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ALPINE SHIRE EVENTS STRATEGY

FINAL REPORT

ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL | NOVEMBER 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Alpine Shire Council (Council) has engaged Urban Enterprise to prepare the *Alpine Shire Events Strategy* (Strategy). This document is intended to be a blueprint for Council to guide decision making, forward planning and strategic direction for events within the Alpine Shire (Shire). This Strategy, including future directions and recommendations, is subject to review after four years.

This Strategy, therefore, identifies the needs and priorities of the community and provides a clear and realistic framework for Council to guide the future delivery of events. The outcome of this is to ensure the sustainability of the events sector whilst delivering the best possible outcomes for the Alpine Shire community.

The events sector has been significantly disrupted due to the impacts of COVID-19 and bushfires. As such, data relating to the events sector reflects pre-2020 economic conditions. This Strategy, therefore, supports short-term recovery of the sector and opportunities for growth following the easing of restrictions.

EVENTS PROFILE

The Shire has a strong and popular events sector, averaging 107 tourism and community events p.a. and attracting around 170,000 attendees¹.

The events calendar is heavily concentrated in the Bright and surrounds region, which attracts 51% of total events and 64% of total attendees. This generally includes events being held during peak periods of high-visitation (e.g. public holidays, weekends). As a result, this creates congestion (and market saturation), leading to reduced resident amenity, and even safety issues within Bright, creating the need to disperse events across the Shire and spread out the events calendar across non-peak visitation periods.

The events sector also aligns with the branding and product strengths of the area, driven by nature-based events, sport and outdoor recreation. Whilst these are key drivers of visitation, there are opportunities to develop a more diverse range of event types, particularly *Arts and Culture* and *Food and Beverage* events. These events typically attract high-yielding lifestyle leader visitor markets and may provide higher contribution to the economy.

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Events held within the Shire attracts an average of around 122,000 event visitors p.a. from outside the Shire and generates \$22.6 million in visitor expenditure p.a.², which directly supports 138 jobs within the Shire³. In addition to the economic benefits, there are numerous important social and community benefits, including:

- Developing a sense of community and increasing community engagement;
- Promoting civic pride and cultural identity;
- Revitalisation of local areas and improving liveability;
- Contributing to the resilience of local economies; and
- Improving the tourism 'brand' of the Shire.

These community benefits need to be measured against some of the potential disbenefits of the events sector, including the impact to resident amenity and liveability, particularly in Bright which hosts most larger events.

¹ This information is based on a three-year average from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (based on information provided by Alpine Shire Council)

² This assumes that daytrip visitors (24%) spend an average of \$112 per person, while overnight visitors (76%) spend an average of \$208 per trip (over one night).

³ The economic impact is calculated using the input-output method (developed by REMPLAN and calculated by Urban Enterprise). This method is based on the interdependencies and relationship between industry sectors and is widely used across the public and private sector to estimate the direct and flow on economic impacts of a project or activity to an economy (using industry multipliers for Victoria).

EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

A total of 69 event venues were audited based on information provided by Council, stakeholder consultation and desktop research. Around one-third of these venues are located in the Bright area, which requires a diverse range of high-quality venues to support the large number of events in the township.

Over half the audited facilities are outdoor venues only, which caters to the large proportion of outdoor and nature-based events. However, this presents issues in terms of seasonality as these venues can only host events during warmer (peak) months. In addition, many of these venues (as identified by stakeholders) require significant upgrades in terms of quality, supporting infrastructure and, in some cases, size.

There is also a gap in the provision of high-quality 'all-weather' indoor venues, which would allow for a larger range of events to occur during off-peak times, particularly the colder winter months.

Whilst Bright is well supported with outdoor event venues, Mount Beauty is identified as having limited dedicated outdoor event spaces to cater for larger events.

EVENT RESOURCING AND SUPPORT

As outlined in the newly adopted Council Plan, the Alpine Shire is committed to "promote and facilitate events across the Alpine Shire" as this supports economic growth and liveability outcomes for residents.

More specifically, Council supports the management and delivery of the events sector through its events funding program and support services including the provision of event approvals. In the 2020-21 financial year, Council approved around \$160,000 in financial sponsorship and logistics support to 39 events. Whilst over the past four financial years, Council has provided an average of around \$200,000 p.a. to the sector.

Council has a challenging role in providing support to the events sector, as it must consider the strategic direction of the events calendar, utilising limited resources to deliver a large event portfolio and meet community expectations. Council should, therefore, consider introducing alternative revenue sources (e.g. event venue hire fees) to help fund events and grow the overall budget.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following summarises the key challenges for the events sector, based on the background research, and subsequent opportunities to improve the delivery and management of events in the Shire.

T1. ALPINE SHIRE EVENTS SECTOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of event diversity (e.g. event type and size).• Calendar congestion during peak visitation periods• Concentration of events in the Bright area• Limited indoor 'all-weather' venues to hold large events.• Lack of suitable facilities and poor supporting infrastructure and accommodation.• Lack of direction/events policy for delivery and planning.• Poor industry awareness of funding and available support.• Inconsistent process for event approvals and funding.• Mitigating the environmental impact of events.• Competing with other regional destinations for events and visitors.• No standardised assessment to measure the impact of events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt a more consistent and effective event permit application and approval process.• Adopt a more consistent and effective event funding approval process.• Develop clear and coherent event guidelines and policy.• Implement a more strategic approach to event attraction to diversify and enhance the calendar.• Prioritise investment and advocacy to upgrade existing and develop new event infrastructure.• Encourage seasonal and geographic dispersal of events.• Spreading the economic benefits of events to smaller townships outside Bright.• Promote environmental consideration of event procedures.• Align the events sector to the local product strengths and the regional product pillars⁴.• Increase collaboration with organisers to build capacity.

⁴ Includes the following product strength of the High Country tourism region: Cycling, Food and Beverage, Snow, Nature-based tourism and Arts and Culture.

STRATEGIC EVENT FRAMEWORK

The strategic framework for event delivery and management in the Shire sets the vision, objectives and guiding directions for the sector.

Vision

Develop a sustainable events sector that generates positive economic outcomes across the Shire, aligns with community values and maintains the region's natural assets.

A sustainable events sector will ensure alignment to economic, community and environmental outcomes. Achieving this balance, by considering all three categories, is critical to ensuring the needs of relevant stakeholders are met, including Council, the community and industry.

Strategic Objectives

1. Encourage the delivery of safe, compliant and self-sustaining events.
2. Provide a clear and transparent system for determining Council event approvals and funding.
3. Support events that foster community development, engagement and contribute to health and wellbeing and align with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan.
4. Stimulate economic activity across the Shire and encourage the geographic and seasonal dispersal of events.
5. Support event visitation and promote the area as a destination to stay, explore and invest.
6. Minimise the environmental impact of events.

Strategic Directions and Strategies

The following directions have been developed in response to issues, opportunities and needs of the events sector. These guide the future delivery and management of events and inform the strategies and recommendations to be delivered by Council.

Strategic Direction 1: Enhance and Diversify Events	
Description	Enhance and diversify events, whilst maintaining sustainability in the sector, in order to achieve positive economic and community outcomes and minimise impact on the environment.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diversify event typologies and event size• Align events to the local brand and regional product pillars• Maximise visitor yield• Provide a sustainable program of events (balancing tourism and community events)• Monitor and mitigate environmental impacts
Strategies	<p>Strategy 1.1: Deliver a diverse calendar of events</p> <p>Strategy 1.2: Attract major and significant tourism events</p> <p>Strategy 1.3: Increase collaboration with the Alpine Resorts</p>

Strategic Direction 2: Deliver Improved Event Facilities and Supporting Infrastructure	
Description	Improve the variety and quality of event infrastructure, including indoor and outdoor venues to provide for a diverse range of events.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upgrade existing event facilities and infrastructure• Deliver strategic infrastructure to support the vision and objectives for the sector (e.g. indoor venues, supporting visitor accommodation)• Increase awareness of available facilities and infrastructure
Strategies	<p>Strategy 2.1: Improve existing event infrastructure</p> <p>Strategy 2.2: Promote utilisation of event infrastructure</p> <p>Strategy 2.3: Develop new strategic event infrastructure</p>

Strategic Direction 3: Support Event Delivery and Management	
Description	Provide efficient and effective support to improve the sustainability of the events sector and enhance the delivery and management of events in the Shire.
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage event dispersal (geographically and seasonally) • Use Council policy and funding levers to influence the direction of the events sector • Improve the efficacy of the event approvals process to meet stakeholder needs • Increase industry capacity and resilience • Improve awareness of event support (financial and non-financial) • Increase event promotion • Standardise the assessment of events to inform decision-making
Strategies	<p>Strategy 3.1: Develop an Alpine Shire Events Policy and Events Management Procedure</p> <p>Strategy 3.2: Establish new event funding criteria and funding allocations</p> <p>Strategy 3.3: Build industry capacity</p> <p>Strategy 3.4: Improve the efficiency of the approvals process</p> <p>Strategy 3.5: Support industry awareness of events</p> <p>Strategy 3.6: Review event staffing resources</p>

EVENT APPROVAL AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK

An Event Approval and Funding Framework has been developed by Council to help achieve the above strategic objectives, strategies and outcomes for the events sector. This forms Council policy in permitting and funding future events in the Alpine Shire (to be implemented from 1 July 2022) and is a key lever for Council to improve event delivery and management.

The framework is summarised in Section 8 of this document. Each event will be subject to specific permitting and funding approval conditions dependent on the characteristics of the event.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

Alpine Shire Council (Council) has engaged Urban Enterprise to prepare the *Alpine Shire Events Strategy* (Strategy). This document is intended to be a blueprint for Council to guide decision making, forward planning and strategic direction for events within the Alpine Shire (Shire). This Strategy, including future directions and recommendations, is subject to review after four years.

Events are a vital part of the region's livelihood, providing a range of economic and social benefits for both residents and visitors. However, over recent years the Shire has experienced significant growth in the events sector, which averages over 100 tourism and community events p.a. and attracting around 170,000 attendees⁵. Despite this growth, there are several challenges for Council, including the lack of strategic direction to manage events, as well as utilising limited resources to deliver the event portfolio and meet stakeholder expectations.

This Strategy, therefore, identifies the needs and priorities of the community and provides a clear and realistic framework for Council to guide the future delivery of events. The outcome of this is to ensure the sustainability of the events sector whilst delivering the best possible outcomes for the community.

