

Hunter Event Advisory Group

Notes of meeting 2 of the **Hunter Event Advisory Group** of Tuesday 10 July 2018 at the Board Room, Local Government Training Institute, 4 Sandringham Avenue, Thornton.

Attendees

Coralie Nichols	GM, Dungog Shire	JTSSE (Chair)	John Trevillian
Mark Stratford	Newcastle City Council	JTSSE	Sharon Boyd
Jo Thomas	HVWTA	JTSSE	Kevin Simmonds
Glenn Turner	Venues NSW		

Apologies

Glenn Caldwell	Destination NSW (SSNDN)
Hannah Jamieson	Newcastle Airport

1. Welcome and introductions by the Chair

John invited Coralie Nichols, General Manager of Dungog Shire Council to introduce herself to the group and speak about her experiences with event strategies on the Sunshine Coast.

John also noted that since the last meeting he had visited all Hunter Councils where he had met with mayors, general managers and senior executives to discuss local event programs and the JTSSE project team's priorities for 2018.

2. Update on project activities for May and June

Sharon outlined the JTSSE team's main activities since the May meeting of the group:

- The 10 Hunter councils visited demonstrated great enthusiasm for their own event programs, and for further developing a signature events program with a regional approach which could benefit the broader region. It was notable that several councils were already looking at synergies with neighbouring LGAs and their event programs.
- Several groups in the Hunter were increasing their focus on business events as an area of real opportunity for the region. The Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association, the Newcastle Tourism Industry Group, the Sydney Surrounds North Destination Network have all identified increasing business event activity as a priority.
- The JTSSE project team has held meetings and/or scheduled discussions with a number of key people, including Business Events Sydney, the Sydney Business Chamber, the Australian Association of Convention Bureaux, Destination NSW's Regional Conferencing Unit to explore the best way to progress more detailed engagement with critical stakeholders. This includes working on a proposal to bring business leaders together for more detailed discussion on business event opportunities for the Hunter later in the year.
- The main focus of the team's work has been on exploring options for an events entity for the Hunter which will drive the region's signature events program.

3. An events entity for the Hunter: options and issues

Kevin's presentation outlined a brief history of NSW Government entities formed since 2000; their drivers and various structures.

Options for the forms that a future *Hunter Events* might take were outlined:

- establishing *Hunter Events* as a business unit of the JO;
- creating a company, potentially modelled on the former *Events NSW* or *Visit Victoria*;
- exploring the establishment of *Hunter Events* with the NSW Government along similar lines to *Events South Australia*, *Events Tasmania*, *WA Events*, *Events ACT* or *NZ Major Events* where the event body is a division of a parent government agency; and
- a council committee under local government legislation similar to *Geelong Major Events* and the *Sunshine Coast Events Board*.

The establishment of professional entities by the Hunter's main competitors: most notably, Geelong; the Sunshine Coast; Townsville and the Gold Coast were also canvassed.

His presentation is attached.

4. Discussion arising from the presentation

Discussion centred on how to take a proposal for the establishment of a professional event entity for the Hunter forward. Some initiatives for further exploration include the following:

- The identification of potential funding partners for the new entity - who will be the beneficiaries and potential investors?
- Governance arrangements – who will be driving the entity and the signature event program?
- What is the likely role of the NSW Government and its relationship with the entity?
- Who are the key 5 or 6 people in the region who will advocate for the proposal and take it to the NSW Government and other potential investors?
- Is one entity for the region the best approach or should councils explore the relative merits of a sub-regional approach where smaller groups of councils working in "community of interest" groupings drive a more localised event program?

Actions:

- Preparation of a more detailed business case for the proposed entity with a view to initiating high level discussions with Hunter Region leaders and potential investors.
- A briefing for the JO on current findings and proposed next steps.
- Advisory Group members to nominate potential champions for the proposal.

5. Next meeting – Tuesday 4 September 2018