



Events Strategy

2018 - 2023

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

Located in Northern Tasmania on the banks of the Tamar River, the municipality of George Town is ideally placed to attract event goers. Coupled with our warm hospitality, community pride, heritage and culture, George Town has much to offer in terms of becoming an events destination.

Undoubtedly, festivals, events and social activities bring together, and support greater connectivity between cross-sections of the community. Growing our existing events, and attracting new events, is a focus for George Town.

Partnerships and collaboration with community stakeholders will be paramount to the success of developing local events and leveraging opportunities such as those presented by the Tamar Valley Folk Festival, Tour of Tasmania, and Targa Tasmania.

In addition, we will continue to work towards having at least one signature event that is synonymous with the identity of George Town, and which is recognised statewide.

We want residents and visitors alike to enjoy a variety of long-running and new memorable events that are distinctly George Town - and to keep coming back time and time again.

Events are everyone's business.

Bridget Archer
Mayor of George Town

INTRODUCTION

The George Town Council Events Strategy aims to gain optimal benefits for the municipality through events, and provides a framework for George Town's event related activities.



Through the Events Strategy we demonstrate that George Town Council is committed to making our municipality a place to live, visit and invest in. The Strategy establishes a clear pathway for George Town to maximise outcomes and optimise its resources and activities associated with identifying, attracting and supporting Council, community, and major events in George Town.

Council is proud to support events in the municipality of George Town, inclusive of Hillwood and our beautiful coastal areas, and we look forward to building on relationships in the events sector and broader community to bring more energy and excitement to both George Town and the Northern Region.





WHY DOES COUNCIL HOLD EVENTS?

Events are the essence of community life in George Town

Each year Council and organisations stage events that create a sense of community connectivity, pride and sense of place.

A strong program of events is essential in activating and enlivening our municipality and public spaces. George Town events provide an evolving opportunity to support and partner with businesses and community organisations to build a stronger local community. Most importantly, our events help strengthen our local community by creating connections and building a positive profile of George Town across Tasmania.

Event benefits include :

