COVID-19, with longer term impacts and recovery periods still in place. The cancellation, or reduction, of events during this period was a major challenge for Council and their partner major event organisers — with Council playing a lead role in maintaining financial and operational support to key events to contribute to their longer-term survival. As we stand in 2023, the Sunshine Coast has demonstrated strength and resilience across the region — riding through the earlier challenges and building again to create extensive benefits to the local region.

The announcement of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games is a new and exciting opportunity for all of South-East Queensland, with flow-on benefits to all types of events and industry on the Sunshine Coast. Acknowledging that there is much work to be done in finalising the region's full positioning and planning for 2032, the strategy aligns possible current

and future targets connecting major events to future Olympic opportunities.

Carefully targeted financial support, high quality events and support infrastructure, engaged business and resident communities and ensuring that the branding and promotional benefits of events are fully realised, continue to play important roles in leveraging the benefits that can be created for the region.

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh, continues to develop an expanded focus on the longer-term outcomes and benefits from successful event funding programs. The immediate economic and visitation impact of events will always be a prime measure of success for each project, however, an increase in the reputational, promotional and destination awareness potential of the events program continues to be a key target. In particular, building a plan to support and partner with events of varied scale, content and outcomes allows the region to create an annual overall impact across a range of targeted categories — including an expanded focus on environmental, cultural, accessible and artistic content that drives external regional perception and local community pride.

This refreshed strategy sets a framework which will deliver the vision of the Sunshine Coast being recognised as the premier regional events destination in Australia — where major events deliver maximum results to the economy, communities and stakeholders.

The vision will be achieved through continued productive relationships with partners in the tourism and events industry, and with local businesses and communities to ensure all the benefits of a vibrant and balanced event calendar for the region are fully realised.

# Introduction

The Sunshine Coast: where major events deliver maximum results

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 – 2023 Refresh provides a five-year framework which seeks to maximise the value of major events to the economy and to the region.





The strategy has been developed by Council in close consultation with the Sunshine Coast Events Board and informed through valuable contributions from the tourism and event industry and key regional partners. The refreshed strategy outlines pathways and actions taken during the first five-year period of the previous 2018-2027 strategy, prior to a formal review in 2023 and sets out the priorities and actions for the remaining period 2023-2028.

The refreshed strategy outlines the region's approach to the acquisition, support and assessment of the annual calendar of Sunshine Coast major event products that drive visitation and economic benefit, and is designed to build on the foundations of success established through the region's first Sunshine Coast Major and Regional Events Strategy 2013-2017. It is also designed to align with and contribute to the desired outcomes of the Sunshine Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033, and to assist Council in achieving the broader regional and community objectives envisioned in the Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2023-2027.

Central to its targeted outcomes, the Major Events Sponsorship Program has a vital role to play in the overall tourism strategy for the region, with events being key drivers of visitation, promotion of the destination and long-term brand development of the Sunshine Coast.

This strategy operates in conjunction with Visit Sunshine Coast's Destination Tourism Plan 2020-2025 and its vision to create a sustainable and competitive tourism and events destination. Actions and measures relating to the immediate and longer-term impact of major events on the overall tourism performance of the region form key parts

“The strategy seeks to ensure that the region realises its full potential, ensuring that major events contribute fully to the vision for the Sunshine Coast region to be Australia's most sustainable region: Healthy. Smart. Creative.”

of this strategy, reflecting the contribution a successful major events program makes to broader regional tourism outcomes.

The events and projects referred to in this document are those supported by Council through the Major Events Sponsorship Program. It is acknowledged that a wide range of other event projects are delivered throughout the region that contribute significantly to the achievement of the overall goals of this strategy, and it is intended that the actions and outputs of this plan work closely with other key regional plans with mutually beneficial goals.



## United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

As we advance our vision as Australia’s most sustainable region — Healthy. Smart. Creative. the environmental, social, cultural and economic activities across the region must be carefully balanced to ensure we advance our vision sustainably.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) for peace, prosperity, people and planet provide a comprehensive and internationally recognised framework for us to collectively align

the way we each live, work, learn and play every day — and form an important foundation of the performance measurement framework of our Biosphere.

Council is demonstrating regional leadership by committing to embed the UNSDGs in our strategies, plans and associated progress reporting. Each Corporate Plan goal identifies how it contributes to the UNSDGs and, in doing so, assists to progress our Sunshine Coast Biosphere aim and objectives.



# Our global commitment

Towards this end, this Plan embeds the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) into its actions. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for peace, prosperity, people and planet provide a comprehensive and internationally recognised framework to collectively align the way we each live, work, learn and play every day.

**UNSDG 03** — Our aim is to support events that promote healthy lifestyles and promote well-being across all ages by supporting mass participation and sporting events to promote an active way of life and improved fitness levels within the community.

**UNSDG 08** — With a focus on sustainable economic growth for the region, including high value industries such as tourism, health & wellbeing and sport, our events industry provides valuable and fair employment opportunities for those living within the region.

**UNSDG 09** — Our aim is to grow inclusive and sustainable industries that provide economic outcomes for the region with increased visitation as a result of hosting major events. We will embrace and support innovative ideas through the new 'Emerging Events' category within the major events sponsorship portfolio.

**UNSDG 12** — Our aim is to encourage event organisers to reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse and to adopt sustainable practices by ensuring that organisers have the relevant information for awareness and capability to drive change.

**UNSDG 13** — Our aim is to encourage event organisers to adopt sustainable working practices to reduce their impact on the climate and the environment, assessing their environmental impact on the wider Sunshine Coast region and our UNESCO Biosphere through the funding application process.

**UNSDG 17** — Our aim is to develop stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise to grow and evolve the region's events industry, while continuing to partner with stakeholders across relevant high value industries to advance collective regional economic development objectives.



In June 2022, our Sunshine Coast local government area was recognised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a **biosphere reserve** - where responsible development and people living sustainably sit alongside active conservation.

Our region has joined a global effort of 738 biospheres in 134 countries to balance the environmental, social, cultural and economic needs of today, without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations.

Our region's international recognition as a special place where people are living, working, learning and playing

sustainably highlights the values of our region that we are seeking to protect and enhance, brings new opportunities and a range of possible benefits to our natural environment, community, lifestyle and economy.

Being recognised as a UNESCO Biosphere reserve and maintaining this credential is our region's commitment to create a positive legacy for future generations. Every resident, visitor, business and government entity has a key role to play in maintaining and enhancing the Sunshine Coast Biosphere reserve for our children, grandchildren and all those who will enjoy the prosperity, beauty and liveability of our region into the future.



## Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 – 2023 Refresh

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 – 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. A successful major events program provides content and added value to regional development in economic growth, sports, the arts, tourism, environment and liveability, tourism and social inclusion, and in turn benefits from regional advances in all of these sectors.

## Strategic Alignment

### Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033

The [Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033](#), (REDS) provides a 20-year vision and blueprint for sustainable economic growth. It will help to ensure the region actively participates in the global economy and deliver the lifestyle and opportunities for local residents and businesses alike.

Tourism, sport and leisure collectively forms one of the identified seven high value and growth industries to support the economy and facilitate new investment opportunities. Underpinned by a strong regional reputation for staging both international and home-grown events, the Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's top tourism markets. Council invests strategically and financially in major events that attract tourists during the low seasons and generates media and brand exposure to support the strengthening of the regional economy.

### Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041

The [Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041](#), focuses on inclusive communities by supporting the growth of social connection and collaboration through a place-based approach. Place based planning is an enduring concept in this strategy. Outcomes sought include an emphasis on active transport; community facilities, including supporting facilities, parks, open space and civic spaces; affordable living options; smart infrastructure and sense of place in the public realm.

Major events raise community pride, tolerance and connectedness between residents, the business community and government. Council funds and coordinates a range of community arts and cultural events, all of which complement the overall goals of the Major Events Strategy.

#### Sunshine Coast Creative Arts Plan 2023 — 2038

Designed to stimulate the region's arts sector and create opportunities to build a strong arts community, the Arts Plan aligns with the Major Events Strategy vision for emerging events to connect to the region's larger goals — creating diversity in our event calendar and assisting in the growth of specific local industries.

### Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017

The [Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017](#), builds a pathway to a healthy environment and liveable Sunshine Coast in 2041. The natural environment and how it can be preserved and enhanced, as well as the liveability of the region is the primary focus – enabling a good quality of life for all residents and supporting a strong economy in an accessible and well-connected built environment.

Major sporting events continue to attract international and interstate visitors who keep returning to enjoy the strong connection to nature and to experience the relaxed local culture. Local food production, creative industries and nature-based activities are key features. Changing our ways and transitioning the events industry to a more sustainable, resilient and low carbon way of delivering events continues to progress. Looking forward, the expansion and activation of green space for future generations through accelerated strategic land programs will play an important role in investigating future regional outdoor event spaces.

## Policy and Legislative Context

### State Government

#### Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's Visitor Economy Future

The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport Towards Tourism 2032 strategy is a collective framework to set the direction of tourism in Queensland for the next 10 years. The strategic plan directly supports growing Queensland's economy via good jobs, better services and great lifestyle.

#### Tourism and Events Queensland Events Strategy 2025

The Tourism and Events Queensland Events Strategy 2025 focuses on targeting and leveraging existing, successful events and recognises that major events focusing on participatory sport and recreation are key strengths, with a longer-term approach of increasing business events.

#### Tourism and Events Queensland Events Strategic Plan 2022-2026

This plan sets out Tourism and Events Queensland's strategic positioning, and unique value proposition for the State's tourism and events industry, particularly in growing overnight visitor expenditure and market share for Queensland.



## Commonwealth Government

### Tourism 2020 Strategy

The Tourism Australia's Tourism 2020 Strategy is Australia's national strategy to enhance growth and competitiveness in the tourism industry by focusing on six strategic areas. It is endorsed by all State and Territory Tourism Ministers and brings the existing work, research and collaboration between industry and governments into a single plan — one that links tourism supply with demand.

