

**Minutes from the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting**

Held in the Grafton Council Chambers on Thursday 20 July 2023 at 1:40pm – 3:16pm

**Chair:** Cr Bill Day

**Minute Taker:** Katee Blizzard (CVC Staff)

**Attendees:** Cr Bill Day; Cr Jeff Smith; Kerrie DiMattia; Liza Bloomer; Marie Howlett; Mark Blackadder; Robert Cook; Steve Tranter; Tania Williams

**CVC Staff:** Justin Putze, Katee Blizzard, Alex Moar

**Guest:** Michael Thurston, Destination North Coast (Via Teams)

**Meeting was opened by the Chair at 13:40**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:** The Chair, Cr Bill Day, opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country.

**Apologies:** Ai Ling Gazzard, Robin Gipp

***Acceptance Moved:*** Kerrie DiMattia ***Seconded:*** Liza Bloomer - ***Carried***

**Correspondence**

***Resignation:*** Adam Gordon

***Acceptance Moved:*** Liza Bloomer ***Seconded:*** Mark Blackadder - ***Carried***

**Minutes previous meeting – for adoption**

***Adoption Moved:*** Mark Blackadder ***Seconded:*** Steve Tranter – ***Carried***

Matters arising from previous minutes	DISCUSSION / DECISION FOR ACTION
Olympic Games Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The letter to the Olympic Committee has been drafted by staff and is awaiting signature.</li> <li><b>ACTION:</b> Noted by EDTAC</li> </ul>
Tourism Marketing Strategy Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff have begun planning for the Tourism Marketing Strategy and are hoping to have it completed by December 2023. EDTAC to be kept informed of progress.</li> <li><b>ACTION:</b> Noted by EDTAC</li> </ul>

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION & OUTCOMES	ACTION or RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL
1. <b>“Value of Tourism” Discussion – Guest Michael Thurston, Director of Destination North Coast (Via Team)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michael Thurston presented the ‘Value of Tourism’ document for the North Coast for 2022 which is a report from Destination North Coast and Visit NSW outlining the key metrics of the industry across the North Coast region and for our LGA.</li> <li>Michael highlighted a 19% decrease in overall visitation to the region, excluding international visitors, but an increase in overall spending. The cost of accommodation was identified as a potential contributor to the decline in day trip visitation, which saw a significant decline of 23%. However, the ratio of overnight visitors to day trippers remains healthy.</li> </ul>	<b>ACTION:</b> CVC Staff to distribute Michael’s presentation with statistics to EDTAC Members.

- Based on the report, the majority of domestic overnight visitors coming to the Clarence Valley engaged in social activities (85%), with slightly over half participating in outdoor nature-based activities (53%) and nearly 40% taking part in active outdoor/sporting activities. Despite this, the report highlighted areas for improvement, such as the need to attract more international visitors and offer more high-end and branded accommodation options. Additionally, it was noted that the Clarence Valley could benefit from developing more wet weather, family-focused, and night-time activities to cater to a wider range of visitors.
- Michael advised that more international promotions were necessary to rebuild this market and highlighted the potential of river-based sporting events to boost tourism on the Clarence River. He highlighted how Grafton's Illuminate Project would have had a definitive impact on increasing overnight stays. However, the lack of quality accommodation across the region was recognized as a challenge, with a high volume of low to medium-quality options. Addressing these issues and developing nature-based attractions could help boost the tourism industry in the North Coast region.
- After the presentation, it was mentioned by the Chair that Jacaranda Festival has been nominated as a Finalist for the Destination North Coast's Tourism Awards for Festival and Events and congratulated Mark and the Jacaranda committee.

## 2. Small Business Month Grant Discussion

- Katee Blizzard shared details on “NSW Small Business Month Funding” opportunity for CVC to host workshops to support our business community in October 2023. CVC can apply for up to \$2,500 for local councils to host face-to-face events supporting businesses.
- Staff discussed hosting Meta training (Facebook and Instagram) following the success of last year’s “Business Marketing Workshop” to help local businesses better present themselves online.
- Staff has had contact with “Alt Collective” (formerly known from the State Funded “Entrepreneur Facilitators’ Program”) about reintroducing workshops with the Hinterland Cluster focused on supporting the growth of the Canoe and Kayak Trail.
- The meeting was opened for feedback and ideas from the committee. The committee agreed that a workshop with Meta would be beneficial and other ideas were presented as well for staff to consider. Below are some of the discussed options.
  - PR and Media Training – It was proposed that hosting workshops on PR and Media Training could greatly benefit local businesses.
  - Governance Training - It was highlighted that it would be beneficial for Business NSW to conduct workshops on governance to the local chambers.
  - Engaging with Government as Suppliers – Committee discussed the importance training businesses to engage with the government as suppliers. It was suggested that