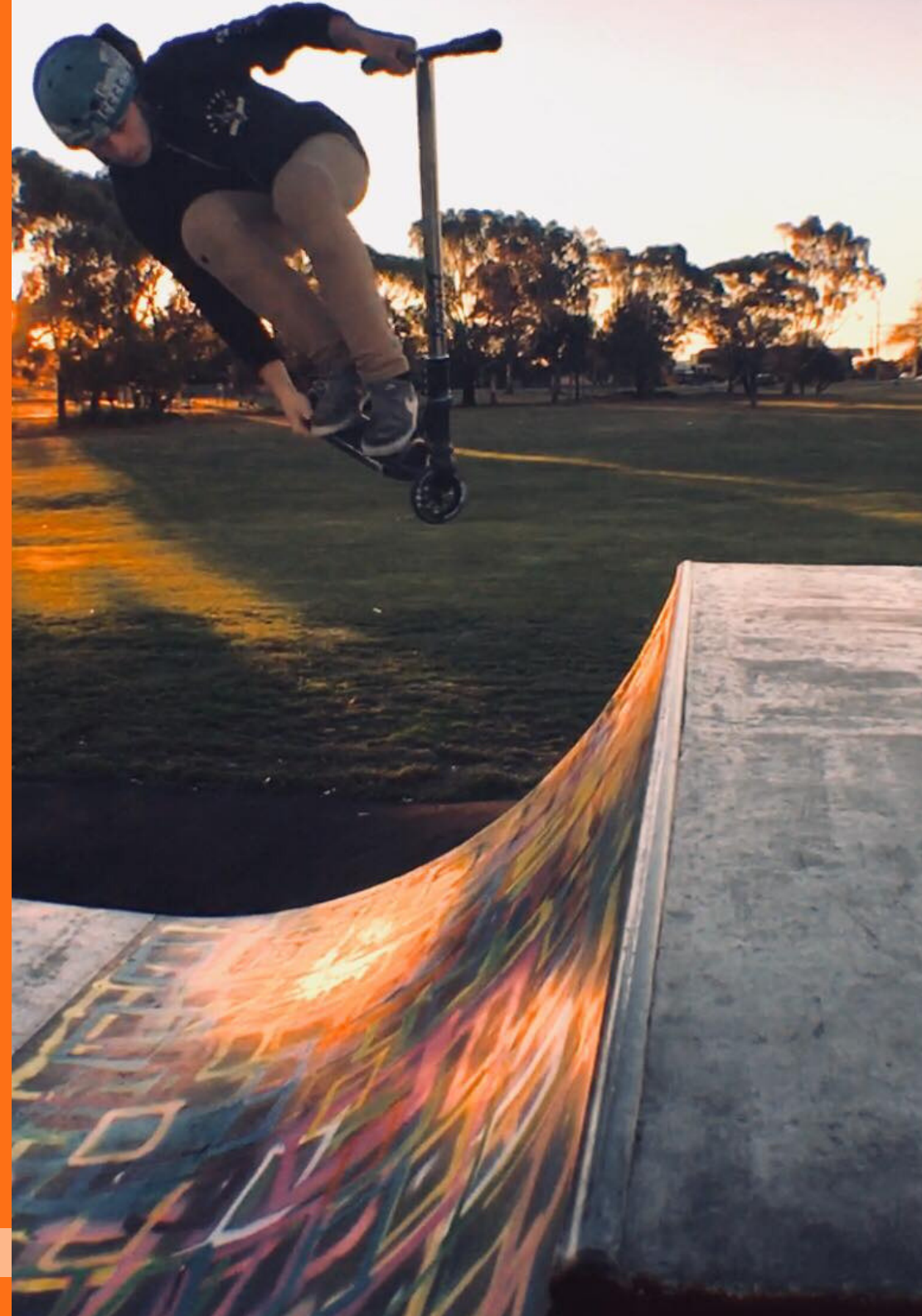
- Build a positive profile by promoting a positive image of the George Town municipality and its people through showcasing it as a place with unique heritage experience and assets that attract visitors and create local economic development and tourism opportunities, as well as building our profile and reputation as a great place to live, visit and invest.
- Engage and connect residents by creating new connections and a shared understanding between people to bring us together as one community.
- Promote partnerships by working collaboratively with community, business and other key stakeholders to develop productive relationships to add value and generate benefits for the community. This also involves supporting community organisations to run their own events, including funding support under the George Town Council Grants and Sponsorship Programs.
- A range of community, social and environment outcomes that contribute to making the George Town municipality great place to live.
- A sense of pride and community spirit, increased participation opportunities, enjoyment and entertainment.
- Utilisation and activation of community assets. Renew and bring to life the personality of our public spaces.

SCOPE

The Events Strategy includes Council and community events and festivals that take place annually, bi-annually, or once off. It includes civic commemorations, arts and cultural events, music events and festivals, special interest events, events for youth.

Council's Events Strategy provides foundation for events in the George Town municipality and covers everything from small events that enable active participation in community life through to larger festivals and events that attract visitors from across Tasmania and interstate.

The strategy creates new opportunities and supports the development of events that help define our community and capture the collective spirit, history and endeavour of all the people within our municipality.





Strategic Direction

The strategic approach for events within the municipality of George Town is to focus on :

- existing, recurring events including community run events and where possible, working to 'lift' them to signature/ destination event status.
- attracting new events that lift the profile of George Town and/or contribute significantly to the economy, particularly during low and shoulder tourism periods.
- encouraging events to build on George Town's hero experiences and competitive advantage to reflect the areas of unspoilt nature and heritage.
- align with the George Town Destination Action Plan to address challenges and opportunities for our municipality.

In five years time

- George Town will be home to at least one signature/destination event that is distinctly George Town's.
- The municipality of George Town will have capacity to support events with improved infrastructure.
- Event organisers will partner and collaborate, share resources and undertake co-promotion.
- Working with George Town Council to organise an event will be a seamless process, with a well-utilised event portal.



BENEFITS OF AN EVENT STRATEGY

There are many benefits in creating an Events Strategy and aligned events program as distinct to simply responding to ad hoc requests to hold events. These advantages include:

- Allowing Council events to be considered collectively and individually, and ensuring that the approach aligns with Council's Strategic Plan.
- Providing certainty about the timing and nature of events, which in turn assists with a calendar of events spread evenly across the year, and therefore delivers added value to each individual event, complementing events and / or avoiding event clashes.
- Allowing a closer consideration of how Council can link the broader regional events environment, including linking to emerging Launceston events and other Statewide events,

- Providing a starting point to explore new economic development opportunities generated by our events program.