### Other key tourism planning documents

Other key tourism planning documents that have informed the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh include:

- Visit Sunshine Coast Strategic Plan — 'Success today, and Success tomorrow' 2021-2024
- Visit Sunshine Coast's Destination Tourism Plan 2020-2025



## Context

### Event measures, types and targeted outcomes

Previous Sunshine Coast Major Event strategies have focused on achieving consistent growth in economic impact through major events. In 2018, a target was set to increase economic impact by \$4 million each calendar year to demonstrate targeted outcomes across the region.

Yearly analysis of the outputs of major event sponsorships show that the strategy was on-track from 2018 through to the significant impact of COVID-19 in 2020 — where highly challenging national and international factors dramatically reduced the ability to meet targets between 2020 and 2022.

Early indications from economic impact outcomes in 2022/23 demonstrate a very strong return to targeted outcomes, clearly showing that the attraction of events and visitors remains a specific strength of the Sunshine Coast Region.

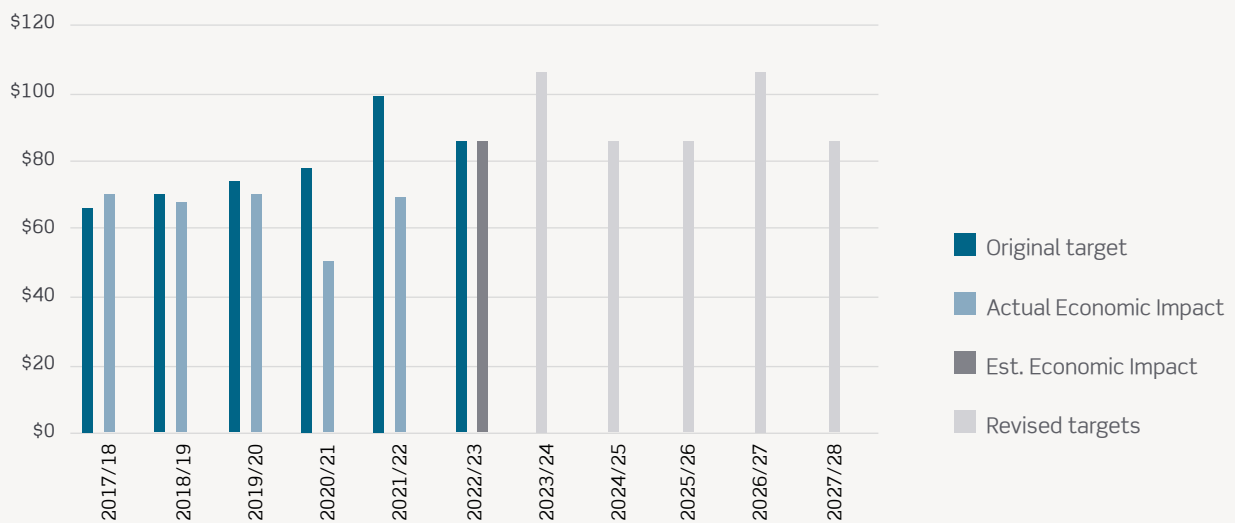
The major event rebound from COVID-19 in 2022/23 (which appears to be on track to achieve the target of \$86 million in direct economic impact) is clearly an excellent sign for future industry and calendar growth. Future economic impact targets, need to take into account:

- Rising costs and financial challenges for event organisers (driving larger sponsorship requests)
- Financial resources available through Council (the budget for major event funding has remained stable since 2019)
- Wider community and Council expectations on outcomes and benefits that can be achieved through hosting major events (broader than just economic impact).





## Economic Impact of Sponsored Major Events — 2017 to 2028



\*note that targets in 2023/24 and 2026/27 are increased, due to the contracted delivery of the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships within the Sunshine Coast during these periods. \*\*the figures and targets above reference only the events and programs funded through the current Major Events sponsorship model. Further investment and return from the lead up to and delivery of the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games are not included in these forecasts.

## Major events on the Sunshine Coast — progress since 2018

The Sunshine Coast major events industry and positioning has grown significantly since the release of the strategy in 2018. The implementation of strategic plans and tasks from 2018 saw a significant increase in achievements that have contributed to the longer-term economic goals of the region.

### Direct impact since 2018

Economic outcomes for events funded from the Major Event Sponsorship Program from the first five years of this strategy include:

Support for more than

**286 major events**

throughout the Sunshine Coast region

**73 new events** to the region

Economic impact of

**approximately \$327.52 million**

Supported over

**3,588 Full Time Equivalent jobs**

Return on Investment of more than

**1:29 sustained over** the five-year program

Key successes include:

- Elevating connections and partnerships with key state and national stakeholders (such as Tourism and Events Queensland) who now partner with the Sunshine Coast in the attraction and support of more than 13 events per year (an increase of 180% since 2018)
- Securing and hosting the first ever NRL regular season matches on the Sunshine Coast, culminating in the hosting of a preliminary final in 2021
- Successfully delivering the 2021 Surf Life Saving Australia National Championship 'The Aussies', followed by securing a long-term deal to host the event three times over the next 10 years
- Securing and hosting two Elton John concerts in 2020 as part of the international 'Farewell Yellow Brick Road' tour
- Significantly elevating the profile and success of key local events such as the Queensland Garden Expo
- Developing and ongoing partnership with strategically driven events (such as The Curated Plate culinary festival) that create outcomes and economic returns for the region far beyond actual visitation to the events
- Maintaining a calendar of events and providing significant support for local event-related businesses, during the impact of COVID-19
- Continuing to strive for successful outcomes as defined in the 2018 strategy post COVID-19, showing a rapid and powerful return to pre-pandemic targets and level of activity.



## COVID-19 impact on outcomes

These outcomes were all achieved during the period of greatest impact from COVID-19, significantly reducing visitor numbers and event scale from 2019/20 to 2021/21. With even greater impact being experienced by other destinations across Australia, the Sunshine Coast was able to support the continuation of events and related industries strongly enough to see a substantial re-bounce in 2021/22.

Financial Year	# of supported Events	New events	Existing events	Business events	Total event 'primary purpose' Visitors	Local event organiser Spend \$M	Economic Impact \$M	Total FTE Jobs	ROI
2017/18	64	17	47	0	148,608	\$4.63	\$69.90	775	1:32
2018/19	63	16	47	0	141,552	\$4.98	\$67.84	753	1:31
2019/20	54	8	36	10	136,469	\$4.16	\$69.96	790	1:30
2020/21	46	11	35	0	91,736	\$2.65	\$50.52	500	1:21
2021/22	62	21	36	5	129,597	\$4.22	\$69.30	770	1:30

## Changing needs over time

Evolving definitions and expectations of the benefits of major events require a broader range of factors to be included in investment decisions:

- Regional representation and profile (how do these events enhance the reputation of the Sunshine Coast, to drive community pride and external perception)
- Event content and type (broadening the events calendar to develop and showcase the region's arts, music, cultural, environmental and social offerings, and our communities)
- Regional spread (ensuring the benefits of hosting events are spread as widely as possible)
- Links to other Council priorities (promoting and showcasing Council's environment, community, and other regional strategies)
- Local industry benefits (building and assisting local business of all types)
- Support new and emerging events as well as established or existing events in the portfolio.











It is clear that these additional factors are of significantly higher importance to the Sunshine Coast community and key stakeholders than they were prior to COVID-19 and measuring event outcomes based on direct economic impact alone may exclude events that drive other valuable regional benefits.



“ In 2023, a refined definition of major event categories was created – designed to broaden the categories for selection of sponsored major events, and clearly demonstrate how each event model contributed to the overall ‘balanced portfolio’. ”

## New event category definitions — 2023 and beyond

The strategic major event categories are designed to provide impact and opportunity for wider event sponsorship outcomes, while retaining the importance of providing direct economic impact to the region and local business.

Sponsorship Types			
 Sponsorship Category	 Signature Events	 Economic Drivers	 Emerging Events
Investment	 High	 Low Medium	 Low
Target outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National scale and awareness</li> <li>• Very high economic impact (and/or) Very high-profile impact</li> <li>• Regional / industry opportunities</li> <li>• Significant promotional value</li> <li>• TEQ / Government major partnerships</li> <li>• Olympic and Paralympic strategic alignment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong return on investment</li> <li>• Spread across calendar year</li> <li>• Bed nights / direct visitor spend</li> <li>• Outcomes as assessed in existing event strategy and process</li> <li>• Reach yearly economic and strategy goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build diverse Calendar (content and location)</li> <li>• Profile new and emerging content</li> <li>• Demonstrated growth potential</li> <li>• Assist in event and industry growth</li> <li>• Meet community and visitor expectations</li> </ul>
Number of Events Annually Supported	4 – 6	30 – 50	3 – 5
Percentage of Investment	 Medium	 High	 Low

(Note that these event categories outline only those included in Council’s Major Events Sponsorship Program. Wider areas of Council’s support of regional events, and how they connect to this strategy, are outlined in Appendix two of this plan)

Event applications for Council support will be assessed in three areas:

## 1. Signature Events

Signature events are 'game changers' for the region. They will have national scale and awareness to make a direct and immediate impact on the Sunshine Coast's reputation and perception. They will have a strong connection to strengths and opportunities within the region, for tourism or other related industries. They will also partner with Tourism and Events Queensland or other state or federal agencies to drive partnerships related to Council investment.

**Outline: An estimated four to six 'signature events' will be supported per financial year, each sponsored at a significant financial level to create the greatest outcomes.**

## 2. Economic Drivers

Economic drivers are the backbone of the economic outcomes through the major events portfolio. While they may provide additional benefits to the region and the community, their main role is to drive significant immediate economic impact — bringing funds into the region for tourism operators and local businesses. They will be selected on their ability to maximise the financial benefit for the Sunshine Coast relevant to the cost of securing the event (return on investment).