The events sector has been significantly disrupted due to the impacts of COVID-19 and bushfires. As such, data relating to the event sector reflects pre-2020 economic conditions. This Strategy, therefore, supports short-term recovery of the sector and opportunities for growth following the easing of restrictions.

1.2. REPORT STRUCTURE

The Strategy includes the following components:

- **Project context** – a summary of government policies and strategies relevant to the events sector, as well as an overview of the Alpine Shire event tourism sector.
- **Events profile** – an assessment of the Shire's events sector, including event typology, attendees, location and calculating the sector's economic and community impacts. This information is used to identify gaps and opportunities for future delivery of events.
- **Event infrastructure** – an overview of the available facilities and infrastructure used to host tourism and community events, including type of venues and location.
- **Events resourcing** – an overview of the level of resources and support provided by Council and other stakeholders to manage and deliver events in the region.
- **Strategic framework** – outlining the vision, objectives and strategic directions to guide event management and delivery. This includes the key strategies and recommendations for Council to help achieve the agreed vision and objectives for the sector.

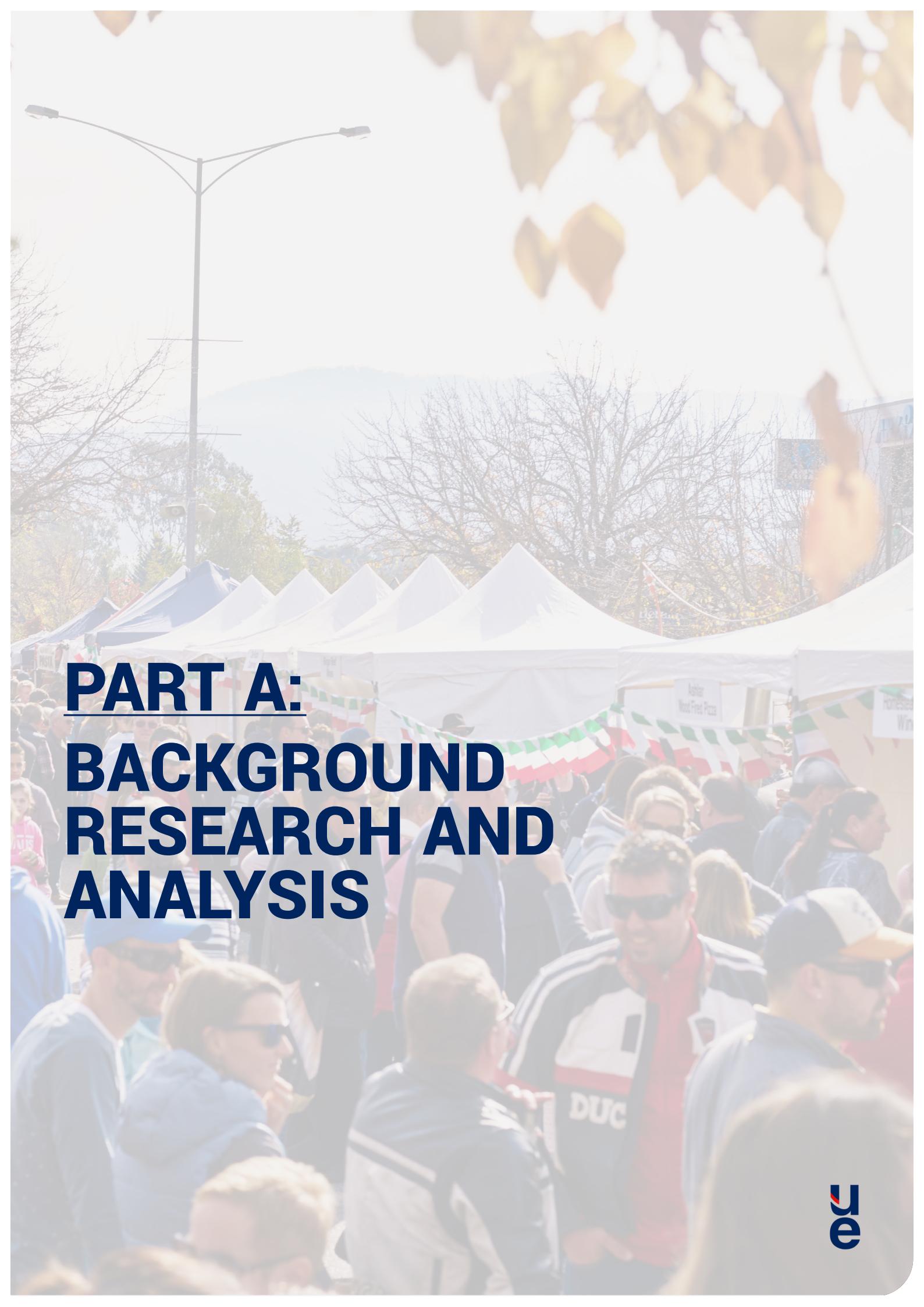
⁵ This information is based on a three-year average from 2016-17 to 2018-19 (based on information provided by Alpine Shire Council)

1.3. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Strategy, the following definitions and classifications apply.

T2. PROJECT DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Event	An event is defined as a facilitated or planned public occasion.
Tourism Event	A tourism event is where the majority of attendees travel to the event from outside the Shire. In these instances, the event is the 'main' driver of visitation to the region.
Community Event	A community event is where the majority of attendees are residents of the Shire.
Event Attendees	Event attendees refers to the total number of persons attending an event, including locals and visitors.
Event Visitors	Event visitors are defined as those visiting from outside of the Shire for the purpose of attending an event.
Event Sector Sustainability	A sustainable events sector focuses on achieving economic, community and environmental outcomes for the Shire. More practically, this includes the development of an events calendar that generates economic growth, aligns with community values and helps maintain the natural environment.
High Country	The High Country is a defined tourism region in Victoria's north-east, which includes seven shires – Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Towong and Wangaratta – and the three major alpine resorts of Falls Creek, Mt Buller and Mt Hotham. The region is represented by a regional tourism board (Tourism North-East), charged with the long-term and overarching strategic vision and direction for the High Country region, ensuring a platform for future tourism growth.
Regional Product Pillars	This refers to the strategic product strengths and tourism drivers for the High Country region (as identified by Tourism North-East): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycling;• Food and Beverage;• Snow;• Nature-based tourism; and• Arts and Culture.



PART A:

BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

2. PROJECT CONTEXT

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This section includes contextual information to support development of (and influence) the Strategy. This includes an overview of the Shire and its visitor economy, as well as key policies and strategies that will influence the strategic direction of the report.

2.2. ABOUT ALPINE SHIRE

Alpine Shire Local Government Area (LGA) covers around 4,788 square kilometres and is located in Victoria's north-east, approximately 300km north-east of Melbourne, 50km south of Albury-Wodonga and 40km south-west of Wangaratta. The Shire is accessible via key transport routes including the Kiewa Valley Highway and the Great Alpine Road.

In 2019, the estimated resident population of the LGA was 12,814, with the population concentrated in the towns of Bright, Myrtleford, Mount Beauty, Harrietville and Porepunkah.

There are also two major alpine resorts – Falls Creek and Mount Hotham – that are located within the municipal borders but fall outside the Shire boundaries (and managed under their own Resort Management Boards). These drive visitation to the Shire, particularly during the winter months, and provide significant contributions to the Shire's tourism industry in terms of flow-on spend.

2.2.1. SUB-REGIONAL APPROACH

There are several key townships within the Shire that influence the level of residential, employment and economic growth. In addition, the townships provide a variable contribution to tourism and the events sector, meaning the priorities and needs of the community (and industry) are likely to vary across the Shire.

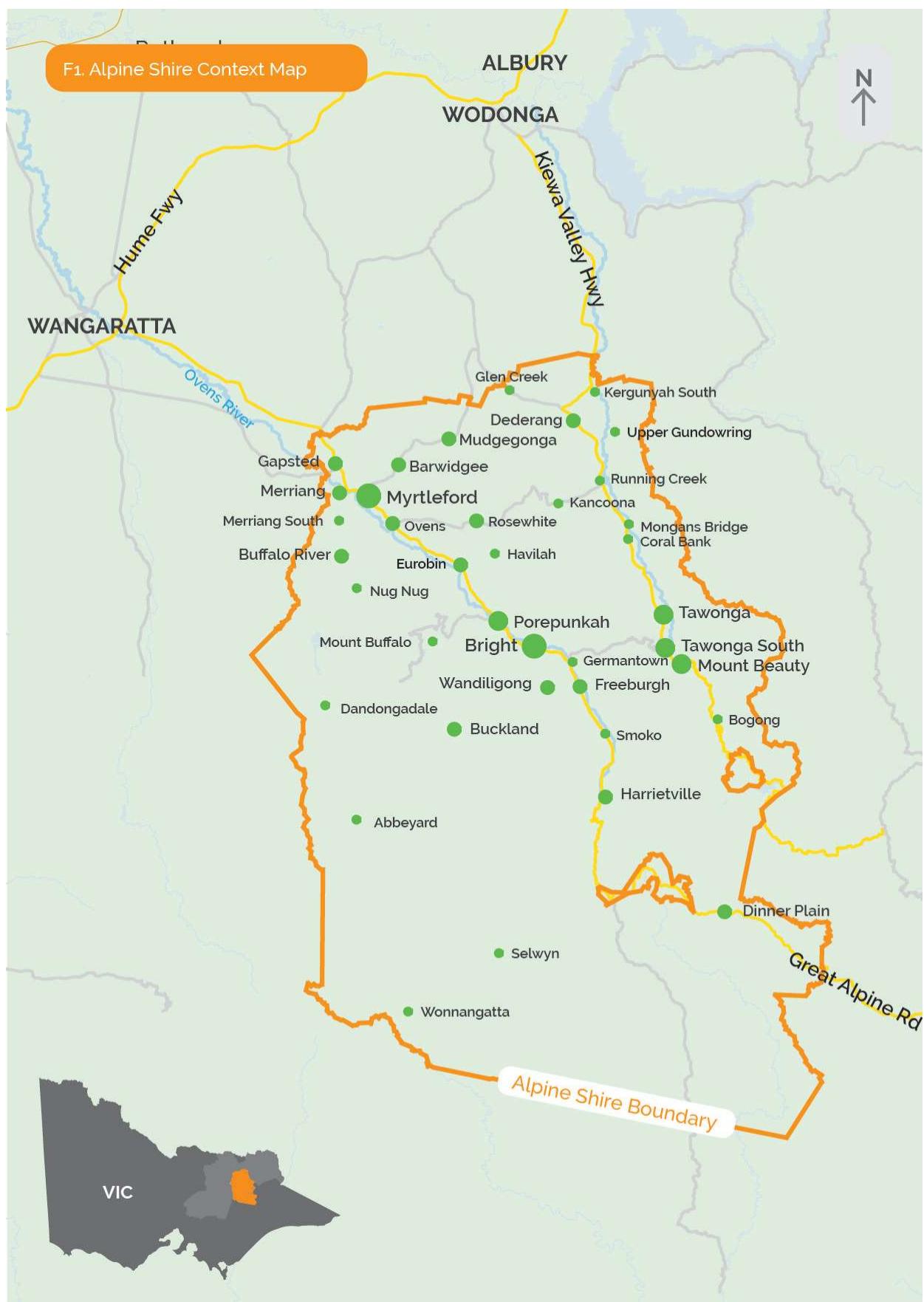
Therefore, it is necessary to provide analysis and strategic direction at a **township** level, which disaggregates the Shire into the following key township areas (based on Council's local tourism regions)⁶:

- Bright and surrounds;
- Harrietville and surrounds;
- Mount Beauty and surrounds;
- Myrtleford and surrounds;
- Dinner Plain; and
- Other towns as specified.