Simply delivering an event for historic reasons or in an ad hoc manner can lead to inefficiencies, poor use of Council resources, or delivery of poor quality events that do not reflect the aspirations of Council or the community.

It is inevitable that over time, Council's Events Strategy will evolve to reflect the changing nature of the community, and opportunities that become evident via research, aligning with the George Town Destination Action Plan, and community and stakeholder consultation.

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

The Community Strategic Plan vision is "the George Town municipal area will be a proud community where people from all ages participate in our active recreational and community life, and where we treasure the immense beauty of our natural environment and rich heritage. We will embrace our industries to drive our prosperity and growth".

This vision reflects the fact that the concept of community pride and the desire to belong, is strong.

The Community Strategic Plan outlines the need to celebrate and support George Town both as a place, and a community. Events are critical to delivering this outcome.



KEY PRINCIPLES

The following key principles underpin the Events Strategy and will guide decision making in relation to the allocation of resources for the identification, attraction, development and support of events.

George Town Council values a calendar of events throughout the year that provides -

- Community, social, cultural, economic, tourism and profile benefits.
- Event opportunities that are unique to George Town, ie specific to our culture and heritage.
- A contribution to making George Town a great place to live.
- Opportunities to showcase the George Town destination brand including our natural environment, heritage, food and wine, arts and culture.
- Implementation of best practice event management.

PRIORITIES

Support from George Town Council will be given to events that are able to generate tourism, economic, community, social, cultural and inclusion benefits. This will include -

- supporting, developing and maximising the value of existing events that already deliver substantial benefits;
- attracting new events where a cost benefit analysis will indicate a satisfactory return on investment;
- emergent events identified as having the potential to deliver substantial benefits;
- encouraging events in off-peak and shoulder tourism seasons to provide impact when demand is traditionally lower.

Council will provide facilitation support to both major and community events. A cost benefit analysis will be conducted on events seeking significant support from George Town Council, with the key focus being on attracting and supporting events that deliver a community need, and return on investment.



Definition of Events

WHAT IS AN EVENT?

Events are described as having the following characteristics :

- Can be one-off, annual or occur more frequently
- Are open to the public or a specific interest group
- Have pre-determined opening and closing dates and times
- May not require permanent structures
- May be staged in a single venue or multiple venues
- Could be conducted on a single day or over a number of days
- Focus on one area / recreation activity or a number of activities
- Can include participants from different demographics or ability levels.

Events may be private, enterprise driven or community based including entertainment events (free or ticketed), exhibitions (to view, buy or sell products or services), festivals (cultural celebrations), fundraisers (for a charity or cause), commemorative celebrations, as well as meetings and forums (to exchange information or for education purposes).





Recognising that many events are delivered by community and professional event organisers, George Town Council will,

- adopt a proactive and customer focussed event compliance program to support event organisers;
- value and actively facilitate collaborations and partnerships with key stakeholders;
- promote and support best practice event management;
- in conjunction with event organisers, facilitate marketing and promotional opportunities.

VALUE OF EVENTS

Events and Festivals can provide significant benefits for the local community and visitors alike. Events are acknowledged as opportunities to stimulate tourism and economic growth by showing the destination and attracting visitors from outside the municipality.

A positive experience for a visitor at an event can prompt them to become a destination advocate, promoting an area, and potentially prompting a return visit during the off season.

Social	community	Economic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to actively participate in community events. • Potential to build skills through volunteering. • Opportunities to contribute to the health and wellbeing of the community. • Potential to build the community profile as an active community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to fostering a strong sense of community, local pride and cultural identity. • Creates community "identity" and cohesiveness. • Celebration of cultural heritage. • Facilitate recognition, remembrance, celebration and commemoration of significant occasions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inject new funds into the community. • Opportunity for local business to develop partnerships. • Can contribute to the growth of overnight stays in the municipality. • Potential fundraising opportunity for community groups and organisations. • Promotion of George Town.