**Outline: An estimated 30-50 'economic drivers' will be supported each financial year, together delivering the vast majority of the targeted direct economic impact.**

## 3. Emerging Events

Emerging events connect to the region's larger goals — creating diversity in our event calendar and assisting in the growth of specific local industries. They will deliver new and unique content to the Sunshine Coast and demonstrate strong community and audience support. A small number of emerging events will be financially and operationally supported for up to a three-year period by the Major Events Sponsorship Program — at an investment level significant enough to make a meaningful contribution to the growth and future success of the event. Emerging events may not necessarily meet traditional economic impact targets in their formative years, however they will demonstrate potential for growth and ability to move to other funding sources after the completion of a partnership with Council.

**Outline: Only a selected few 'emerging events' will be supported each financial year (maximum three to five), with competition likely to be strong for the available places and financial support.**

## Overall, between 2023 and 2028 – The Balanced Sunshine Coast Major Events Calendar will:



Maintain an overall direct economic impact of \$86 million per year



Attract in excess of 160,000 primary purpose event visitors, creating over 1,000 Full Time Equivalent jobs each year



Sponsor and support between 40 and 60 major events across the three categories per year, noting an emphasis on quality over quantity



Create and drive growth and profile of regional event related businesses, increasing supplier listings within [www.eventsconnect.sunshinecoast.qld.au](http://www.eventsconnect.sunshinecoast.qld.au) by 30 or more businesses each year



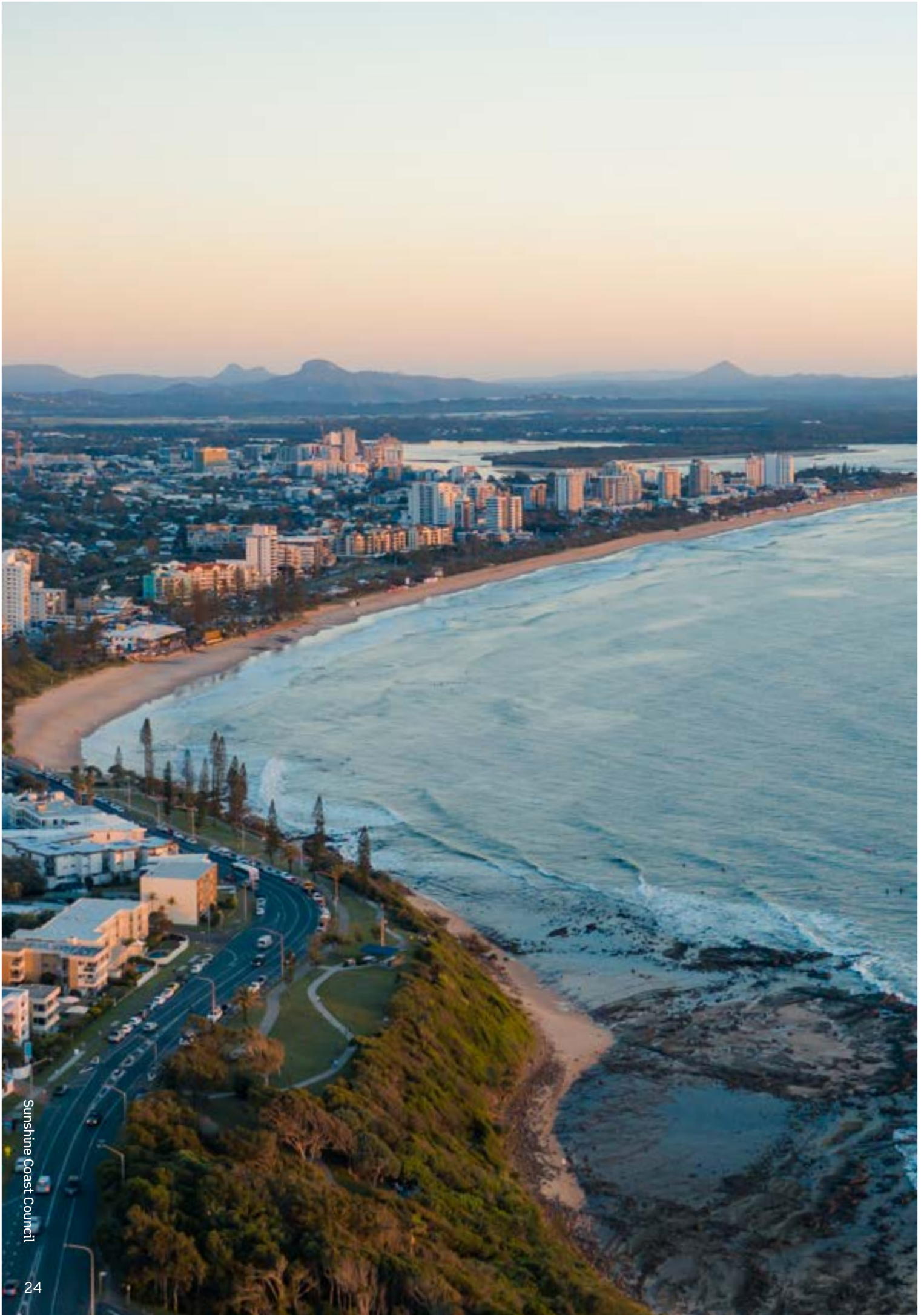
Work with three to five 'emerging events' each year to create opportunities for unique and profiling content for the Sunshine Coast



Align and attach the positioning and audiences of four to six 'signature events', and three to five selected 'emerging events' per year to the outputs and projects of key regional stakeholders such as Tourism and Events Queensland and Visit Sunshine Coast



Provide annual reports to Council and the wider regional community outlining yearly outcomes in economic impact, regional promotion and positioning, local industry support, growth of emerging events and wider community and industry benefits.





# Strategic Direction

The Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's most popular visitor destinations, making tourism and events highly important local economic drivers. Sunshine Coast Council's vision is for the Sunshine Coast to be *Australia's most sustainable region: Healthy. Smart. Creative.*

Becoming a nationally recognised destination through the hosting of a rich variety of major events each year has an important role to play in achieving this vision. These events generate visitor expenditure which supports local businesses, as well as contributing to a range of liveability and community development objectives.

The recent announcement of the hosting of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in south-east Queensland significantly increases the opportunities, and perhaps the expectations, for further event support and benefits. In the early stages of the development of the region's 2032 plans and strategies, the major events portfolio will continue to play a key role in enhancing the reputation of the region, its local businesses and community, by partnering in the delivery of national and international scale events.

## The role of events in contributing to a Healthy. Smart. Creative. region

Major events are important catalysts for regional reputation, economic development, social inclusion and community well-being. The economic impact of major events can be broad and far-reaching. The region benefits from increased visitation (e.g., boosted accommodation, transport, food and business expenditure) and also the

localised expenditure associated with holding the event (e.g., equipment and service hire). This additional spending can provide significant stimulus to local businesses and enhance the viability of the tourism and tourism-dependent industries. According to Tourism Australia, for every dollar spent on tourism activities, another 91 cents is generated in other parts of the economy\*. Hosting major events is one way to build a region's national and international reputation.

\*Source — Tourism Australia Annual Report 2016/17

In addition, the ability to connect with attendees and the wider event audience provides opportunities for longer term visitation, economic and industry benefit to the region. Major events attract large participant numbers who experience what the region has to offer and become advocates for future interaction — either by themselves and their families, or through their own networks and contacts.

The media, broadcast and digital exposure provided by events expands the audience even further — showcasing the region's attractions and activities directly to consumers and potential future visitors.

In this way, major events have a significant role to play in the building of destination awareness and in preference (if choosing a destination to visit, how likely are the region's target market to choose the Sunshine Coast above other competitor destinations).



Sunshine Coast Council

Major events therefore deliver both short and longer-term value to the region in the form of:

### Immediate term (during the event)

- Direct economic impact
- Business and industry involvement
- Increase in destination awareness
- Showcasing of regional strengths
- Participation for local community.

### Longer Term

- Repeat visitation from event participants
- Contribution to increase in wider visitation (through destination promotion)
- Event industry development
- Improved attractiveness as a place to live work, or play.

“ According to Tourism Australia, for every dollar spent on tourism activities, another 91 cents is generated in other parts of the economy\*. Hosting major events is one way to build a region’s national and international reputation. ”



## Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

After the ground-breaking announcement in 2021, the Sunshine Coast is now part of an incredible, once-in-a-generation journey to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Sunshine Coast Council, as a key Games Delivery Partner for Brisbane 2032, is taking the opportunity to set its own legacy vision. With less than 10 years to go, Council wants to achieve something very exceptional for Brisbane 2032. To set a new and bold vision of legacy for our region before Brisbane 2032 even take place; legacies that would benefit not only the Sunshine Coast, but also lead solutions and create benefits beyond our region.

Major events within the region are clearly linked to the development phases and outcomes in the lead up to Brisbane 2032 and play a significant role in building the industry and reputation of the Sunshine Coast as a globally recognised location for international sport and festival events.

At the commencement of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2028-2033, the Major Events Sponsorship Program will continue to focus on hosting events that provide the greatest direct benefit to the economy and local industry — with an initial wide view of upcoming 2032 opportunities. As regional, state and national strategies and targets are further defined and

developed for Brisbane 2032, the pathway for major events will evolve to include greater partnerships and references to 2032 related events of all kinds, to play a larger role in the region's investment and outcomes for Brisbane 2032.

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy will be fully reviewed in 2028 — to align with further developed Brisbane 2032 strategies and outline how major events will be driven and structured between 2028 and 2032.