The locational context of the Shire and key townships are illustrated in Figure F1.

⁶ <https://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au/community/tourism-and-events/tourism>

F1. ALPINE SHIRE



Source: Urban Enterprise 2021

2.3. TOURISM CONTEXT

Tourism (including tourism-related events) plays a key role in driving the economy, contributing \$163 million in output (15% of total) and 807 jobs (19% of total) p.a.⁷. The visitor economy directly supports the *Accommodation and Food Services* industry, and *Retail Trade*, as well as providing indirect benefits to a broad range of other service industries and businesses within the supply chain.

Alpine Shire received around 850,000 visitors in 2019, driven by the domestic market. Visitors are drawn to the Shire for numerous reasons, with the following product and experience strengths providing strong motivation for visitation:

- Events and festivals;
- Nature-based assets (inc. national parks, alpine resorts, etc.);
- Cycling tourism (aligning with the 'Ride High Country' brand); and
- Food and beverage (e.g. wine and beer).

As shown in Table T3, event visitors to the Shire totalled almost 80,000 in 2019, which only includes visitors where the primary purpose of visit was to attend an event. This visitor market is a relatively high proportion of total visitation (9.4%) and, therefore, provides a significant contribution to the visitor economy in terms of visitation (and subsequent visitor spend).

Therefore, it is important that the events sector is managed efficiently and effectively to ensure it continues to provide value to the tourism industry and the economy more broadly.

T3. ALPINE SHIRE VISITATION 2019

	All Visitors		Event Visitors		Event Visitors as % of total
	No.	%	No.	%	
Daytrip	331,674	39%	20,889	26%	6.3%
Domestic Overnight	508,342	60%	57,900	73%	11.4%
International	12,047	1%	1,036	1%	8.6%
Total Visitors	852,063	100%	79,826	100%	9.4%

Source: Tourism Research Australia (TRA), National Visitor Survey (NVS) and International Visitor Survey (NVS), 2019 YE Dec.

Note: Event visitors provided by TRA data does not include all event attendees, as it excludes residents as well as 'incidental' visitors that may not list events as the primary purpose of visit (e.g. existing visitors to the region, travellers accompanying event participants, etc.). This leads to undercounting of event visitors.

BENCHMARKING EVENT VISITATION

Table T4 benchmarks the number and proportion of event visitors against three competing Victorian tourism regions with identified strengths in the events sector.

It shows that, relative to these regions, the Alpine Shire performs favourably in terms of proportion of event visitors, which demonstrates its strong and popular events sector.

⁷ Economy ID, 2020 (represents the 2018-19 year)

T4. EVENT VISITOR BENCHMARKING 2019

	Geelong and the Bellarine	Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges	Phillip Island	Alpine Shire
Event Visitation	702,319	397,293	135,626	79,826
Total Visitation	6,427,688	6,989,966	2,657,628	852,063
Proportion of Event Visitors	10.9%	5.7%	5.1%	9.4%

Source: TRA, NVS and NVS, 2019 YE Dec

2.4. STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT

In 2018, Council commissioned the development of an *Events Delivery Review*, which provided an overview of the Shire's events sector and outlined opportunities for improvements. This led to a number of recommendations that were subject to further review and are subsequently examined in this Strategy, including:

- *Council pursues continued growth in events, with a focus on bolstering events held outside peak periods, the use of towns other than Bright, and the use of Alpine Events Park.*
- *Council invests in undertaking community consultation to understand community tolerance and community thresholds for event delivery in each key township.*
- *Council works closely with external approval agencies to develop succinct joint guidelines (Event Principles) to consistently manage events through the Shire.*
- *Establish a competitive application process for events held during peak periods in Bright.*
- *Introduce criteria to prioritise funding for applicants who demonstrate their event is held outside of peak periods, at Alpine Events Park, or in a town other than Bright.*
- *Council develops and implements a fee schedule for use of community buildings, facilities, parks and open space.*

In addition, the following local, regional and state-wide strategies and policies have been examined to determine the implications for event development in Alpine Shire.

- The Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy 2021;
- The Alpine Shire Community Vision 2040;
- The Alpine Shire Council Plan 2021-2025;
- The Hume Regional Growth Plan;
- Victoria's High Country Destination Management Plan;
- The North East Victoria Cycling Optimisation Masterplan; and
- Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy.

At a local level, Council's Economic Development Strategy and other policy documents focus on the achievement of *sustainable* economic growth, which also balances the needs of the community and the environment. In the context of the events sector, this includes development of the events calendar to foster economic prosperity, whilst also promoting liveability outcomes and preserving the region's natural assets.

The regional policies focus on leveraging the strength of cycle tourism and, more specifically, achieving positive outcomes for the Shire by expanding the cycling events program.

At the State level, Victoria's 2020 Tourism Strategy highlights that events play an important tourism role in Victoria in terms of regional dispersal, generating visitor expenditure and encouraging year-round visitation.

2.4.1. AUSTRALIAN EVENTS AND TOURISM CONTEXT

Until recently, Australia and the state of Victoria, had experienced a period of sustained visitor economy growth. There has been a dramatic shift in the tourism landscape both nationally and internationally as a result of the unprecedented 2019-20 bushfire season and COVID-19 pandemic. The full extent and impact of these events is yet to be determined.

A recent analysis produced by Austrade⁸ forewarns that the pandemic is likely to have a 'widespread and long-lasting impact on tourism'. The key factors most likely to have a damaging impact on Australia's visitor economy includes escalation of travel restrictions, sharp reductions in air capacity, social distancing, self-quarantine and restrictions on non-essential travel.

These impacts will be acutely felt across the events sector, with larger events requiring long lead times to plan and organise, and limited flexibility regarding date, number of attendees (for social distancing purposes) or location changes. This could subsequently impact the visitor economy of regional areas, as regional events are often used as promotional tools to attract visitation during the off-peak season.

Ensuring mechanisms are in place to support and assist industry during the significant rebuilding period will be key to re-establishing a vibrant visitor economy and events sector for the region. This should include prioritising improvement of Councils events resourcing and support frameworks to enable event operator training and development to occur while events themselves are unable to be conducted. This will be explored further in later sections of this report.

⁸ Coronavirus Analysis and Insights Note, Austrade, 2020

3. EVENTS PROFILE

3.1. INTRODUCTION

A profile of the Alpine Shire events sector was prepared for this report, including an analysis of the type of event, location and attendance. The purpose of this is to provide a holistic understanding of the sector, identify strategic gaps and opportunities for improving the future management and delivery of events. The events profile was developed using the following assumptions and data:

- Unless otherwise indicated, the data is presented as a three-year average covering the period 2016-17 to 2018-19⁹;
- Both tourism and community events are included in the profile;
- Events that were held more than once annually were counted overall as one event (the exception being for event seasonality and attendance, where each occurrence of the same event was counted separately for each month and total attendance aggregated); and
- For events where attendance and/or visitation figures were not available, no estimate was provided (and this represents a gap in the data).

A snapshot of the events sector is illustrated at the end of this section.

The information presented in this section is drawn from events data provided by Council and supported by desktop research, event organiser surveys and stakeholder input. Whilst this information is comprehensive, it is not an exhaustive list of all events and, as such, some small-scale events are excluded from the analysis.

3.2. EVENTS PROFILE

NUMBER OF EVENTS AND ATTENDANCE

The Shire hosts an average of **107 events p.a.**, which includes one-off events, annual events, seasonal and monthly events (counted as one event for the purposes of this assessment). These events attract, on average, around **170,000 attendees p.a.**, which includes both local residents and visitor markets.

Using survey data to estimate the number of visitors as a proportion of total attendees, it is estimated that, on average, there were a total of **122,000 event visitors p.a.** from outside the Shire.¹⁰ Overall, the number of attendees is significant in relation to the number of Shire residents and visitors to the region. As a result, there is risk of overcrowding in some of the townships, which could have a negative impact on resident amenity as well as the environment.

In addition to the events that are hosted within the Shire, it is important to identify the list of events occurring within the Alpine Resort boundaries, including Falls Creek and Mount Hotham. Whilst these are not under the direct influence of Council, these should be considered when reviewing the future management of events to avoid any duplication or conflicts with events within the Shire. Based on an audit conducted by Urban Enterprise, there are 14 significant events held across both alpine resorts, which are predominantly sport and outdoor recreation events.

Therefore, there is an opportunity for Council to collaborate with the Resort Management Boards to ensure events are coordinated across multiple jurisdictions to avoid duplication or congestion. This could also benefit Council by leveraging visitors to the resorts and encouraging dispersal to the Shire, which can promote increases in visitor expenditure and flow-on economic benefits.

⁹ The event schedule for 2019-20 was excluded due to disruptions caused by the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic

¹⁰ This assumes that 30% of attendees to community event are visitors; and 75% of attendees to other tourism events are visitors; This figure is greater than TRA data as it includes all visitors that attend events, not just those who list events as the primary purpose of visit.

EVENTS BY LOCATION

There is a high degree of variability in terms of the number of events by location (i.e. township). The events calendar is driven by the Bright township, which hosts over 55 events p.a., which equates to over half the events held in the Shire (51%). This is followed by the other major township areas of Myrtleford (18%) and Mount Beauty (15%). There are also 8 events (7%) held in multiple locations, which have not been attributed to a single township as the impact is shared across the Shire, with the balance being in the Harrietville (4%) and Dinner Plain (4%) areas.