**ACTION:** Staff to update EDTAC on Grant Application Process at next meeting.

	<p>CVC staff could look to organize workshops in collaboration with Service NSW to offer tender preparation training, enabling businesses to better understand the processes involved with government contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Doing Business with Council - Cr. Day emphasized the need to support local businesses in securing tenders with the Council as well. The idea of hosting workshops that guide businesses on how to apply for Council contracts was well-received.</li> <li>● Committee members agreed on the importance of hosting these workshops to provide comprehensive support and resources for our local business community.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Food Plunge Festival</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cr. Jeff Smith proposed an event similar to the already existing art/culture PLUNGE except promoting local food producers. The producers, cafes, and growers already exist, this would be a marketing tool for a month of events/promotions run by the business houses themselves. A spring event, it could be tied in with the beginning of the “Jacaranda Season”, a lead in event.</li> <li>● Deb Novak of Clarence Valley Food Inc. is looking to host a pilot event. Cr. Smith will keep us updated.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Noted by EDTAC</p>
<p><b>4. Christmas Decoration in the CBD. – Cr Jeff Smith</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cr. Jeff Smith proposed partnering with local Chambers of Commerce for simple Christmas decorative lighting. Discussion was held around current lighting on Prince Street and committee members asked if they will be staying up through Christmas. Staff to advise.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Staff to advise if Prince St. lights are going to stay up through Christmas and if so, can something similar be done throughout the LGA.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark Blackadder discussed the potential for a Christmas on the Clarence event that would run annually with a rotation of venues up and down the river including Grafton, Maclean, Yamba, etc. Grafton Chamber is working with Mark Blackadder to coordinate. Mark will keep the committee informed.</li> </ul>	
<p>5. <b>52 Discoveries booklet and printed material discussion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff have provided Brochure Packs for EDTAC Committee members and welcome feedback / suggestions.</li> <li>• Delegates discussed the updating of brochures and staff shared that they are planning to develop a new visitor’s guide to replace “52 Discoveries” booklet. These updates will take place after the completion of the new Tourism Marketing Strategy.</li> <li>• Delegates discussed the importance of Inclusive and Accessible tourism and how we need to update local brochures to better represent what we have on offer withing the Clarence Valley.</li> <li>• Delegates discussed local signage and billboard updates. Ulmarra CBD Precinct Upgrades will be finished shortly, and it was noted that new signage should be a priority.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> EDTAC Members are invited to share their feedback on new local brochures to CVC staff.</p>
<p>6. <b>EDTAC delegate Steve Tranter to report on:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Old Grafton Gaol</b></li> <li><b>Historical publications that should be reprinted</b></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Clarence River Historical Society has been asked for photos of the old Grafton Gaol from Department of Planning and Environment. The availability of a section of the old gaol for community use will be considered at the July Council Meeting.</li> <li>• Delegates discussed updating and reprinting historical publications and brochures or including some of the material within new tourism brochure.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ACTION:</b> Noted by EDTAC</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will connect with Steve to discuss further.</li> </ul>	
<b>7. General Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee asked whether National Parks should be contributing to the Clarence Valley Council Tourism Marketing Budgets for the coverage provided. At this stage, NSW National Parks do not contribute to local marketing.</li> <li>• The committee noted that via “Destination NSW”, TV program “Sunrise” came to Yamba and broadcasted from Yamba River Markets and main beach highlighting multiple local businesses.</li> <li>• Delegates discussed whether to fill delegate vacancies on EDTAC. Staff will review Council’s Terms of Reference (TOR) to check requirements.</li> </ul>	<b>ACTION:</b> Staff to review Terms of Reference.
<b>Meeting closed</b>	3:16 pm	
<b>Next Meeting</b>	21 September 2023 – Grafton Chambers from 1:30pm – 3:00pm	