EVENT CO-ORDINATION, DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Roles and Responsibility for Events

To realise the event vision to be renowned as one of Northern Tasmania's most event-friendly destinations, a collective partnership between event organisers, the tourism industry, private enterprise, and all levels of government and the community is required.

The event roles for George Town Council are many, including Leader, Provider, Sponsor, Facilitator, and Communicator.

LEADER	Advocate, attract, support, plan and provide an event focus for George Town. Act as a catalyst for collaboration and partnerships between event organiser and suppliers.
PROVIDER	Provide potential venues, open spaces, and in-kind support for festivals and events that meet key criteria aligned with the event vision.
SPONSOR	Evaluate opportunities to invest as an in-kind sponsor and/or cash sponsor in events aligned to the event vision and Council objectives.
FACILITATOR	Support events and grow local event management capacity as an advisor to local event organisers through relationship management.
COMMUNICATOR	Actively attract and promote new events (and retain suitable events) aligned with the event vision through various media channels, and partner with regional and state tourism and event organisations.

Responsibilities include -

SUPPORT	Providing event organisers with advice and information
APPROVAL	Co-ordinating and facilitating the Council event process and act as a main point of contact for event organisers.
SAFETY	Actively facilitate risk management with event organisers to ensure the safety of event attendees and staff.
FEES AND CHARGES	Appropriate fees and charges are in place for venue usage, application fees and permits.
SPONSORSHIP & GRANTS	Event organisers are encouraged to apply for funding through Council's Grants and Sponsorship program.
EVENT ATTRACTION	Attracting suitable new events (and retaining suitable existing events), identifying opportunities to leverage significant community, social, cultural or economic benefits.
EVENT DELIVERY	Delivering Council events for the George Town community, ie Christmas Parade and Carols, Australia Day Ceremonies , and other Council events as determined.
COMMUNICATION	Promoting Council and community events through Council's social media platforms, Destination Tasmania, ATDW website, Council Website, links to Tourism Tasmania.
EVENT EVALUATION	Facilitating event monitoring and post evaluation of the impact of events and festivals with event organisers, against performance indicators.

EVENTS SUPPORT

George Town Council runs both a Community Assistance Program and a Minor Sponsorship Program.

Council provides financial support through the Community Assistance Program in three ways:

Assistance to Individuals

Available for individuals up to the age of 25 who have been selected to represent Tasmania in a State, National or International Event. Grants can be applied all year round, up to the amount of \$200.

Council Fee Remissions

Grants can be applied for remission of Council service charges and venue hire. Grants can be submitted all year round, up to the amount of \$500.

Community Grants

Available up to the amount of \$2,000.

The Community Grants are offered in two rounds - February and August each year.

Whilst it is beneficial for George Town Council to help the development of signature/designation events(s) and have more significant events, Council recognises the importance to maintain a balance for support offered for existing, and new local events.

POTENTIAL COUNCIL SUPPORT

- Potentially eligible for Council's Community Grants Program or Minor Sponsorship.
- Fee Remission
- Networking opportunities
- Listing on events portal and calendar
- Advice and Information
- Encourage organisers to apply for other funding sources.





SOCIAL MEDIA

Technology has driven changes in planning events and festivals, with social media having a tangible impact on marketing awareness and driving consumer attendance at events. Many events and festivals use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Live Streaming to generate excitement, conversation and sharing, which builds a following, exposure to a wider audience which can then receive promotion and ongoing marketing.

Social Media has also had an impact on events with followers becoming promoters of the event, and driving audiences and participation. Attendees post photos, videos or updates on feeds, or "Like" a post that is then seen by each of their friends following their social media posts.

The following is an estimate of social media activity by event attendees:

- 65% tweet or post to social media during a music festival
- 56% upload photos of the event
- 31% write review of their experience of the event and post reviews online.

Implications for George Town

The promotion of social media sharing through quality WIFI available at events, and "Selfie" opportunities, further enhance unique experiences in scenic locations to encourage social media sharing. It is important to foster event organiser's ability to maximise the benefits of social media, promoting signature/destination hashtags, and leveraging social media strategies with larger partners such as Tourism Tasmania and Events Tasmania





Key Goals

1

Tourism, Economic Benefit and Profile

Maximise the economic, tourism, community and profile benefits achievable from events.