Venues and events on the Sunshine Coast hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games:

- Kawana Sports Precinct: Football and Basketball
- Alexandra Headlands (staging area): Marathon, Race Walking, Kiteboarding, Cycling Road Race and Time Trial, Paralympic Marathon and Cycling
- Sunshine Coast Hinterland: Mountain Bike
- Maroochydore City Centre: Athletes Village

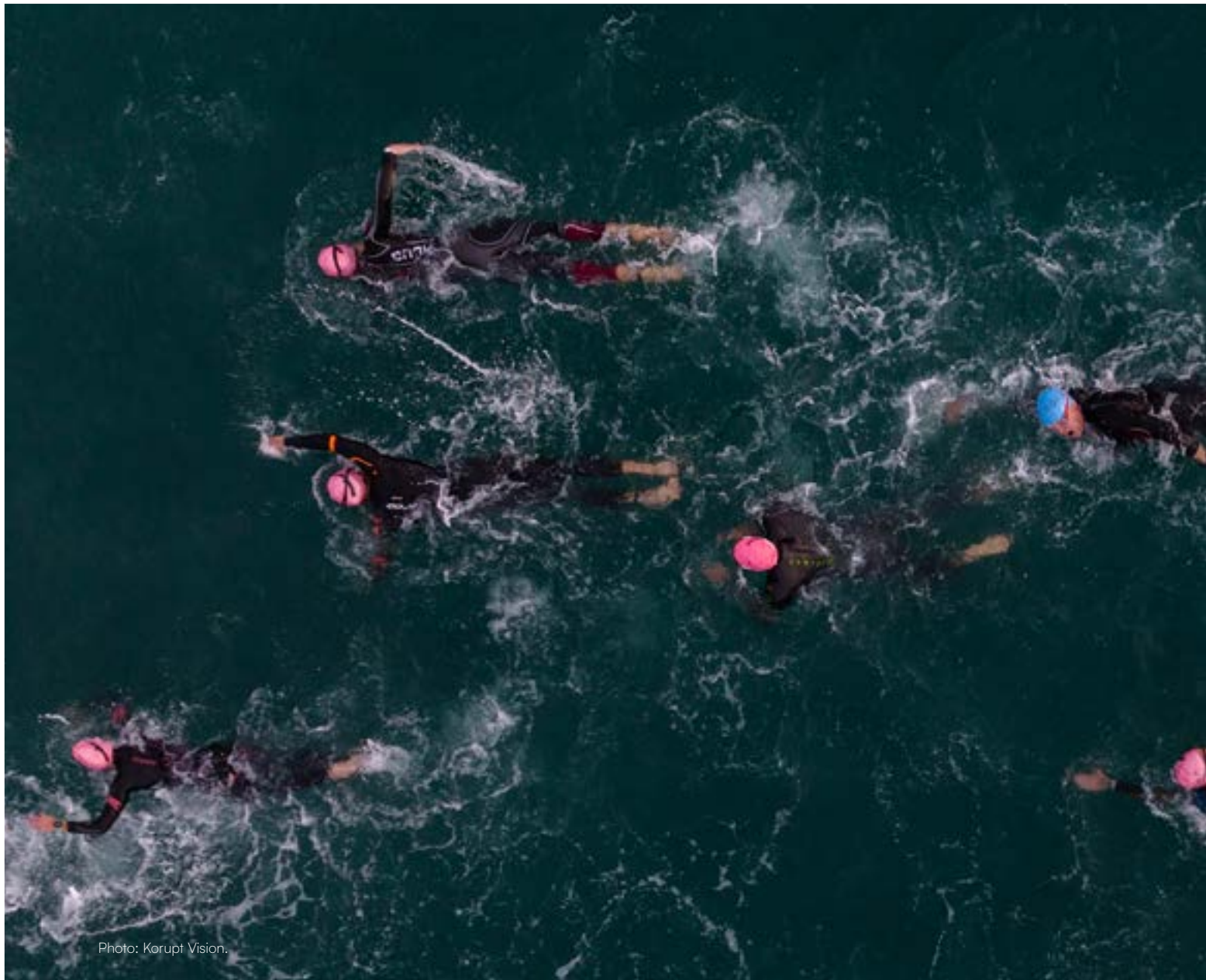


Photo: Korupt Vision.

## Council's commitment

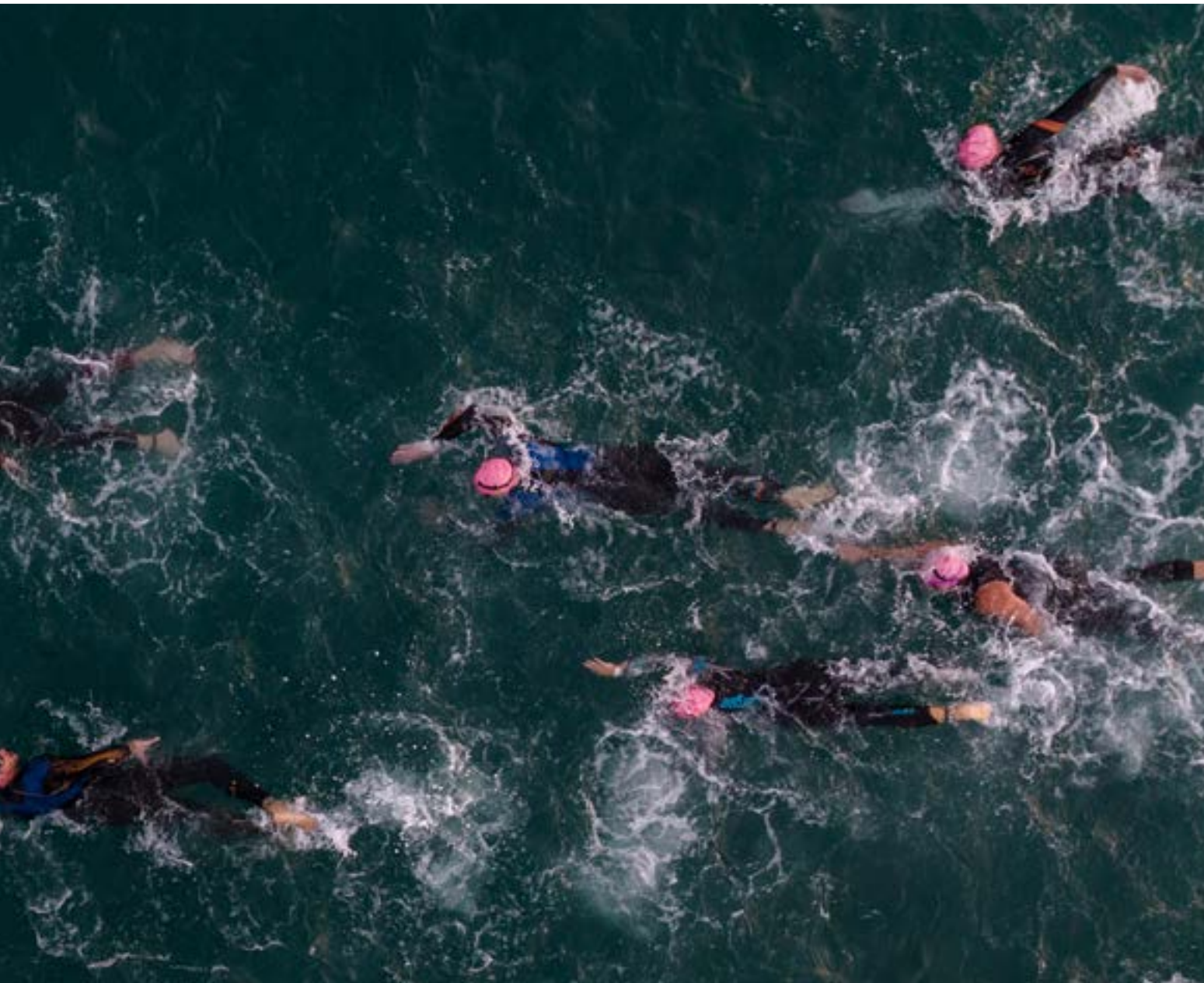
### Building on success — event value optimization

The Sunshine Coast's major events portfolio has grown significantly over the past 15 years. Leadership provided by Council and the Sunshine Coast Events Board has been instrumental in reaching a point where the focus on attracting and supporting events can shift from quantity (volume of events) to quality (i.e. the events which best deliver our objectives).

To enhance value from the events program, Council will continue to develop its selection and support processes to ensure that it is selecting and funding activities which, in combination, offer a diverse calendar of projects which deliver across all the key goals.

The concept of program diversity is vital to achieving the range of desired outcomes — both in terms of location and timing (to spread the impact and benefit as widely as possible across the region and the calendar year), and in nature or type of event and identified target audience (to reach the optimum balance between the short-term economic return and the longer-term destination benefits of the program).

While immediate and measurable economic impact will always be at the centre of project selection, in practical terms this may result in some projects being chosen based on their potential to drive awareness, reach a wider audience outside the region, or to fill an identified gap in the current event program.



The region's approach also needs to be mindful of the underpinning infrastructure necessary to support event delivery. This will require understanding of current event venue capability, identification of new venues or additional capacity required to support objectives, and a cooperative approach with Council and regional stakeholders in the development and delivery of future facilities plans.

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh, outlines how the Sunshine Coast is evolving its processes for supporting specific types of events that together make an overall contribution to the region. Previous assessment methods have focused on direct economic impact — rating return on investment only by the level of local spend created during the event itself. This traditional method has restricted the event selection process as it highly favours certain types of events that are able to directly meet the assigned targets.

“ Events will play a big part to showcase Queensland in the lead up to Brisbane 2032, and the Sunshine Coast is well positioned to be a destination of choice for visitors to experience its diverse calendar of events. ”

**Tourism and Events Queensland**

Allowing events of differing scales and types to be assessed in slightly different pathways allows the overall assessment of economic benefit to be shared across a range of outcomes — creating a greater sense of a “balanced” event portfolio.

## Current Event Landscape

### Governance and partnerships


A number of partners and stakeholders are directly involved in securing, promoting, supporting and delivering the region's major events.