As such, Bright attracts the majority of event attendees to the Shire (64% of total attendance), with the next most popular location being Myrtleford (22%).

The events sector is heavily concentrated in Bright, which creates pressure on existing infrastructure and services due to the high volume of events and attendees. Developing and/or re-locating events to other locations could help to alleviate the pressure off Bright, promote visitor dispersal and maintain the amenity of residents.

EVENTS BY TYPE

Events in the Shire have been categorised by genre (using Council categories), with the data showing that the sector is driven by **Nature and Recreation-based events**, leveraging the Shire's natural assets and product strengths. This includes Sport and Outdoor Recreation events (35% of events and 34% of attendees) and Cycling events (15% of events and 8% of attendees). When aggregated, these types of events generate 50% of all events and almost half of all attendees (42%).

In terms of event occurrence, this is followed by Arts and Culture events¹¹ (15% of events and 16% attendees), Community events (14% of events and 6% attendees) and Markets (12% of events and 28% of attendees).

The sector is driven by nature-based and recreation event-types, which should be a key focus for Council to help strengthen and consolidate the events calendar. However, with consideration given to the location and timing of events, there are opportunities to diversify the events calendar, focusing on attracting events that attract high-yielding visitor markets (e.g. Arts and Culture, Food and Beverage).

SEASONALITY OF EVENTS

The busiest times for events are across the **Autumn** (33% of total events) and **Spring** (27%) shoulder seasons, driven by the months of April (13%), March and October (11%).

This is followed by the Summer seasons (25% of total events), with most events occurring in January (11%); while the Winter months (15%) held the lowest number of events – with the fewest events held in July (4%).

Autumn is the dominant event season, which also makes it the busiest in terms of events held and number of attendees, which is attributed to school holidays and cooler weather making outdoor and recreation events more appealing.

However, to avoid market saturation and encourage seasonal dispersal (during off-peak visitation periods), there is an opportunity to host more events during the slower winter months and/or during the shoulder months of February and September. This is key to creating a more sustainable event sector and providing greater economic and social benefits to the Shire.

EVENTS BY SIZE

The size of events, which is represented by attendance figures, is categorised according to Council's *Event Funding Program Guidelines*. The data obtained from Council shows that, on average, over half of all events (59%) attract less than 1,000 attendees, followed by medium scale of between 1,000 to 5,000 attendees (36%). However, there are very few significant events with greater than 5,000 attendees (5%).¹²

¹¹ Includes heritage events and Indigenous events,

¹² Note: the totals do not equal the average number of events as some events missing attendance data.

Therefore, there are opportunities to identify and attract more large-scale and significant events, as these events generate the greatest level of visitation, provide substantial economic benefits and help promote the region as a visitor destination. However, consideration should be given to the location and timing of these large-scale events, so they do not adversely impact resident amenity or the environment (through congestion or over-crowding).

3.3. ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY IMPACTS

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EVENTS

The events sector delivers significant economic benefits to the Alpine Shire as a result of increased visitation and visitor expenditure. Drawing on existing tourism data (Section 2.3), the 122,000 event visitors from outside the Shire generates an estimated **\$22.6 million in visitor expenditure p.a.¹³**, which directly supports 138 jobs within the Shire¹⁴.

When disaggregated by event type, Markets, Food and Beverage and Arts and Culture events have a greater *relative* impact in terms of output and employment *per event*, as these events typically attract high-yielding lifestyle leader visitor markets. Understanding the varying impacts of event typologies for the local economy will help shape Council's focus for future event attraction and promotion.

COMMUNITY IMPACT OF EVENTS

Events provide destinations with exposure and create community engagement, in order to enhance liveability and favourability¹⁵. The development of events can create a range of social and community benefits for the local community, including:

- **Events build communities and connect people** – Linking people through social events builds health, confidence and self-esteem, which can have significant positive impacts on both individuals and communities and strengthen their engagement and resilience. Events can also be a mechanism to deliver important messages to residents, share information and knowledge;
- **Increases community engagement** – Community events can increase community engagement through participation, as well as the use of volunteers to assist in the delivery of events.
- **Promoting diversity** – Participation in multicultural arts and culture events leads to the promotion of trust, recognition and acceptance.
- **Civic pride and cultural identity** – Events provide opportunities for individuals and groups to generate pride through public celebrations and local festivals.;
- **Contributing to the resilience of local economies** – Investment in events and required infrastructure contributes to the local economy by promoting the region as a desirable visitor destination and assists in attracting high skilled and educated workers to communities.¹⁶

However, the community benefits – whilst important – need to be measured against some of the disbenefits when considering the future management of events, particularly the **impact on resident liveability**. Tourism events, through increased traffic and pedestrian congestion, can reduce amenity and create safety issues associated with over-crowding.

Although events generally provide a positive economic and social impact, consideration should also be given to community and business needs. This will influence the future management and delivery of events.

¹³ This assumes that daytrip visitors (24%) spend an average of \$112 per person, while overnight visitors (76%) spend an average of \$208 per trip (over one night).

¹⁴ The economic impact is calculated using the input-output method (developed by REMPLAN and calculated by Urban Enterprise). This method is based on the interdependencies and relationship between industry sectors and is widely used across the public and private sector to estimate the direct and flow on economic impacts of a project or activity to an economy (using industry multipliers for Victoria).

¹⁵ Tourism and Transport Forum, 2014

¹⁶ Creative Victoria, The Arts Ripple Effect: Valuing the Arts in Communities

Alpine Shire Events Profile

NUMBER OF

107
Events p.a.

170,000
Attendees p.a.

122,000
Visitors p.a.

ONGOING ECONOMIC IMPACT

\$22.6 MILLION

Visitor Expenditure

138
Jobs Created

EVENTS BY LOCATION

	Number of Events	% of Total Events
Bright and Surrounds	55	51%
Myrtleford and Surrounds	20	18%
Mount Beauty and Surrounds	16	15%
Multiple	8	7%
Harrietville and Surrounds	4	4%
Dinner Plain	4	4%

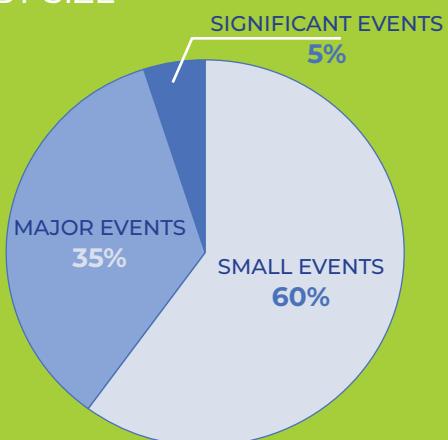
EVENT TYPE

	% of Events	% of Attendees
Sport and Outdoor Recreation	35%	34%
Arts and Culture	15%	16%
Cycling	15%	8%
Community	14%	6%
Market	12%	28%
Food and Beverage	6%	7%
Snow	3%	1%

EVENTS BY MONTH



EVENTS BY SIZE



Small Events: Up to 1,000 attendees
 Major Events: 1,000-5,000 attendees
 Significant Events: over 5,000 attendees

Note: the information compiled in this section is sourced from Council's event database and derived by Urban Enterprise.
 All data is presented as a three-year annual average from 2016-17 to 2018-19.

4. EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The following provides an overview of the available facilities and infrastructure used to host tourism and community events. The information presented below is based on an audit of venues identified as currently hosting tourism and community events. This is drawn from Council's events database, supplemented by survey results and desktop research.

Note: whilst this audit is comprehensive, it may exclude smaller venues not included in Council's database.

4.2. EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

A snapshot of the events sector is illustrated at the end of this section, with key points to note as follows:

- A total of **69 event venues** were identified across the Shire;
- Most facilities are **outdoor venues only (35 or 51%)**, while around 40% are indoor venues. However, a further six venues can be utilised for both indoor and outdoor events; and
- **39 venues (57%) are managed by Council**, while the remaining are 'non-council' facilities (i.e. DELWP, Committees of Management, private, community organisations, not-for-profits, clubs, etc.).

EVENT VENUES BY LOCATION

The audit demonstrates that the majority of event venues and facilities are located in Bright (22 or 32%), closely followed by the Myrtleford (19 or 28%) and Mount Beauty (17 or 25%) areas. With the balance being in Harrietville, Dinner Plan and other areas.

It is important that the Bright area has a sufficient number of quality and fit-for-purpose venues to support over 50 events held across the year. With venues concentrated across Bright and Myrtleford, additional event infrastructure should be considered in other areas of the Shire to encourage event dispersal.

EVENT VENUES BY TYPE

The most common facility type (27 or 39%) is outdoor reserves, gardens or parks, comprising over one-third of the audited venues. This capitalises on the large number of outdoor recreation and nature-based events but has limitations in terms of seasonality and the cost of providing temporary infrastructure. Other popular venues include community based facilities such as halls (16 or 23%) and sporting clubs/showgrounds (6 or 9%).

Private operators of accommodation, restaurants and cafes (7 or 10%) are also responsible for hosting a number of events in the Shire. These are generally used by the community for private (and smaller) functions.

This analysis highlights gaps in conferencing facilities and purpose-built 'all-weather' venues that allows for events to occur during off-peak times, particularly the colder winter seasons, as well as night-time. There is also a lack of large-scale indoor performance venues to host one-off music concerts or festivals.

SUPPORTING VISITOR ACCOMMODATION

In order to attract overnight visitors to tourism events held within the Shire, particularly for multi-day events, there needs to be sufficient quantity and quality of accommodation. The total capacity (at a given point in time) of holiday beds and camping sites across the Shire is 25,301. However, this is concentrated around the Bright area (62%), which includes accommodation in nearby Porepunkah, reflecting the strong events calendar in this area.

It is important that there are sufficient accommodation options (and bed capacity) to attract high-yielding overnight visitors to events. Having relatively limited capacity in other towns across the Shire will impact the ability to host larger tourism events and promote visitor dispersal.