George Town Council will assess event opportunities to determine which events will deliver the most beneficial economic, tourism, destination and promotion outcomes. Support will be given to events that align to the key principles; and

- Generate increased visitation and economic yields.
- Positively promote the image of George Town.
- Fill gaps in the existing events calendar, particularly during the off season.
- Utilise George Town facilities as event venues.
- Activate retail precinct.

Key Strategies

- Event Attraction Plan - identify new event opportunities, conduct feasibility analysis to determine likely return, and facilitate key stakeholder's involvement.
- Marketing, leveraging and brand - co-ordination of key marketing and leveraging opportunities to maximise event outcomes and promote George Town.
- Events Sponsorship and Grants Program - support to events delivering the most beneficial economic, tourist and community outcomes.
- Event Industry Development - support the development of networking and sharing between event organisers.
- Measuring impacts - research and monitoring to measure impact of events, perceptions and visitor experiences.

Measures of success

- Increased number of event visitors.
- Increased length of stay and economic yield from visitors (measured by accommodation occupancy, visitor numbers and likely spend per visitor).
- An increased profile and positive exposure for George Town.
- High levels of satisfaction of event organisers and event visitors.
- A diversified calendar of events, spread throughout the year.

2

Community, Social and Lifestyle

Encourage and support a diverse calendar of events..



George Town Council will encourage and support a diverse calendar of events that contribute to making George Town a desirable place to live, visit, work and invest in.

- Contribute to a calendar of events throughout the year that are affordable and accessible to local residents.
- Encourage and support creativity, innovation and local talent.
- Build community spirit, pride, and a sense of place.
- Enable social connections to take place within the community, including volunteer and participation opportunities.
- Celebrate or commemorate unique aspects of George Town and significant occasions.

Key Strategies

- Event development and support - support the conduct of community events delivering beneficial outcomes, provide information to event organisers and their volunteers to improve capacity and capability, facilitate partnerships to aid growth and sustainability.
- Sponsorship and Grant opportunities - funding to support events which deliver community outcomes, and comply with the respective criteria for funding.
- Calendar management - promote and disseminate the George Town Calendar of Events, and provide to event organisers on suitable dates.
- Marketing - promotion of events to residents, ratepayers, businesses, visitors, and other stakeholders.
- Event Delivery - deliver key civic events and other events that align to George Town's Strategic priorities.

Measures of success

- A diverse calendar of community focused events throughout the year, catering for large sections of the community.
- High level of community participation, engagement and satisfaction with events, measured by attendance numbers, event surveys, and Council's community satisfaction survey.
- Community pride and sense of belonging.
- Positive feedback post event on social media, word of mouth.

3

Municipal Activation

Plan an events program that activates and creates vibrancy within the municipality.



Key Strategies

- Identify, develop, fund, deliver and measure events in the George Town municipal area.
- Develop and implement a marketing and communications plan to promote event activities, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders.

Measures of success

- comprehensive events program that appeals to the local community, measured by attendance, satisfaction surveys and community perception.
- Positive feedback from the local retailers.



4

Community Safety and Amenity

Facilitate the safe conduct of events and fulfil Council's regulatory responsibilities in a customer focussed manner.



- Event approvals - updated and streamlined, user friendly event application and permit process.
- Event information and best practice event management - provision of Council's Event Management Planning Guide, encourage and support best practice event management, including environmental sustainability and accessibility.

Key Strategies

- Event approvals consistency - updated and streamlined, user-friendly event application and permit process.
- Event information - Promote Council's Event Management Planning Guide as a tool for event organisers.
- Communications - regular communications with event organisers.
- Fees and charges policy - review policy to reflect the needs and capacity of community and commercial event organisers.
- Implement a program to monitor the impact of events on the community, and implement continuous improvement activities.

Measures of success

- Event organiser satisfaction with event compliance process.
- Improved efficiencies in the approval and permitting of events.
- Maintain and update of Council's Event Management Planning Guide.
- Regular communications with event organisers.
- Safe events, with no or minimal incidents or negative impacts on the community.





Reviewing the plan

The George Town Council's Events Strategy will be reviewed as part of a strategic planning process to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of the community and the evolving tourism and events sector.