### Sunshine Coast Council – Council's role

Council plays a number of roles for events hosted in the region:

- As the lead agency for development and delivery of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh, Council actively pursues new event opportunities, oversees the management of the Sponsorship Program and provides specific resources to supported events to maximise their benefit to the region. Through the application of the Major Events Sponsorship Program, Council invests significant funding in the acquisition and development of events across the region
- Funds and coordinates a range of community arts and cultural events such as [Horizon Festival](#), [Caloundra Music Festival](#), and a range of other community events
- Provides funding opportunities through the [community grants program](#) through initiatives such as the Regional Arts Development Fund, and the Creative Industries Investment Program
- Planning, supporting and developing regional, district and community sports facilities
- Management of sporting, leisure and entertainment at venues and facilities including [Nambour Showgrounds](#), [Caloundra Indoor Stadium](#), [Maroochydore Multi Sports Complex](#), [Sunshine Coast Stadium](#) and the [Kawana Sports Precinct](#), [Venue 114](#) and community spaces
- Oversees the permit and operational planning process for all events, liaising with local stakeholders to ensure safe and well-managed events
- As a co-host City for the [Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games](#), Council will identify and secure an enduring legacy for the Sunshine Coast and work collaboratively with the Community Reference Group and key partners to identify Sunshine Coast specific themes, opportunities, and challenges.





## Sunshine Coast Events Board and Working Groups

The [Sunshine Coast Events Board](#) was established in November 2013 following Council's adoption of the Sunshine Coast Major and Regional Events Strategy 2013-2017. Collectively the nine-member Board provides strong leadership and sound advice in support of the Strategy.

The Board's role is to:

- Oversee the implementation of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy
- Provide strategic advice to Council on issues and collaborative opportunities to support the region's investment in existing major events (including reviewing sponsorship applications)
- Secure new major events for the region.

The Sunshine Coast Events Board is recognised as having played an instrumental role in growing the value of events to the local economy. It is widely viewed as effective and efficient, providing an optimal mix of industry and expert input to decision-making.

Two working groups support the Sunshine Coast Events Board:

- The role of the Existing Portfolio Working Group is to develop and retain existing major events and maximise their value by advocating, educating and leveraging as well as identifying infrastructure and investment needs
- The New Major Events Working Group identifies opportunities to secure new major events, and reviews and comment on sponsorship applications for new events.

## 2032 Sunshine Coast Legacy Plan Community Reference Group (CRG)

The 2032 Sunshine Coast Legacy Plan Community Reference Group (CRG) will help shape the region's legacy plan arising from Council being a key delivery partner for Brisbane 2032.

Established in early 2022 and chaired by two-time Paralympian and USC Public Health Lecturer Dr Bridie Kean, the group met on several occasions to develop a Brisbane 2032 legacy vision and aspirations for our future generations, 10 years before, during and after. This is the regions 10+10+ Vision.

The CRG comprises of 16 community representatives with Sunshine Coast Council represented by Mayor Mark Jamieson and Councillor Maria Suarez. The community representatives cover a wide range of interests which include First Nations, People with a Disability, Sport and Recreation, Business, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Events, Young People, the Environment, and Education.

“ Through the application of the Major Events Sponsorship Program, Council invests significant funding in the acquisition and development of events across the region ”



## Visit Sunshine Coast (VSC)

[Visit Sunshine Coast's \(VSC\)](#) core role is to promote the Sunshine Coast as a premier holiday and business events destination locally, nationally and internationally, as well as to develop the resilience and capability of the regional tourism industry. VSC works closely with Council and event organisers to leverage marketing and promotional benefits for the region from supported major events. Under the guidance of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh, VSC will continue to have a significant role to play in the future of the events program, particularly in relation to the actions and goals surrounding destination branding, audience reach and the specific event leveraging program.

## Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ)

[Tourism and Events Queensland \(TEQ\)](#) is a statutory body of the Queensland Government and the state's lead marketing, tourism experience and destination development and major events agency. TEQ works collaboratively across government and in partnership with industry and destination stakeholders to identify, attract,

develop and promote a distinctive and coordinated events calendar that generates economic and social benefits across Queensland and highlights the state's unique destinations and showcases why Queensland is home to world class events.

## Venue and Industry Partners

Event organisers, venues and suppliers play a vital role in the management and delivery of events in the region. High quality event promotion and organisation, along with welcoming and professional venues have played a large role in the growing profile of the Sunshine Coast as a premier event destination. The region is fortunate to have access to a network of suppliers, sporting and cultural organisations who are well equipped to continue the diversification and growth of the local industry.

[The University of the Sunshine Coast \(USC\)](#) continues to play an increasing role in major events. As home of the [Sunshine Coast Lightning](#) netball team and the [Australian Cycling Academy](#), USC is developing a national profile as an industry leading home of elite sport.





Photo: Jordan Clune.



Photo: OuterImage.

## Local Business

Local businesses drive and share the economic benefits created for the region through major events. Collaboration and communication with local businesses are vital to ensuring potential outcomes are fully realised.

In 2022, the business community created the ‘Sunshine Coast Events Industry Association’ — an independent group of residents with a strong drive to maximise return for the local economy. With support from Council, they deliver a range of programs for businesses, including connections, opportunities and promotion for event related businesses.

## Community

Central to the success of any event strategy is the level of support garnered from the local community. Participants in Sunshine Coast events often comment on the welcoming and friendly atmosphere, and on the dedication and size of our volunteer workforce. Events in the region also attract a loyal group of local participants, audiences and attendees, who help to sustain the event products and create the atmosphere and experience our visitors are drawn to.

“ The region is fortunate to have access to a network of suppliers, sporting and cultural organisations who are well equipped to continue the diversification and growth of the local industry. ”

It is acknowledged that some major events impact on the local community — creating temporary access or congestion issues. The goals in this strategy focus on spreading the impacts and benefits of major events as widely as possible across the region and communicating both the short and long-term benefits of our strategic investment. Both are vital to ensuring that community and business support is maintained in future years.

## Guiding principles and methods

Best practice – what attributes are typically found in a successful major events destination?



“ There is no single formula that guarantees success, however, there are a number of factors that contribute to making a successful events destination. Sunshine Coast continues to perform strongly against many of these attributes. ”

Figure 2: Event Destination Best Practice Attributes

Strategy and Vision	Current Sunshine Coast status
• A clear vision, goals and objectives with stakeholder and community support	
• A commitment from the region to embrace events, based around strong partnerships between key stakeholders	
Facilities and location	
• Geographical location — proximity to large day visitor and domestic markets, and access via airport gateways	
• High quality natural environment	
• An appropriate accommodation mix throughout the region	
• Investment in event infrastructure to accommodate a range of events — from local community events to mega events, including venues, public transport, etc (noting the future impact of scheduled infrastructure investment and installation for Brisbane 2032)	
• Infrastructure to accommodate diversity of events i.e., indoor venues for <i>weatherproof</i> events (noting the future impact of scheduled infrastructure investment and installation for Brisbane 2032)	
Governance and process	
• Continuous improvement in governance	
• Flexible funding model to support existing event and new event acquisition	
• Clear systems and processes between stakeholders for event planning and management	
Community and business engagement	
• Strong community engagement and continuous feedback for growth and development	
• Local trade and business involvement with events	

Sunshine Coast performs strongly. 
 Progress has been made, however, room for improvement exists



# The Sunshine Coast Advantage

Our competitive advantage – our tourism and major event destination 'brand'.



The Sunshine Coast is proud of its hard-earned reputation as a premier Australian event destination. Excellent event infrastructure, increasingly convenient access, a highly desirable natural environment, and the expertise and commitment of the Council team and its partners combine to enable the region to attract and deliver high-quality major events.

Building a strong destination brand is integral to successfully representing the destination's unique identity and characteristics. Defining the destination's strengths creates awareness, helps it stand out from competitors, and drives bookings.

The Sunshine Coast brand embodies Queensland's Travel for Good principles and is anchored by a common purpose 'To Enrich Lives Through Travel'. In this new era of travel, people actively seek experiences that enrich, awaken and transform them, and, eventually, the world. They want to ignite something new within themselves by consciously connecting with and appreciating our extraordinary planet, its people and cultures.

The Sunshine Coast destination brand is built around the region's personality of being laid-back, playful, welcoming and adventurous, and emphasises our values of sustainability, belonging, abundance and authenticity.

These characteristics are implemented via Visit Sunshine Coast's campaigns such as the current hero campaign called 'Sunshine Moments, For real'. The idea behind the campaign is to leverage what's in our name (i.e., 'sunshine') and go a step further to show visitors how a trip to the Sunshine Coast brings out the sunshine in them. It does this by showing that on the Sunshine Coast 'sunshine' is not just a thing, but a feeling.

The campaign is adapted for various tourism sectors — including conferences and events — each with the common goal of inspiring, energising and connecting with the target market.



Photo: Jesse Lindermann.





Photo: Zoe Worth Photography.

“ Years of hosting successful major events has also stimulated the creation of a well-resourced and experienced event supplier network. ”

## Our destination brand for event participants and visitors

Our destination branding highlights the region's key attributes, which include our:

- Enviably climate, making the destination conducive to outdoor activities year-round
- Pristine, safe and picturesque beaches
- Commitment to sustainability and UNESCO Biosphere status
- Stunning natural environment of the hinterland and Glasshouse Mountains
- Low-density living/space/lack of congestion
- Innovative and sophisticated food and produce
- Quality accommodation and venues
- Curated visitor experiences
- Friendly, safe and welcoming community
- Easily accessible location (Sunshine Coast Airport, major increase in direct services, plus proximity to Brisbane).



## The Sunshine Coast advantage — for event promoters and industry

The Sunshine Coast has long been a proven destination for event promoters, participants and their families and friends. There are many reasons why the region has established a reputation as a destination of choice as a host for major events.

### 1. Holiday Destination = Increased Event Attendance — Key Revenue Driver

The Sunshine Coast destination brand as a desirable visitor destination drives attendance for major events. Participants choosing event options from a crowded national calendar are drawn to the region's attractions and climate — not just for their chosen event activity, but also for the vacation and relaxation options available during their stay.

### 2. Infrastructure, Venues and Facilities

The region has both natural and man-made assets at its disposal to offer promoters. All types of major events are well accommodated, either along the beaches, roads or pathways, or at stadiums and public venues.

### 3. Available, Accessible and Affordable

The Sunshine Coast is easily accessible with its own international airport, train stations and only one-hour drive from Brisbane. It also offers an extensive range of accommodation options of all types and for all budgets. More than one million potential customers live within a 45-minute drive.