Alpine Shire Events Infrastructure

NUMBER OF EVENT VENUES

69

Total

35

28

6

Outdoor
Venues

Indoor
Venues

Indoor and Outdoor
Venues

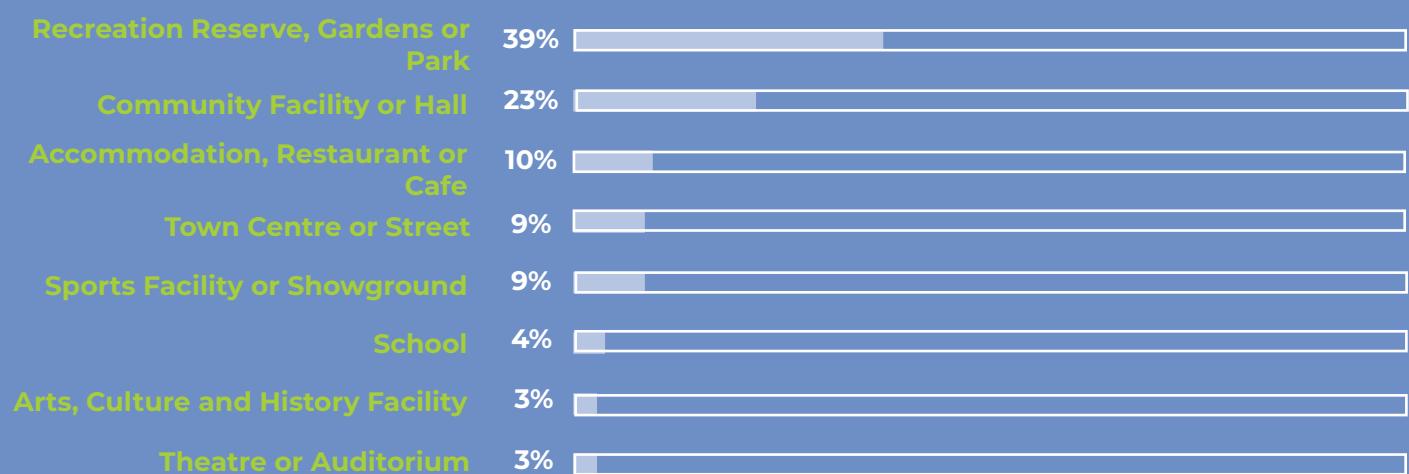
EVENT VENUES BY LOCATION

	Number of Venues	% of Total Venues
Bright and Surrounds	22	32%
Myrtleford and Surrounds	19	28%
Mount Beauty and Surrounds	17	25%
Harrietville and Surrounds	6	9%
Dinner Plain	4	6%
Other	1	1%

SUPPORTING VISITOR ACCOMODATION

	Total Holiday Beds / Camping Sites	% of Total
Bright and Surrounds	15,660	62%
Harrietville and Surrounds	3,200	13%
Myrtleford and Surrounds	2,388	9%
Mount Beauty and Surrounds	2,289	9%
Dinner Plain	1,392	6%
Other	372	1%

EVENT VENUES BY TYPE



Note: the information compiled in this section is sourced from Council's events and accommodation database and derived by Urban Enterprise.

5. EVENT RESOURCING AND SUPPORT

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of event resourcing and support for the events sector within Alpine Shire. It focuses primarily on the support provided by Council to facilitate the management and delivery of events.

The level of resourcing, and types of support provided by Council, is reviewed in subsequent sections of this Strategy to ensure alignment with the strategic needs of Council and the community.

5.2. ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The importance of the events sector is recognised by Council in the *Council Plan 2021-2025*, which notes Council's commitment to "promote and facilitate events across the Alpine Shire" as this promotes economic growth and liveability outcomes for residents. Council plays a critical role in supporting and managing event delivery, including:

- Facilitate community groups to deliver community events;
- Facilitate groups and commercial operators to deliver small to major tourism events;
- The planning and delivery of civic events;
- Financial support via the event funding program; and
- Logistics support including waste management advice, bin supply, traffic management, etc.

This is administered and provided by the events team, which comprises 1.6 FTE in staff resources (spread across three part-time positions). The events team is supported by other areas in Council, including Facilities Asset Maintenance.

EVENT SUPPORT

The level of event funding provided by Council is shown in Table T5, which averages around \$200,000 over the past four financial years. For the most recent 2020-21 financial year (prior to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and bushfires), Council approved around \$160,000 for 39 events, which includes financial sponsorship and logistics support.

T5. COUNCIL EVENT FUNDING

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
\$198,700	\$254,960	\$199,950	\$163,744 ¹⁷

Source: Alpine Shire Council, 2020

In order to be eligible for funding, applicants must apply through the event funding annual process and complete relevant documents as required (e.g. emergency management plan, traffic management plan, etc.).

The process for event funding is comprehensive and involves multiple stakeholders and guidelines. This process needs to be efficient and effective in order to improve the delivery of events and meet the needs of relevant stakeholders (inc. Council).

¹⁷ Council's events budget is being supplemented in the short-term by State and Federal Government recovery packages. For example, the 2020-21 events budget includes an additional \$100,000 in 2020-21 as part of the State Government 'Local Government Bushfire Recovery Funding'

5.3. STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to Council's role, there are a range of non-Council organisations that have various levels of responsibility for operating and supporting events in the Alpine Shire. Existing key partnerships with regards to event attraction, development and funding include:

- **Tourism North-East** – Tourism North-East is the regional tourism board and provides assistance to Council in terms of product development, marketing, and promotional strategies. More specifically, Tourism North-East can work collaboratively with Council with respect to coordination of a complementary events calendar that aims to keep visitors in the region for longer and increase visitor yield.
- **Visit Victoria and Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions** – These are the State Government bodies that administer the Regional Events Fund (REF), with Visit Victoria being a key partner in promotion and strategic planning for the tourism sector.
- **Creative Victoria** – Creative Victoria provides a range of grants targeted towards the arts sector which may be able to be accessed for arts-based events and activations in the Shire.
- **Local Tourism Organisations and industry event operators** – These groups play an important role in attracting, promoting and assisting the delivery of events. This includes business support, assisting organisers with the application process and providing amenity for attendees (e.g. accommodation, retail, food, etc.).

Council influence and support is enhanced through collaboration with relevant stakeholders that can assist in the delivery and management of events.

6. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

6.1. INTRODUCTION

The following summarises the challenges and opportunities for the events sector, which is used to inform the strategic event framework and strategic directions for Council. This is drawn from a combination of the background research and consultation with key community and industry stakeholders (note: the consultation process and findings are summarised in Appendix A).

6.2. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Table T6 lists the key challenges facing the events sector and subsequent opportunities to improve the delivery and management of events in the Shire.

T6. ALPINE SHIRE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of event diversity (e.g. event type and size).• Calendar congestion during peak visitation periods creating pressure on local infrastructure.• Concentration of events in the Bright area impacting resident amenity.• Limited indoor ‘all-weather’ venues and spaces to hold large events.• Lack of suitable facilities and poor supporting infrastructure and accommodation.• Lack of strategic direction and policy for event delivery and planning.• Poor industry awareness of funding programs and available support.• Inconsistent process for event approvals and funding.• Mitigating the environmental impact of events.• Competing with other regional destinations for events and visitors.• No standardised assessment to measure the impact of events.
Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt a more consistent and effective event permit application and approval process.• Adopt a more consistent and effective event funding approval process.• Develop clear and coherent event guidelines and policy to direct the future of the events sector.• Implement a more strategic approach to event attraction in order to diversify and enhance the calendar.• Prioritise investment and advocacy to upgrade existing and develop new event infrastructure.• Encourage seasonal and geographic dispersal of events.• Spreading the economic benefits of events to smaller townships outside Bright.• Promote environmental event procedures to minimise the impact on the natural environment.• Align the events sector to the local product strengths and the regional product pillars.• Increase collaboration with industry and organisers to increase awareness and build capacity.

A photograph of a mountain biker in action. The rider is wearing a black helmet with a visor, a light blue long-sleeved shirt with a 'FACTORY' logo, and dark pants. They are leaning into a turn on a dirt trail. In the background, there are trees, a white van with 'FACTORY' branding, and other people at what appears to be a race or event. The scene is bathed in warm sunlight.

PART B:

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7. STRATEGIC EVENT FRAMEWORK

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This section provides a strategic framework to support event delivery and management in the Shire. The aim of this section is to set the vision, objectives and directions for the sector.

7.2. VISION

Drawing on the strategic needs of the Shire, the vision of the Alpine Shire Events Strategy is to:

Develop a sustainable events sector that generates positive economic outcomes across the Shire, aligns with community values and maintains the region's natural assets.

A sustainable events sector will ensure alignment to economic, community and environmental outcomes. Achieving this balance, by considering all three categories, is critical to ensuring the needs of relevant stakeholders are met, including Council, the community and industry.

7.3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The project vision is supported by the following key objectives, which will inform future event development. This draws on existing Council objectives and includes relevant amendments and additions based on the strategic needs of the Shire.

1. Encourage the delivery of safe, compliant and self-sustaining events.
2. Provide a clear and transparent system for determining Council event approvals and funding.
3. Support events that foster community development, engagement and contribute to health and wellbeing and align with the strategic objectives of the Council Plan.
4. Stimulate economic activity across the Shire and encourage the geographic and seasonal dispersal of events.
5. Support event visitation and promote the area as a destination to stay, explore and invest.
6. Minimise the environmental impact of events.

7.4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The following strategic directions have been developed to help Council achieve the vision and objectives for the events sector. These provide the areas of focus for the events sector and help inform the strategies and recommendations to be delivered by Council. The strategies and recommendations for each of these directions are also detailed below.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1: ENHANCE AND DIVERSIFY EVENTS

Enhance and diversify events, whilst maintaining sustainability in the sector, in order to achieve positive economic and community outcomes and minimise the impact on the environment.

The Alpine Shire has a strong events calendar, attracting over 100 tourism and community events annually that attracts around 170,000 attendees (including residents and visitors to the Shire). However, there remain gaps and opportunities to further enhance the sector including growing existing events, as well as attracting new and diverse events that align with the regional product pillars of the High Country.

STRATEGY 1.1: DELIVER A DIVERSE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

It is important that Council consolidates existing and supports new event types to diversify the calendar. This will ensure Council maintains its competitive advantage in the events sector, whilst also providing new recreation options for residents and attracting new visitor markets to the Shire. A diverse events calendar will include a combination of tourism, community and business events, as shown in the table below.

T7. EVENT TYPOLOGIES

Event Type	Description	Rationale
Tourism	<p>Includes the following holiday/leisure event types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycling.• Food and Beverage (e.g. wine and beer).• Snow.• Nature-based tourism (inc. sport and recreation).• Arts and Culture.	These event types align with the Shire's product strengths and the Tourism North-East product pillars, which are economic drivers for the region.
Community	Includes Markets and Civic events.	These events promote community benefits and provide recreational activities for residents and visitors.
Business	Includes conferences, seminars and business retreats.	Business events attract high-yielding markets and drive off-peak/mid-week visitation.

