

Hunter Joint Organisation Events Operations Group Notes of Meeting, 22 May 2018

In attendance:

Jacqui Hemsley (Lake Macquarie), Sam Willcox (Newcastle), Claire Briggs (Singleton), Tony Chadwick (Singleton), Adam Franks (Maitland), Janelle Gardner (Port Stephens) and John Trevillian, Sharon Boyd, Kevin Simmonds and Bill Tatnell for the project team.

Apologies:

Ivan Skaines (Dungog and Upper Hunter representative), Jane Holdsworth (Cessnock). Muswellbrook and MidCoast Councils to advise representatives for future meetings.

Discussion centred on two main themes

1. The findings of the 2017 report to the JO and Tourism Hunter. Specifically, how a new entity with a brief to drive the signature events program would work in relation to the Hunter Event Operations Group, and to other groups in the region, such as the Destination NSW (DNSW) Sydney Surrounds North Destination Network (SSNDN).
2. The development of a key network of council officers with responsibility for the planning, delivery and approval of their council's events and community activities.

The following key points emerged from Point 1

- Throughout the 2017 consultation program there was strong and broad agreement that the Hunter was ready for a professional and focused event entity that could drive a signature event program for the Hunter. In focusing on building the signature event program capable of driving increased overnight visitation, economic benefits can be shared more widely across the region.
- The establishment of an event entity for the region will require new sources of funding external to councils. This means finding sufficient guaranteed funding for an agreed establishment period. There is no suggestion that the funding model will include recommendations that divert resources from existing council event budgets.
- **Noted** that establishing the point of difference between the proposed entity and its antecedents was important if support is to be strengthened.
- **Noted** that an entity needs to take a truly regional approach to strategy – where the benefits of collaboration are demonstrably shared across the region. This doesn't necessarily mean all councils will have the same level of event opportunities identified within their LGA but optimising and leveraging events within the broader region through complementary activities and enhancements can share the economic benefits beyond the LGA borders.

- **The importance** of a communication strategy for the project was noted. The JO website has established a Hunter Major Events webpage so that stakeholders can learn more about the project, the team and up-coming activities:
 - <http://strategicservicesaustralia.com.au/hunter-major-strategy-implementation-project/>
 - <http://strategicservicesaustralia.com.au/the-consultancy-team/>
 - <http://strategicservicesaustralia.com.au/groups-working-with-the-events-consultancy-team/>

The following key points emerged from Point 2

John and Kevin provided an overview of how the creation of a strong event practitioners network added value to some of the biggest events in NSW over the past 20 years. John's establishment of the City Live Sites program for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games was picked up by other international event organisers and is now a standing feature of major international sporting events.

Kevin noted that his work in securing major event contracts through his work with Rugby World Cup, Events NSW and Destination NSW was supported by the existence, and reputation of the NSW Event Operations Group. Event organisers look for high standards of event delivery capability when looking for places to take their events.

Meeting outcomes

- The event development workshop program outlined at the meeting will be further considered by the project team, including consideration of the timing, scope and content for proposed workshops to be held between June and October/November. Councils are asked to advise the project team of any suggestions of stakeholders to be involved, specific issues to be addressed and any related activities already planned that may be relevant to the project.
- Options for further work on event development workshops identified so far:
 - Business events
 - Hunter Wine Bicentenary 2028
 - Refreshing or extending existing events (possibilities include Newcastle's V8 Supercars, Maitland's Steam Fest)
- **Operations Group members are asked to consider the following** in regard to the establishment of the proposed HEOG:
 - What works well at the moment in sharing information about events across the region?
 - What are the biggest problems councils face in delivering and promoting their events?
 - What are the opportunities (including recent examples of lost opportunities) where councils would like to focus their efforts in building collaborative partnerships across the region?

Proposed meeting dates

JTSSE proposes Operations Group meetings from 1.00-3.00pm at Thornton, preceded by light lunch at 12.00pm, with the Hunter Event Advisory Group, who will meet on the same day from 10.00am – 12.00pm.

10 July 2018
4 September 2018
23 October 2018

Meeting closed.