### 4. Welcoming Culture

Sunshine Coast residents are known for their welcoming and visitor friendly culture. The tourism industry is one of the region's largest employers, with strong support across all elements of the community. This helps make event promoters' lives easier by making visitors feel valued and appreciated.

### 5. Experienced Event Industry

Key stakeholders across the industry have years of experience in the events business. From State and Local Governments, Tourism, Police, Emergency Services, Department of Main Roads, public transport organisations, National Parks and the University of Sunshine Coast — all of whom work in cooperation to deliver best results for major events and the wider region. Years of hosting successful major events has also stimulated the creation of a well-resourced and experienced event supplier network.

### 6. Investment in Tourism

The Sunshine Coast community is committed both strategically and financially to invest in major events that bring benefits to the region. Council provides significant investment through the Major Events Sponsorship Program to provide direct funding support to targeted events. A dedicated team of major events and tourism staff work with all sponsored events to negotiate Council support and provide specialised local advice and guidance.





# Vision 2028

For the Sunshine Coast to be recognised as the premier regional events destination in Australia where major events deliver maximum results.

This vision is a call to action for the community, all partners and stakeholders in the region's events sector.

The Sunshine Coast has made great strides over the previous five years in establishing its reputation in the events field. However, a renewed focus is essential if the destination is to ensure that we remain at the forefront to maximise the regional benefit provided by major events.

In addition, the perception and desired outcomes for events from our community, industry and key stakeholders continues to evolve — with a desire to support and manage event investment that targets a wider overall value of return to the region — expanding from a single target of creating direct economic impact during the hosting of each event.

Therefore, supported Sunshine Coast major events will be selected based on an overall plan to continue to create a 'balanced calendar' of events across each year. A 'balanced portfolio' will aim to host a wide range of events that continue to achieve targets related to significant direct economic output, but also play a combined role in the promotion and perception of the region's lifestyle, opportunities, and community connections.

For all destinations, events take place within the context of the host environment and broader economy — scale, type, volume and frequency of events are intimately linked to this context. As such, it is unrealistic for the Sunshine Coast to aspire to being Australia's largest event economy, with city destinations and larger visitor hubs are always likely to outperform in overall visitor numbers and absolute dollar value.

However, it is realistic and necessary to maximise the value of major events, specific to the unique circumstances and context of the Sunshine Coast. For the region's key stakeholder and partner groups, major events delivering maximum results means:

## Visitors

Visitors want to come to events on the Sunshine Coast, recognising it as a great place to visit, to recommend to family and friends, and to return to again and again.

## Audience

Audiences for major events see the attractions of the region and identify the Sunshine Coast as a preferred destination for future travel choices.

## Wider regional perception

Out of region connections through events of all types build their knowledge and understanding of the Sunshine Coast, as a modern, desirable location with an enviable lifestyle and expansive opportunities.

## Event organisers

Want to bring their events to the Sunshine Coast and have confidence that the region will provide the infrastructure, support services and market opportunity to deliver the best possible events.

## Local business and community

See the benefits that major events bring and are well informed of the impacts and opportunities they create.

# Goal

To attract, support and grow a diverse calendar of events that promote the region, drive visitation and create lasting benefits for Sunshine Coast businesses and the community.

A clear-sighted and focused perspective is necessary to achieve a vision where the Sunshine Coast is recognised as the premier regional destination in Australia — where major events deliver maximum results.

The region's purpose represents the organisational, investment and management challenges which Council and its regional partners now need to adopt. As major event investment is supported by Council and regional funding, actions which maximise economic benefits are a clear priority. Maintenance and growth in satisfaction levels and engagement among the community, businesses and stakeholders are also key enablers for Council's economic impact ambitions.

Organisationally, priorities will be:

## Targeted event acquisition:

A proactive and flexible approach to targeting new events for the region, securing those events which have the capacity to fully leverage the region's assets and strategic aspirations

## Selective event retention and development:

Nurturing and developing those events that Council wants and needs to retain, ensuring they deliver the very best possible outcomes for organisers and the region as a whole

## Maximising return on investment:

Securing the maximum economic results, supported by assessment and measurement mechanisms which allow transparent and objective decision making

## Developing a diverse and sustainable portfolio of events:

Striving for diversity in the events calendar (audience, location, type and timing) where this supports overall strategic and return on investment priorities

## Linking events to regional priorities:

Using the impact and audience of events to showcase additional regional strengths and priorities such as environment management, accessibility, culture and community connection

## Clearly explain funding sources and impacts:

Outline categories for the types of events and outcomes targeted to contribute to a 'balanced portfolio', including the key factors and potential outputs that define an events capability to deliver targeted results

## Continued excellence in governance and event management:

Continued focus on governance, project selection, measurement of outcomes and targeted event support as key enablers for ensuring major event outcomes continue to be achieved and reviewed

## Targeted event leveraging:

Focus promotional, support and leveraging resources on a small number of targeted event projects — with specific leveraging plans and post event reporting to measure the influence on event outcomes.

“ Maintenance and growth in satisfaction levels and engagement among the community, businesses and stakeholders are also key enablers for Council’s economic impact ambitions. ”



Photo: Zeke Laing.





Photo: Barry Alsop — Eyes Wide Open.



Sunshine Coast Council

## Goal Outcomes

Specifically, the Major Events Sponsorship Program delivers for the region by attracting, supporting and leveraging events that:

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



## Pathways to success

The region will pursue six priority pathways to ensure major events deliver maximum results.

01

### 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

02

### 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

03

### Drive maximum return:

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

04

### Best practice region:

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

05

### Create industry demand:

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

06

### Engage the community:

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



# Pathway 01: Showcase the region’s strengths

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.

Major events have the scale, audience, interest and connection to tell the story of the Sunshine Coast to locals, visitors and wider national and international observers.

The evolution in out of region perception of the Sunshine Coast as a desirable destination and region has in part been driven by the success of the Major Events Sponsorship Program over the past 10 years. Events bring engaged and large-scale audiences, visual representation, and strategic connections to assist in sharing the Sunshine Coast’s brand, strengths and opportunities.

Event connections can showcase all aspects of the Sunshine Coast region and community, creating opportunities to communicate and promote:

- Visitation and destination promotion
- Community pride
- Cultural connections
- Economic and business opportunities
- Environment and sustainability targets
- Accessibility and inclusion
- Natural and physical assets.

The region will strive to continue to build a diverse calendar of major events that together significantly enhance the profile of the Sunshine Coast, feed the consumer need of experiential events and generate targeted returns for the region.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Target new event acquisition opportunities which align with the full range of the region’s assets and unique advantages</li> <li>2. Incorporate alignment with the event destination brand into event selection and assessment criteria</li> <li>3. Partner with specific ‘signature events’ with the greatest capacity to demonstrate and communicate regional strengths, assets and opportunities</li> <li>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</li> <li>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</li> <li>6. Build opportunities to promote additional community and regional goals (beyond just tourism) that showcase the true value of the Sunshine Coast.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Event calendar contains spread of projects across all elements of the destination brand</li> <li>• Quantity of quality event imagery and promotion that portrays the region’s highlights</li> <li>• Build partnerships with ‘signature events’ that have the capacity, reach and uniqueness to ‘tell the region’s story’</li> <li>• Track changes in audience perception and interest in new and expanding event content</li> <li>• Spread of event location.</li> </ul>





## Pathway 02: Balance the Portfolio

**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.

Creating a calendar of events that in combination deliver the full range of targeted outcomes requires an on-going assessment of the list of yearly sponsored major events, and the resulting gaps and opportunities within the wider calendar.

While maintaining the focus on economic impact, ensuring the event portfolio spreads the benefits across the region, and appeals to a wide range of audience and participant types, will result in the greatest overall impact across the Sunshine Coast.

The event categories of ‘Signature’, ‘Economic Drivers’ and ‘Emerging’ events will sharpen selection processes across different event types, working to ensure that all desired outcomes can be achieved at the right scale and level of investment.

In addition to maximising the wider benefits of the sponsorship of events, a balanced portfolio also demonstrates to the local community, and wider national contacts, the growth of the Sunshine Coast’s lifestyle and cultural engagement — profiling a region of unique and evolving programs with diverse and attractive content.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<p>7. Communicate and explain the use of, and opportunities created, by the major events three-tier funding system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear regional understanding of the strategy and goals of the refined major event categories</li> </ul>
<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process confirmed and in operation</li> <li>• Portfolio includes four to six signature events, and three to five emerging events</li> </ul>
<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of at least one new event per year that demonstrates ‘regional spread’</li> </ul>
<p>10. Promote opportunities for event creation in under-represented locations across the region</p> <p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link outcomes of the balanced portfolio to regional and national promotional campaigns.</li> </ul>
<p>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.</p>	



# Pathway 03: Driving Maximum Return

Driving maximum return for event partnerships and sponsorships requires a specific approach to event selection, operational and promotion assistance for partner events, and a clear post event assessment program to consistently measure event outcomes.

Events across all three funding categories will be assessed and measured on potential and actual direct economic benefit through the hosting of the event, based on a combination of:

- Primary purpose regional visitors (PPV) to the event
- Total visitor nights from PPV
- Direct regional spend or investment by event (e.g., event operation local spend by organiser).