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2021

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Council sets targets for tourism events as follows:

- **Maintain the current proportion of Nature-based events (inc. Sport and Outdoor Recreation, Snow and Cycling), which accounts for around 50% of total events. These event categories align with the Shire's competitive advantages, which includes high-quality nature-based assets and outdoor recreation activities.**
- **Increase the current proportion of Arts and Culture (15%) and Food and Beverage (5%) events to greater than 20% of total events, as these event types attract high-yielding lifestyle leader visitor markets and will promote resident amenity.**

Council will influence the number of tourism events through event approvals and funding (which is discussed in the approval and funding framework in Section 8).

STRATEGY 1.2: ATTRACT MAJOR AND SIGNIFICANT TOURISM EVENTS

The majority of events in the Shire (60%) are small/community events that attract fewer than 1,000 attendees (and a small proportion of visitors). In contrast, only 5 events p.a. (5%) are large-scale or ‘significant’ tourism events – mostly held in Bright – that attract over 5,000 attendees.

Attracting a higher proportion of large-scale tourism events is a key action as this will support the events sector, attract visitors and generate significant economic benefits to the Shire. However, consideration needs to be given to the location (to avoid overcrowding) and timing (to avoid calendar congestion) of these events.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Council adopts the recommended event categories (see approval and funding framework in Section 8).**
- **Council facilitates and/or advocates for an increase in the proportion of large-scale or significant tourism above the existing proportion of 5%. This includes consideration of event permitting and funding conditions outlined in Section 8.**

STRATEGY 1.3: INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH THE ALPINE RESORTS

The Alpine Resorts – Falls Creek and Mount Hotham – provide a substantial contribution to regional events, particularly outdoor and cycling events, which are typically held in off-peak winter months. This provides an opportunity for Council to leverage the benefits from these events and collaborate with the resort management boards (RMB) to:

- Link existing outdoor recreation and cycling events in the resorts to surrounding towns within the Shire (e.g. Alpine Classic);
- Attract new events that incorporate both the resorts and destinations within the Shire; and
- Ensure events are coordinated across jurisdictions to avoid duplication and congestion, ensuring the benefits are maximised (for Council and RMB).

This will help promote dispersal of events to other towns, and across off-peak periods, promoting economic benefits to the Shire.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Collaborate with the Alpine Resorts RMB to coordinate events across jurisdictions.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2: DELIVER IMPROVED EVENT FACILITIES AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Improve the variety and quality of event infrastructure, including indoor and outdoor venues to provide for a diverse range of events.

Improvement in event infrastructure is needed to support the project vision and strategic needs of the Shire. More specifically, the current stock of event infrastructure is a barrier to event development due to:

- The quality and suitability of existing facilities and supporting infrastructure;
- A lack of venues across the Shire (outside Bright), which restricts the dispersal of events to other townships;
- A lack of contemporary indoor venues, which prevents many events from being held during off-peak winter months in 'all-weather' facilities; and
- A lack of contemporary large-scale accommodation across the Shire to support visitor capacity for large tourism events and encourage overnight stays to multi-day events.

In addition, the existing stock requires ongoing improvement to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and meets the needs of residents and visitors. As a result, strategic investment in existing and new event infrastructure is needed to address these barriers and support the sustainable growth of the sector.

STRATEGY 2.1: IMPROVE EXISTING EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ongoing issues with existing infrastructure are impacting the delivery of events in the Shire. It is critical that Council supports the improvement of infrastructure by ensuring venues are fit-for-purpose, adequate facilities are available, and consideration is given to environmentally sustainable design (e.g. energy efficiency, water usage, etc.).

This includes improvements to both indoor and outdoor venues in terms of safety (e.g. fencing), amenities (e.g. toilets, water, lighting), waste management and accessibility. Improving the existing stock of event infrastructure will enhance the experience for attendees, reduce set-up costs for organisers and attract new events to the Shire.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Complete a detailed quality audit of existing event infrastructure (both Council and non-Council owned) across the Shire and identify/prioritise infrastructure improvement requirements.

STRATEGY 2.2: PROMOTE UTILISATION OF EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The consultation found that existing infrastructure used for events is underutilised. In addition, many organisers are unaware of the available venues or facilities within the Shire that could be used to help deliver events.

To overcome this issue, Council is developing a **venue directory** that will provide an overview of Council venues and facilities across the Shire. The directory will be supported by a **facilities module** that provides an online booking system for Council-owned facilities and venues.

Implementing and publishing this directory (and facilities module) is a key action that could support event delivery for existing organisers and attract new events to the Shire. To increase the effectiveness of the directory, specific facilities information for different event typologies should also be included (e.g. wedding venues, indoor arts and cultural venues, sport and outdoor recreation facilities, conference venues, etc.).

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Finalise the delivery of the venue directory and facilities module to become a guide for:

- **Existing organisers by helping source and book appropriate equipment (e.g. lighting, seating, etc.); and**
- **Prospective organisers looking to deliver a new event in the Shire, by listing the relevant event infrastructure and venues that can be utilised.**

STRATEGY 2.3: DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIC EVENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The infrastructure audit identified several events infrastructure gaps in the Shire, including location of venues, the need for more indoor venues and provision of dedicated outdoor venues with appropriate supporting infrastructure.

These gaps are key barriers to event development, as well as improving the sustainability of the sector. Therefore, it is vital that Council supports development of event infrastructure in strategic locations, which will require a combination of private and public investment. This includes the following opportunities that were identified as a result of the infrastructure audit and consultation outcomes.

1. A dedicated outdoor events space in Mount Beauty.

- Investigate the potential to develop purpose-built infrastructure at an existing outdoor venue in Mount Beauty. This could include provision of built infrastructure (e.g. lighting, toilets, amphitheatre, etc.) to support ongoing event delivery in the township.
- Encouraging outdoor events in Mount Beauty aligns with the area's unique setting and natural assets. These works would help facilitate additional events in the township (inc. existing and new events) and support event dispersal outside of Bright.

2. Development of a contemporary conferencing and business events venue

- This will support the attraction of the high-yielding business market – through conferences and business events – which will help generate economic outcomes sustainably, as this market typically drives off-peak visitation (e.g. mid-week and/or winter).
- To ensure sufficient capacity and support overnight stays, this venue should include supporting accommodation in an integrated facility. A contemporary facility that provides a high level of amenity and aligns with the Shire's unique strengths (e.g. nature) will help attract the metropolitan business market.

3. Support the development of a large-scale indoor venue

- A large-scale indoor and 'all-weather' facility is needed in the Shire to:
 - Facilitate the attraction of large and diverse event types that are impacted by inclement weather (e.g. arts and culture, food and beverage events);
 - Allow (new and existing) events to occur during off-peak winter months; and
 - Support night-time events in the Shire, which could stimulate the night-time economy.

4. Promote investment into high-quality visitor accommodation

- In order to support large tourism events across the Shire and attract high-yielding visitor markets, new and contemporary branded visitor accommodation is needed. This could include a well-recognised accommodation brand such as Accor, Vibe, Quest, etc.
- Development of large and high-quality accommodation will increase the value of the visitor economy (by generating yield) and enhance the visitor experience (inc. event visitors).
- This is also recognised as a key opportunity in the *Alpine Shire Economic Development Strategy* to help support the tourism industry.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Support the development of new strategic event infrastructure through the preparation of a feasibility study and/or investment prospectus, highlighting preferred locations, the financial/economic benefits and identifying potential funding sources.**
- **To attract accommodation investment:**
 - **Complete an accommodation audit to identify the gaps in commercial accommodation, focusing on large scale and high-quality facilities;**
 - **Investigate potential locations for suitable accommodation, including in the key towns of Bright, Myrtleford and Mount Beauty; and**
 - **Prepare a feasibility study that investigates the viability of visitor accommodation, as well as a prospectus, to attract private investment.**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3: SUPPORT EVENT DELIVERY AND MANAGEMENT

Provide efficient and effective support to improve the sustainability of the events sector and enhance the delivery and management of events in the Shire.

Council's ongoing commitment to support the events sector includes facilitation of community events, overseeing the application process as well as supporting the industry through ongoing training and funding.

However, as the strategic needs of the Shire evolves, and the economic landscape changes in response to the COVID-19 and bushfire 'shocks', the level of Council support should adapt accordingly.

This will be reflected in the types of support and use of resources provided by Council, to ensure the expectations of community and industry stakeholders are met. Within all this, Council's focus should be on delivering more efficient and effective support and ensuring the sector has adequate resources and assistance to deliver events.

STRATEGY 3.1: DEVELOP AN ALPINE SHIRE EVENTS POLICY AND EVENTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

An overarching Events Policy will help establish Council's guidelines and values for the events sector. This is a critical document that will provide clarity for community, Council and event organisers to:

- Enable consistent delivery and management of events; and
- Ensure the events sector aligns with the strategic needs of the Shire.

An events policy is a key policy document to help achieve Council's **vision** and provide **strategic direction** to ensure the events sector balances community, economic and environmental outcomes. An indicative guideline for what the policy will include, based on the specific needs of the Shire, is outlined in Table T8 (note: the policy will include and be informed by the *Event Management Procedure* currently being developed by Council to achieve consistent project management practices).

T8. ALPINE SHIRE EVENTS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Table of Contents	Description/Examples
1. Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To outline the key principles and <u>values</u> of events in the Shire.• To provide <u>direction</u> for the delivery and management of events.
2. Definitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definitions for event types and event categories.
3. Scope of Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy inclusions/exclusions.
4. Event Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Objectives.• Roles and Responsibilities (Council, Organisers, etc.).• Event Management Procedure (under development).• Decision-Making Framework (e.g. approvals and funding criteria).• Environmental Guidelines and Practices.• Relevant Legislation and Compliance.• Administrative Requirements (e.g. fees and rates).
5. Policy Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline date and schedule of ongoing policy reviews.
Other/Appendices	E.G. Annual event budget, listing funded events, Events calendar, etc.