In order to maximise these outcomes, Council will drive success by:

- Partnering with an overall calendar of events that meets or exceeds the annual economic impact target of \$86 million per annum
- Working with individual partner event organisers to find ways to increase event scale, duration, or local operational spend
- Select specific use of Council and regional partner local and national promotional opportunities to drive additional event scale and visitor attendance
- Negotiate agreements with sponsored events that ensure Council investment maximises potential ROI
- Continue to evolve event data assessment processes to ensure each events overall economic impact is measured consistently and as accurately as possible.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<p><b>13.</b> Review the major events portfolio on an annual basis to assess those which best meet strategic objectives and offer the best growth/leveraging potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ROI of targeted events</li> <li>• Overall annual economic impact, reaching or surpassing \$86 million per year</li> </ul>
<p><b>14.</b> 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased reportable outcomes against strategic goals through targeted events</li> </ul>
<p><b>15.</b> Develop and implement specific ‘leveraging plans’ for the targeted events in conjunction with VSC, and the event organiser</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reported increase in total ‘local spend by organiser’ across the ‘economic drivers’ portfolio</li> </ul>
<p><b>16.</b> Post event, prepare specific leveraging reports for each targeted event to track outcomes and make future recommendations for support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase subscribers to ‘Events Connect’ by 10% each year.</li> </ul>
<p><b>17.</b> Where possible, and in keeping with the goals and pathways of this strategy, sign events up to three-year contracts to achieve maximum ROI over a longer cycle</p>	
<p><b>18.</b> Continue the development and knowledge of ‘Events Connect’ — the Sunshine Coast ‘supplier portal’ — to create and connect opportunities for increased event delivery spend through local businesses and organisations.</p>	



# Pathway 04: Best Practice Region

Maximising results through being a best practice region. *Be a leader in process and governance.*

Council will be a leader in sustainable event delivery, governance, management and support services. This means continuing to build on what is already good practice in areas such as process and governance, sponsorship selection, event acquisition, event sustainability and organisational support for major event projects.

Organisationally, Council will maintain and further grow its status as a leader in process and governance for major events by continued improvement through:

- Connecting all event sponsorship agreements to expected economic, accessibility and environmental practices and policies — including the use of event partnerships to promote Council’s overall regional goals and strategies
- Building on current governance and decision-making structures — undertaking annual reviews of governance procedures, building on change management and succession planning support where required
- Committing to clear and transparent communications with event, business and community partners
- Establishing best practice procedures in contracting, measurement and assessment of Council supported major events
- Working with all regional stakeholders to continually improve event practices and processes across all major events, to enhance our reputation for quality, safety, and customer experience.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<p><b>19.</b> Review procedures in contracting, measurement and assessment to maintain the region’s best practice status in these areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customer satisfaction survey (event organisers — existing and prospective events)</li> </ul>
<p><b>20.</b> Undertaking annual reviews of governance procedures, building on change management and succession planning support where required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention of high performing existing events</li> </ul>
<p><b>21.</b> Work with key industry stakeholders such as TEQ and VSC to share available data the impact of major events and develop additional methods to track additional outcomes such as repeat visitation from event participants and audiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance in industry benchmarking processes</li> </ul>
<p><b>22.</b> 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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to produce annual reports and data relating to environmental and accessibility outcomes from each major events.</li> </ul>
<p><b>23.</b> Development of centralised online application tool to increase major event visibility across all of Council</p>	
<p><b>24.</b> Create and promote clear guidelines of Council’s environment and accessibility expectation from major events, and the required post event reporting.</p>	



# Pathway 05: Create industry demand

Maximising results through creating industry demand.  
*Grow the profile of the Sunshine Coast as a major event destination to the event industry.*

Council will continue to grow the profile of the Sunshine Coast as a premier major events destination to the event industry by leveraging its growing reputation in the industry — for best practice processes in governance and support services, and clearly communicating its competitive advantages as a major events destination. The region’s profile within the Australian event industry will continue to drive an increase in the number of event proposals and sponsorship opportunities to consider. The intention of this is not to increase the number of projects supported through the Major Events Sponsorship Program, but rather to increase the pool of potential projects to choose between to ensure best fit and maximum return to the region.

Priorities include:

- **Proactive communication:** Proactive and consistent communication which promotes opportunities and inspires ideas to drive more major event applications
- **Strategy outlines:** Clearly and openly promote Council’s objectives and measurement systems for new event support — driving a wider understanding of opportunities for potential ‘signature’, ‘economic driver’ and ‘emerging’ events
- **Growing visibility:** To support the ambitions in new event development and acquisition, the region needs to grow its visibility with key stakeholders and in appropriate industry forums, conferences and industry associations
- **Event acquisition:** A proactive and flexible approach to actively pursue new events for the region, securing those events which have the capacity to fully leverage the region’s assets and strategic aspirations
- **Event retention and development:** Nurturing and developing those events the region wants and needs to retain, ensuring they deliver the very best possible outcomes for organisers and the community as a whole
- **Maximising return on investment:** Securing the maximum economic result, supported by assessment and measurement mechanisms which allow transparent and objective decision making.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of leads, both proactive and reactive</li> </ul>
<p>26. Improve outward facing event support information services (websites, social media platforms, etc.) to present clear and professional information to potential event promoters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals submitted (quality and relevance)</li> <li>• Invitations to participate in state and national event industry processes</li> </ul>
<p>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)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interest from existing events targeted from other regions.</li> </ul>
<p>28. Develop case studies which can be used for future event attraction</p>	
<p>29. Develop additional opportunities for famil visits from key industry targets, and hosting of key industry events</p>	
<p>30. Use Events Connect 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.</p>	





# Pathway 06: Engaging with Community

## Maximising results through engaging with communities

Council will communicate effectively with businesses and the community to continue to build support by promoting the outcomes and benefits of major events. Active engagement by businesses adds considerable value to events, extending expenditure benefits through the economy as well as providing a co-ordinated and coherent experience offering to visitors. Strong levels of support from residents not only provides a potential audience for events, but also helps create a feeling of the major event being 'at home' in the region.

The Sunshine Coast has established strong credentials as a great home for a range of events and has taken advantage of its coastal and hinterland locations as accessible and attractive venues. It will continue to build

on these strengths, but where possible, add an increased focus on spreading projects around the region and across the year to disperse the impacts and benefits as widely as possible. Events should support and showcase the regional values and aspirations, including ecological sustainability, social diversity, innovation and sustainable growth. Major events should encourage and facilitate community pride, tolerance and connectedness between residents, the business community and government. Retaining and building community and business support for investment in events continues to be a priority. Without community support, the events are unlikely to perform to their greatest potential, reputational risk grows and the relationships with event proponents can weaken, resulting in events being potentially lost to competitor destinations.

Actions for 2023-2028	Indicators
Actions	
<p><b>31.</b> Include diversity of location, timing and event type as an influencer in the event selection process (where this is possible without jeopardising program outcomes)</p> <p><b>32.</b> 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</p> <p><b>33.</b> Through the targeted local communication, create additional awareness of local supply and strongly promote opportunities for specific local business to leverage key event projects</p> <p><b>34.</b> Work with key event communication campaigns to, where possible, reduce the effect on businesses impacted by specific events</p> <p><b>35.</b> 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</p> <p><b>36.</b> Ensure meaningful community engagement takes place as part of event planning</p> <p><b>37.</b> 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersal of benefit across region</li> <li>• Specific business opportunities created</li> <li>• Direct local spend by organisers</li> <li>• Event business community support/ awareness of benefit</li> <li>• Community support (as measured in the TEQ Social Indicators Survey).</li> </ul>



## Implementation Overview

Following on from the implementation of the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2027 the Major Events Sponsorship Program for the Sunshine Coast enters the next decade in a position of strength. The region's natural advantages as a tourism and events destination, combined with leadership and significant support from Council and the Sunshine Coast Events Board have attracted, developed and assisted a high- quality calendar of major events that have continually delivered excellent results.

The vision and actions outlined in this strategy is designed to continue to build on the long-term success, by using clear selection tools and desired outcomes to continue to create a 'balanced events portfolio' that maximises the value gained from the Major Events Sponsorship Program. This will be done by ensuring that selection processes for sponsored events align with the goals and calendar structures as outlined in this strategy, including the clear definition and communication of the purposes and outputs related to the three key event categories — 'signature events', 'economic drivers' and 'emerging events'.

In keeping with the purpose to maintain, attract and grow events that promote the region, drive visitation, and create lasting benefits to Sunshine Coast businesses and the community, Council will emphasise both the short and long-term benefits of a diversified calendar of events, balancing the short-term economic return with the



longer-term exposure, perception and awareness benefits that can be created through high-profile projects.

Council will also continue to demonstrate the Sunshine Coast's reputation as a premier major events destination, to drive more applications and interest from event promoters in all categories wishing to bring new products to the region. This increase in the range and number of projects considered for support through the Major Events Sponsorship Program will allow Council to continue to be targeted and selective in supporting the events which bring the best overall value to the region.

After the adoption of this strategy refresh, the Sunshine Coast Events Board and Council will continue to lead the region in the implementation of the actions, goals and measures outlined in this plan.

Cooperation with wider regional stakeholders will, as always, be central to achieving the vision of the strategy.

From 2023 to 2028 this document sets out a range of key pathways and actions to achieve Council's goals. Many of these measures can begin being implemented immediately, and review and measurement of results will continue throughout.

This plan should be formally reviewed in 2028 to check progress against goal outcomes, and see the development of 2032 opportunities and regional targets, and outline a new list of updated actions for 2028-2033.



Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
1. Target new event acquisition opportunities which align with the full range of the region's assets and unique advantages.	1	1,2,3	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB, S&CV
2. Incorporate alignment with the event destination brand into event selection and assessment criteria	1	2,3						TMEU
3. Partner with specific 'signature events' with the greatest capacity to demonstrate and communicate regional strengths, assets and opportunities	1	2,3,4	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB
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	1	1,2,3	Ongoing annually					TMEU



Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
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	1	2,3	Ongoing annually					TMEU, VSC, Event Organisers
6. Build opportunities to promote additional community and regional goals (beyond just tourism) that showcase the true value of the Sunshine Coast	1	2,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
7. Communicate and explain the use of, and opportunities created, by the major events three-tier funding system	2	5,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
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	2	5,6						TMEU, SCEB

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
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	2	3,5,6,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU
10. Promote opportunities for event creation in under-represented locations across the region	2	4,5	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
11. Through connections with VSC and other marketing partners, undertake promotional campaigns to outline new and unique events developing within a diverse and engaging annual event calendar	2	2,3,5	Ongoing annually					TMEU, VSC, TEQ (where applicable), Comms Branch
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	2	1,4,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB, VSC

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
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	3	1,2,3,4,5	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB
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	3	4,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB, SCEIA
15. Develop and implement specific 'leveraging plans' for the targeted events in conjunction with VSC, Council communication resources, and the event organiser	3	1,3	Ongoing annually					TMEU, VSC, Comms Branch, Event Organisers
16. Post event, prepare specific leveraging reports for each targeted event to track outcomes and make future recommendations for support	3	1,2,3,4,5	Ongoing annually					TMEU

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
17. Where possible, and in keeping with the goals and pathways of this strategy, sign events up to three-year contracts to achieve maximum ROI over a longer cycle	3	1,2,3	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB
18. Continue the development and knowledge of 'Events Connect' — the Sunshine Coast 'supplier portal' — to create and connect opportunities for increased event delivery spend through local businesses and organisations	3	4,6	Ongoing annually					SCEIA, TMEU
19. Review procedures in contracting, measurement and assessment to maintain the region's best practice status in these areas	4	4,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU
20. Undertaking annual reviews of governance procedures, building on change management and succession planning support where required	4	4,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
21. Work with key industry stakeholders such as TEQ and VSC to share data on the impact of major events, and develop additional methods to track additional outcomes such as repeat visitation from event participants and audiences	4	1,2,3	Ongoing annually					SCEIA, TMEU, VSC, TEQ
22. Sunshine Coast Events Board and Council's Tourism and Major Events Unit continue to advocate for improved regional coordination of major event operations and delivery services	4	4,6	Ongoing annually					SCEIA, TMEU, SCEB
23. Development of centralised online application tool to increase major event visibility across all of Council	4	4,6						TMEU
24. Create and promote clear guidelines of Council's environment and accessibility expectation from major events, and the required post event reporting	4	2,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
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	5	1,2,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU
26. Improve outward facing event support information services (websites, social media platforms, etc.) to present clear and professional information to potential event promoters	5	1,2,6						TMEU
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).	5	2,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB
28. Develop case studies which can be used for future event attraction	5	1,2,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
29. Develop additional opportunities for famil visits from key industry targets, and hosting of key industry events	5	1,2,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU

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Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
<b>30.</b> Use Events Connect 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	5	1,2,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
<b>31.</b> Include diversity of location, timing and event type as an influencer in the event selection process (where this is possible without jeopardising program outcomes)	6	4,7						TMEU, SCEB
<b>32.</b> 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	6	4,6	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB, Comms Branch
<b>33.</b> Through the targeted local communication, create additional awareness of local supply and strongly promote opportunities for specific local business to leverage key event projects	6	6,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch

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 TEQ — Tourism and Events Queensland.  
 VSC — Visit Sunshine Coast.



Action	Pathway	Link to goal outcomes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Responsibility
<b>34.</b> Work with key event communication campaigns to, where possible, reduce the effect on businesses impacted by specific events	6	6,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Comms Branch
<b>35.</b> 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	6	2,4,6,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, SCEB, Comms Branch
<b>36.</b> Ensure meaningful community engagement takes place as part of event planning	6	7	Ongoing annually					TMEU, Community Land Permits
<b>37.</b> Engage with businesses through feedback surveys to gauge direct impact, monitor community sentiment and collect testimonials on the positive impact of events	6	6,7	Ongoing annually					TMEU





## Appendix 2

### Council investment and support of Sunshine Coast Events

The Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 – 2023 Refresh, outlines the goals, targets and structure of Council's investment in events through the Major Events Sponsorship Program. As outlined, the role of this program is to focus on achieving direct economic and regional positioning to create the greatest overall benefits for the region, industry and community — in line with the Sunshine Coast - Natural Advantage: Regional Economic Development Strategy 2013-2033.

Council does, of course, support and lead a very large range of additional event programs across the Sunshine Coast that make other contributions to our region, community and lifestyle.

Horizon Festival is the Sunshine Coast's leading contemporary multi-arts festival. The festival runs for 10 days and nights with events rich in:

- visual art
- music
- theatre
- dance
- words and ideas
- film
- workshops.

First presented by the Sunshine Coast Council in 2016, Horizon Festival is a key action in the Sunshine Coast Creative Arts Plan 2023—2038.

At its heart, Horizon Festival is deeply connected to place. Celebrating the spectacular natural landscape of the Sunshine Coast region, honouring the stories and artworks of our First Nations people, providing a platform for local artists to extend their practice, and a way for communities to engage, experience and be inspired.

It is the Sunshine Coast's leading contemporary multi-arts festival, presenting 10 days and nights of visual art, music, theatre, dance, words and ideas, film and creative workshops, inspired by the stories and beauty of the Sunshine Coast.



## The Caloundra Music Festival (2007-2025)

The Caloundra Music Festival (CMF) brings a diverse audience of local communities and visitors together to celebrate the best high-quality music and Sunshine Coast culture and food. The festival will generate sustainable economic benefits and showcase the Sunshine Coast's environmental credentials by aspiring to become the region's first net zero music event.

In achieving its vision CMF will seek to be a 'sustainable' event delivering on triple bottom line outcomes:

- Stimulate the local economy
- Showcase Caloundra, and the Sunshine Coast, as a vibrant and diverse tourist destination
- Celebrate the region's unique heritage, character, culture and local creative talents
- Encourage community participation and build capacity and
- Embrace our unique environment and promote Council's vision of sustainability.

This not-for-profit family-friendly community event celebrates the environment, cultural achievements and community pride of the Caloundra area.

## Community Grants

Council offers a range of grants and funding for community projects and artistic development.

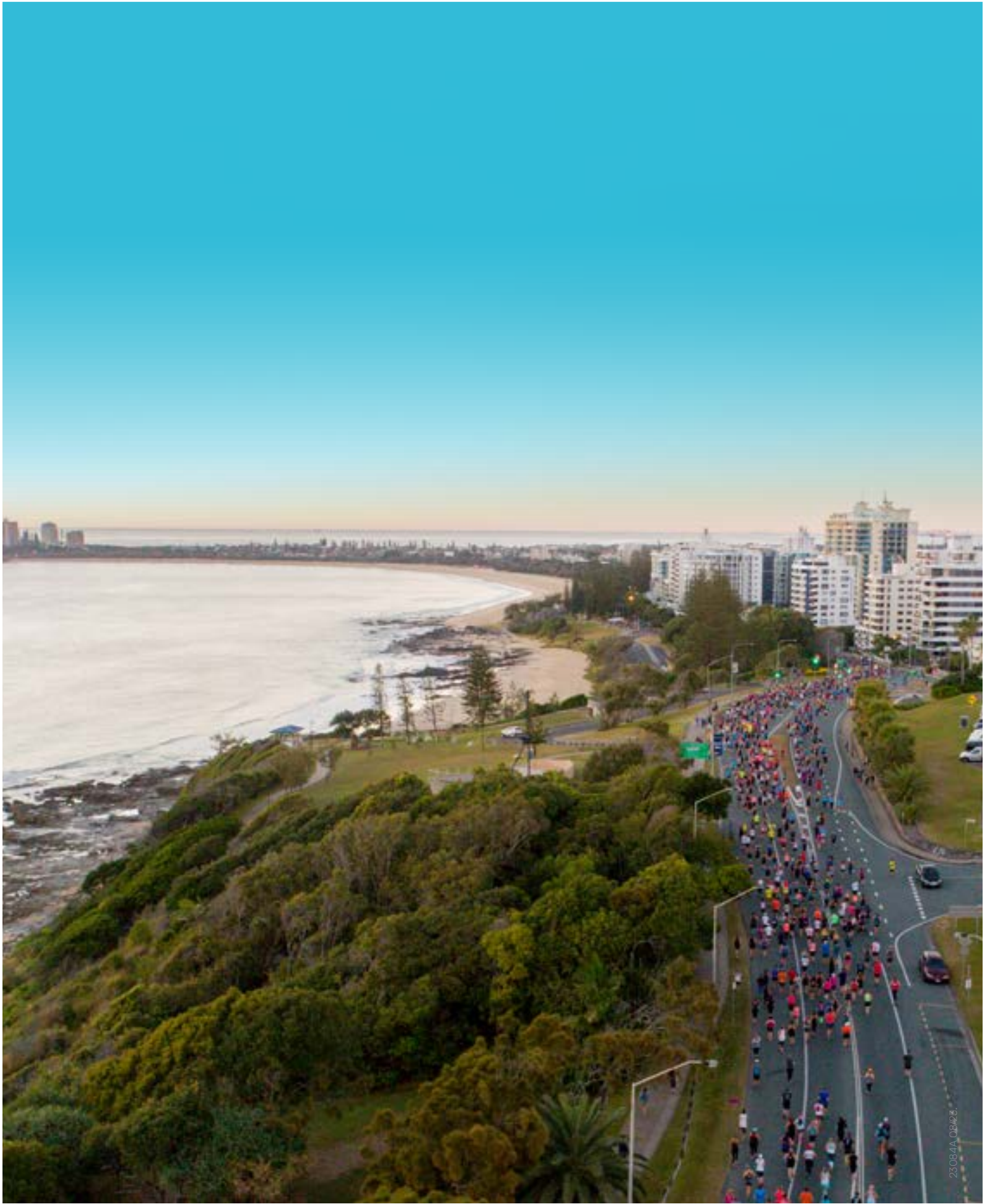
- Major and Minor Event Grants
- Arts Funding
- Festive and Commemorative Events
- Sport Fields and Recreation Trail Grants
- Arts and Heritage Levy Funding.

## Business Events Assistance Program

The attraction and retention of business events within the region is managed by Visit Sunshine Coast as part of their wider partnership with Council. The Major Events Sponsorship Program welcomes applications for business events that create outcomes for the region that align with the Sunshine Coast Major Events Strategy 2018-2028 — 2023 Refresh.

Together, all of Council's event support programs work in unison to support our local community, creating and supporting a full and engaging calendar of events of all types.

View all Sunshine Coast events at [Sunshine Coast Events](#).



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