Source: Urban Enterprise, 2021

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop an Alpine Shire Events Policy and Events Management Procedure that is used by Council to:

- **Outline a consistent and transparent approach to event delivery and management;**
- **Improve decision-making and provide clear parameters to guide the event approvals process (see approval and funding framework in Section 8); and**
- **Provide the community and organisers with an understanding of Council's vision and objectives.**

STRATEGY 3.2: ESTABLISH NEW EVENT FUNDING CRITERIA AND FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The recommended funding criteria and funding allocations for different event tiers is detailed in the approval and funding framework in Section 8. This is based on a review of the *Alpine Shire Event Funding Program Guidelines* (2020-21) and is intended to align the funding framework with the event sector vision and objectives.

Development of more consistent and quantifiable criteria will improve the efficacy and transparency of the funding process and will be a core component of future event policies. This is a key requirement to better support delivery of events that have received Council approval and are seeking Council funding.

The proposed funding allocations for each tier will streamline the funding process for Council, whilst maintaining the current (and recommended) level of financial support (i.e. average of \$200,000 p.a.). This will allow Council to continue the strategic growth of the events calendar and use its existing funds more efficiently to meet the long-term needs of the Shire. This will also allow for more discretionary use of Council funds to attract large tourism events.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

- **Establish and implement new funding criteria and funding allocations for each event category (see approval and funding framework in Section 8).**
- **Include the new funding criteria/allocations as part of future Council events policies.**

STRATEGY 3.3: BUILD INDUSTRY CAPACITY

To help improve industry capacity and capability, Council needs to enhance its level of industry support, including ongoing training, mentorship and support tools/resources provided to industry. This is a key role for Council to help grow the skillset of organisers, ensure events are managed safely and successfully and promote the delivery of financially self-sustaining events.

More specifically, industry requires the following levels of support from Council, which could be best provided through the development of an online **toolkit** focusing on:

- Information relating to risk and emergency management procedures;
- Supporting documentation/permit application requirements and relevant contacts;
- Environmentally-friendly and waste management practices (and checklist);
- Building awareness of the funding programs and support available to organisers;
- Writing grant applications and securing sponsorships;
- Marketing events; and
- Creating a budget.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

- **Establish a toolkit for current and potential event operators.**
- **Deliver the toolkit through ongoing video tutorials/FAQs; workshops, and recorded event management workshops.**

STRATEGY 3.4: IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF THE APPROVALS PROCESS

Consultation with industry identified the need for Council to improve the efficiency of the approvals process, making it easier for existing and new operators to apply for (and receive) approvals. As mentioned above, Council is working towards improving the consistency of the approval process through the development of an *Event Management Procedure*. This will be supported with the upcoming rollout of the *Alpine Events Permit Module* (in progress), which is an online system to make it easier for Council and organisers to view, manage and report on event permits.

The successful completion of the procedure document and implementation of the online module – including training both Council and industry to use it effectively – is crucial to improving the efficiency of the approvals process. This will provide consistency in event management and help facilitate the delivery of compliant events.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Completion and delivery of the *internal*/Event Management Procedure and the online Events Permit Module to improve the efficiency of the approval process.

STRATEGY 3.5: SUPPORT INDUSTRY AWARENESS OF EVENTS

Increasing awareness of upcoming events to industry will encourage collaboration and provide opportunities for businesses within the hospitality sector (inc. retail, food services, accommodation) to support events.

Council has the opportunity to facilitate this through a range of measures, including:

- Provision of a seasonal calendar of upcoming events to relevant businesses in the hospitality industry;
- A more comprehensive online calendar of events provided on Council's website;
- Ongoing industry communication (e.g. email to relevant businesses within Council's CRM database); and
- Scheduled workshops/information sessions for businesses at key points throughout the year (i.e. quarterly).

This would help increase the level of industry support (inc. servicing visitors) and contribute to the success of tourism events.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

Adopt and implement measures to increase industry communication and enhance awareness of events.

STRATEGY 3.6: REVIEW EVENT STAFFING RESOURCES

To deliver this Strategy and improve the delivery and management of events, Council must perform a range of tasks, including industry support, facilitating event approvals, assessing funding applications and reviewing funding criteria.

Therefore, to deliver the recommendations adopted in this document, Council may need to engage additional temporary staffing resources. This ensures there are sufficient resources for event attraction, as well as assisting industry with event delivery and management.

KEY RECOMMENDATION

- **Review staffing requirements to achieve the recommendations and actions identified in this Strategy.**
- **Engage additional staffing resources on an 'as needs' basis.**

8. EVENT APPROVAL AND FUNDING FRAMEWORK

8.1. INTRODUCTION

An event approval and funding framework was developed by Council to help achieve the strategic objectives, strategies and outcomes identified in the Strategic Events Framework (Section 7). This section helps form Council's policy in permitting and funding future events in the Alpine Shire (to be implemented from 1 July 2022) and is a key lever for Council to improve event delivery and management.

This includes an overview of event categories, permitting conditions and funding conditions to ensure each proposed new event aligns with agreed objectives and outcomes for the events sector.

8.2. IDENTIFIED EVENT IMPACTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

To help determine the most appropriate categorisation for each event, the anticipated *social, environmental* and *economic* impact of the event will be identified, and the potential beneficial and detrimental impacts of the event will be considered.

Key considerations include but are not limited to those listed in Table T9.

T9. EVENT IMPACTS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Impact Type	Considerations
Social impact	<p>Beneficial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Extent to which the local community participates in or spectates at the event, and the opportunities this brings for improved social cohesion and community development.Degree of community consultation and engagement of the local volunteer base in the planning and delivery of the event.Contribution of the event towards the objectives of Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan. <p>Detrimental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Impact on the free flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic through the CBDs of our major towns and on key arterial roads, resulting in increased emergency response times and reducing accessibility for residents and visitors.Risk factors associated with the event including alcohol consumption and associated antisocial behaviour.Monopolisation of key public open spaces by event infrastructure to the detriment of informal family events and other social gatherings.
Environmental Impact	<p>Beneficial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstration of commitment to best practice in sustainable event management/sustainable tourism. <p>Detrimental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Poor practices around waste separation at events.Littering.Use of single use items and plastic.Increased incidence of free-camping and associated waste-management issues when managed accommodation is at capacity.
Economic Impact	<p>Beneficial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Economic input to Alpine Shire businesses.Capacity to drive increased visitation, particularly overnight and off-peak.Profile, brand alignment and marketing reach of the event. <p>Detrimental:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Costs associated with event impact on Council infrastructure and open spaces.

Source: Alpine Shire Council, 2021

8.3. EVENT CATEGORISATION AND PERMITTING CONDITIONS

Based on event impacts and considerations (described above), as well as a range of other identified characteristics, events will be categorised as *Signature, High Impact, Medium Impact, Low Impact* and *Private – Low Impact*.

The following guidelines and conditions (see Table T10) will be applied to establish the event category and determine whether an event fulfils the minimum requirements to be permitted to proceed. Event organisers will be required to nominate – within their event application – the category within which they consider their proposed event best fits, and the basis for this assessment. Council will retain the discretion to reallocate events to a different category from that which was applied under.

T10. EVENT CATEGORISATION AND PERMITTING CONDITIONS

Event Type	Key Characteristics	Permitting Conditions
Signature Event <i>One-off event likely to exceed 6,000 attendees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are events of International or National significance• Generate state-wide, national and/or international publicity• Capacity to attract, interstate and international visitation• An event that has potential to have significant social, environmental and economic impact for the community (refer Table T9).• The event requires complex road closures and/or traffic management. May also include large infrastructure builds.• Expected to be a one-off event• Event attendance likely to exceed 6,000 people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to a resolution of Council or decision taken under CEO delegation as appropriate.
High Impact Event <i>Event exceeding 6,000 attendees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are events of National or State significance• An event that has potential to have significant social, environmental and economic impact for the community (refer Table T9).• The event requires complex road closures and/or traffic management. May also include large infrastructure builds.• Typically contributes greater than \$5million into the local and regional economy.• Event attendance exceeding 6,000 people including a large proportion of interstate visitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications must be received minimum of 6 months prior to the date of the planned event• Not permitted over public holiday weekends• Not permitted to run in a township CBD over school holidays if road closures required.• Not permitted to run in Howitt Park and/or Centenary Park in Bright.• Mandatory referral to Risk Assessment Panel

Event Type	Key Characteristics	Permitting Conditions
Medium Impact Event <i>Event exceeding 1,000 attendees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are events of State or Regional significance An event that has potential to have considerable social, environmental and economic impact for the community (refer Table T9). The event requires: some road closures and/or traffic management to change traffic conditions. Typically contributes greater than \$1million into the local economy. Event visitation exceeding 1,000 people with the potential to attract interstate visitation but primarily attended by intrastate visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications must be received a minimum of 12 weeks prior to the date of the planned event. Applications for events anticipating 2,000+ people must be received a minimum of 6 months prior to the date of the event. Not permitted in CBD over school holidays or public holiday weekends if road closures required Not permitted in Howitt Park and/or Centenary Park in Bright (if patronage exceeds 500 people at a time). Discretionary referral to risk assessment panel.
Low Impact Event <i>Event attracting up to 1,000 attendees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are events of Regional or Local significance An event that has reasonable social, environmental and economic impact for the community (refer Table T9). The event requires: no road closures but may require some changed traffic conditions (e.g. reduced speed) Visitation up to 1,000 people with the potential to attract interstate visitation but primarily attended by intrastate visitors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications must be received minimum of 6 weeks prior to the date of the planned event Not permitted in a township CBD over school holidays or public holiday weekends if road closures required Not permitted in Howitt Park and/or Centenary Park in Bright (if patronage exceeds 500 people at a time).
Private – Low Impact Event <i>Event attracting up to 200 attendees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An event that has low impact on community amenity and Council managed land The event does not impact traffic conditions, does not require portable toilets or trailers, and there are no food or alcohol sales. Could be a wedding, family celebration etc. Visitation of 50 to 200 people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications must be received a minimum of 10 working days prior to the date of the planned event.

Source: Alpine Shire Council, 2021

8.4. EVENT FUNDING

The following criteria will be applied to applications when assessing levels of funding for permitted events. This assessment is independent to the event permitting process and determines an event's eligibility for funding only. Weightings for each of the criteria will be included in the annual Event Funding Guidelines. Event organisers must comply with Council's event funding application process and associated timeframes, including provision of all required documentation by the timelines specified.

This process designates funding for permitted events according to '*Tiers*', which are based on specific criteria and determine the maximum level of funding that can be provided. This tiered system provides flexibility for the range of event types (i.e. high/medium/low impact) to receive different levels of funding based on meeting certain criteria, which also distinguishes between a 'tourism' or 'community' event (where relevant).

Table T11 (overleaf) details the eligibility criteria and funding allocations for each Tier, which will be applied to funding applications to determine the level (and duration) of funding.

T11. EVENT FUNDING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Tier	Determining Criteria	Funding				
Signature Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likely to be a one-off major tourism event with the capacity to attract intrastate, interstate and/or international visitation Of international or national significance Delivers substantial community, economic and tourism benefits Generates state or national profile for the region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to a resolution of Council or decision taken under CEO delegation as appropriate. 				
Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A large-scale tourism event Event has the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation Of national or state significance Delivers significant social, economic, environmental and/or cultural-wellbeing outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maximum funding (cash sponsorship plus the monetary value of logistics support) will not exceed \$10,000 provided for up to 3 years Cash sponsorship will be offered to events being delivered over school holidays or over public holiday weekends where they encourage tourism dispersal to areas outside of Bright 				
Tier 2	<p>Medium to large scale events that offer one or more of the following attributes:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Tourism Events:</td> <td>Community Events:</td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the capacity to attract interstate and intrastate visitation but primarily appeals to local audiences (from North-East Victoria). Are of regional significance Provide economic and environmental outcomes Sustainability Actions </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events that celebrate local identity and culture and provide a range of community benefits including participation, wellbeing and community connectivity Offers opportunities for community engagement and connectivity Participation opportunities for local groups Sustainability Actions Offers community health and wellbeing through participation </td> </tr> </table>	Tourism Events:	Community Events:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the capacity to attract interstate and intrastate visitation but primarily appeals to local audiences (from North-East Victoria). Are of regional significance Provide economic and environmental outcomes Sustainability Actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events that celebrate local identity and culture and provide a range of community benefits including participation, wellbeing and community connectivity Offers opportunities for community engagement and connectivity Participation opportunities for local groups Sustainability Actions Offers community health and wellbeing through participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maximum amount of funding (cash sponsorship plus the monetary value of logistics support) will not exceed \$5,000
Tourism Events:	Community Events:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the capacity to attract interstate and intrastate visitation but primarily appeals to local audiences (from North-East Victoria). Are of regional significance Provide economic and environmental outcomes Sustainability Actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events that celebrate local identity and culture and provide a range of community benefits including participation, wellbeing and community connectivity Offers opportunities for community engagement and connectivity Participation opportunities for local groups Sustainability Actions Offers community health and wellbeing through participation 					
Tier 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller-scale community events that offer one or more of the following attributes: Event may attract intrastate visitation (from North-East Victoria) but are primarily focussed on local community. Events that provide community benefit including participation, wellbeing and community connectivity Events for special interest groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maximum amount of funding (cash sponsorship plus the monetary value of logistics support) will not exceed \$2,000 				

Source: Alpine Shire Council, 2021

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A CONSULTATION PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

OVERVIEW

To inform development of the Strategy and future directions for events, extensive stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to ensure that the strategy reflects community values meets stakeholder expectations. The engagement approach included a combination of:

- Workshops with a community reference group and two business and event organiser reference groups (over two phases – project commencement and discussion paper);
- Meetings with key government, Council and industry stakeholders to help inform the project vision and objectives;
- Listening posts with community members; and
- Surveys of community representatives and event organisers, including:
 - 86 responses from the community survey, representing a cross-section of residents, to identify community aspirations and key issues facing the community in relation to events; and
 - 37 responses from event organisers to identify issues facing the events sector and opportunities for event enhancement and development.

The following provides a summary of the key consultation outcomes, focusing on the issues and opportunities raised by the community, local industry and event organiser stakeholder groups.

Please note: the information in this section is a summary of the key points raised, which were obtained from detailed meeting minutes and survey findings.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The events calendar

Residents see the events calendar as too congested, with a number of events held over consecutive weekends – particularly in Bright – and causing overcrowding of town centres (and reducing amenity). As such, locals tend to avoid towns hosting large tourism events, as local infrastructure (i.e. roads) and services are overwhelmed by visitors from outside the region.

The general view is that the events sector is driven by the pursuit of economic benefits, rather than community/social benefits. As such, more balanced support is required to provide positive impacts for residents.

This is supported by the community survey results, with 77% of respondents believing that the events sector has a negative impact on the community, including overcrowding, waste, noise pollution and environmental impacts.

Disperse events geographically and seasonally

Events are seen as too heavily concentrated within the Bright area, particularly over weekends, leading to significant congestion issues.

The community wants to disperse (or relocate) more tourism and community events across the Shire so that other local economies and communities can experience the benefits – and at the same time alleviating overcrowding in Bright.

Whilst recognising that majority of events need to be held over weekends, it was identified that:

- Fewer events should be held over long weekends/public holidays, as these times already attract a significant number of visitors; and

- More events need to be rescheduled to traditionally 'slower' months, such as winter and during school term, to facilitate year-round visitation.

Event infrastructure

The quantity and quality of event facilities and venues was raised as an issue, particularly the availability of indoor (i.e. all-weather) venues, the lack of large scale event venues and poor quality of existing facilities (e.g. toilets, lighting, etc.). In particular, sufficient lighting is needed to allow for night-time events in the Shire, which could stimulate the night-time economy and grow the potential economic benefits.

However, this was balanced with the potential negative impact of developing more (and larger) venues, which could contribute to increased congestion of towns. As such, the development of infrastructure needs to consider the community impact.

Many survey respondents listed Pioneer Park and other outdoor spaces (e.g. town centres, Mount Buffalo) as key venues that drive events, while no key indoor venues were identified.

Issues and Barriers to Event Development

When asked to identify the key barriers to a thriving event industry in the Shire, the following issues were raised (in order of frequency):

- Lack of funding for events (or in-kind support);
- Lack of suitable facilities/venues; and
- Poor marketing and promotion of events.

Council Support

In general, the community recognises that Council provides sufficient support to the events sector, with 37% of respondents listing Council's performance as positive (Extremely well or Very Well).

However, around 25% of responses were negative, arguing that Council does not provide enough support to deliver and manage events.

In terms of improving this level of support and developing the event sector, many residents identified the need for Council to:

- Improve communication and consultation with community;
- Adopt a more strategic focus to the events calendar that balances tourism and liveability; and
- Increase the focus on community and grassroots events.

Other key points raised by the community includes:

- More diversity in the types of events is required to meet resident demand, particularly food and beverage, as well as arts and culture events;
- There is a lack of event promotion and communication to residents, leading to poor awareness of local events occurring across the Shire;
- The environmental cost of events also needs to be considered, particularly the impact on waste and open spaces; and
- Although the Shire hosts several significant events, there is potential to attract more of these 'iconic' events, particularly cycling events that leverages the cycling assets of the region.

BUSINESS AND EVENT ORGANISER FEEDBACK

Following engagement with local businesses and event organisers, the following feedback was provided.

Event support and resources

Event organisers identified the need for additional support from Council and other organisations (e.g. Tourism North-East) to facilitate the delivery of events, particularly in response to the impacts of the bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic. This includes:

- Clear direction and leadership that provides guidance for organisers to safely run events in response to social distancing restrictions;
- A consistent and effective funding structure that supports the continuation of existing events and allows new events to become established;

- A more streamlined approvals process, which currently requires multiple application forms from different organisations. Organisers felt that more guidance is also needed to navigate this process, and that the process should be simple and easy to follow;
- Improvements in communication between event organisers and Council, which could be facilitated through a centralised directory of resources/guidelines;
- Greater collaboration between event organisers, to avoid event duplication, expand the support network and identify opportunities for local businesses to support event visitation; and
- More coordinated marketing and promotion of key events in the region – using both traditional and social media platforms.

Despite these areas for improvement raised, majority of survey respondents (79%) felt that Council provides a supportive role for the events sector.

In terms of resources, most event organisers (69%) obtain outside (i.e. non-Council) funding to help run the event, particularly private sponsorship. This indicates that the current level of Council funding (or in-kind support) may need to be reviewed to ensure sufficient resources are provided to deliver events.

Event infrastructure provision

Event organisers found that the general quality of event infrastructure and facilities requires improvement (in terms of capacity, outdated facilities, etc.), and that an infrastructure audit is needed to identify gaps and areas for improvement.

It was also recognised that there is variability in the level and quantity of event-related infrastructure across the Shire, which affects the ability of smaller towns to host events. This includes appropriate venues (e.g. all-weather), amenities (e.g. lighting, toilets) and supporting infrastructure (e.g. accommodation/transport) – each of which is needed to host tourism events; attract visitors and promote visitor stays in the region.

This results in majority of tourism events being held in larger towns such as Bright and Myrtleford, whilst smaller towns such as Mount Beauty are limited in

the ability to host large events (or multiple events at the same time). This has flow-on effects to local economies, as it constrains the level of event visitation and visitor expenditure.

As such, many event organisers found that the lack of suitable indoor facilities (21% of respondents) and the lack of suitable outdoor facilities (5% of respondents) as key issues facing event development in the Shire.

In addition, a lack of high quality visitor accommodation was identified as a barrier to support large-scale tourism events, as well as multi-day events, which constrains the level of visitation.

Issues and barriers to event growth

When asked to identify the barriers to a thriving event industry, the following key points were raised (in order of frequency):

- Financial resourcing and funding (inc. accessing funding);
- Marketing and promotion costs;
- Lack of suitable facilities; and
- Government regulation, including obtaining relevant approvals from Council (and other organisations).

More specifically, when addressing the issue of accessing Council funding or in-kind support, most organisers were either: not aware of the availability of funding; or the application process was too onerous.

These issues identified by event organisers are focused on funding and finance and should be addressed by Council to alleviate some of the key barriers to event development.

Event development opportunities

In terms of the potential to develop and grow the sector, around 70% of event organiser responses had not planned on running any new events in the near future. This could be attributed to the uncertainty surrounding the tourism industry, following the bushfires and impact of COVID-19.

However, many potential significant events were identified as a possibility to be hosted in the Shire, particularly sport and recreation events that leverages the region's natural assets and aligns to existing product strengths.

Use of volunteers

Volunteers are seen as a crucial component of event delivery, with 94% of survey respondents utilising volunteers to support events. In some cases this included upwards of 100-150 volunteers per event.

However, it was agreed that the sector in general could better utilise volunteer support, including:

- A central directory of volunteers that could be accessed by organisers;
- Council developing a volunteer register; and
- Council promoting the benefits of increased volunteerism, such as improving community engagement, connections, etc.



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