

<b>24SP050</b>	Adoption 2024 - 2028 Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan
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<b>Key focus area</b>	4. Diverse economy
<b>Objective</b>	4.1 Our city is a vibrant destination that reflects the lifestyle, culture and natural environment that make it special
<b>File</b>	F2023/02390 - D11349388
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### Executive summary

At the Ordinary Meeting held on Monday 22 April 2024, Council resolved to publicly exhibit the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028.

Public exhibition took place from Tuesday 23 April 2024 to Tuesday 21 May 2024 and Council received four written submissions. All submissions received an individual reply.

Council staff decided to extend public exhibition until 21 June 2024 give stakeholders additional time to participate in the consultation process.

The submissions have been collated and are available in Attachment 2.

This report details the submissions received during the exhibition and proposes minor changes to the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028, as a result of external submissions and an internal review.

#### **Recommendation**

Council:

- A. acknowledges the public exhibition submissions and responses to the Lake Macquarie Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028 (Attachment 2).
- B. adopts the Lake Macquarie Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028. (Attachment 1)
- C. notifies those who made a submission during public exhibition of Council’s decision.

### Context

Under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, the four-year Delivery Program for Events and Festivals was due for review following the expiry of the inaugural Events and Festivals Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

The Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 sets ambitious but attainable goals to further develop the role and impact of events and festivals for the city. The plan also aims to activate the night-time economy, attract major festivals, deliver unique and surprising events, and highlight the region’s natural assets to drive tourism.

The plan recognises the interconnectedness of events and festivals with broader economic and tourism development goals and strategically aligns with the Destination Management Plan 2022-2026. By aligning with the Destination Management Plan and focusing on the strategic actions outlined in the Plan, Lake Macquarie City Council aims to build a diverse and economically strong community while affirming the region's position as a premier tourist destination.

## Discussion

Public exhibition took place from Tuesday 23 April 2024 to Tuesday 21 June 2024 during which time Council received four written submissions. All submissions received an individual reply. The submissions have been collated and are available in Attachment 2.

Key themes arising from the public exhibition included:

- support for the continued funding and delivery of events and festivals in our area
- a request for additional support for community event organisers
- improved event infrastructure for our parks
- correction to the references made to Black Rock Motor Park and Resort being a driver of major event tourism. The proposed resort will bring tourists to the city but is not a physical location for major events.

Changes to the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 have been made based on external feedback and internal review.

The changes are as follows:

- references to Black Rock Motor Park and Resort have been removed from the document
- Minor changes for clarity and readability.

## Community engagement and internal consultation

During the public exhibition, the project page on Council's online engagement portal, Shape Lake Mac, received 2500 visits, and 289 engaged visitors. The Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024–2028 was downloaded 225 times.

- 134 for the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028, and
- 91 for the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan – Engagement

Four responses were received via Shape Lake Mac.

Engagement activities were promoted through online and traditional print media, including the following channels:

- Council's website under public notices
- Media release – from which four articles were produced in Newcastle Live, Newcastle Herald, Port Macquarie News and Newcastle Weekly.
- E-newsletters May:
  - Your City to 20,485 people and Shape Lake Mac to 6202 people.
  - Lake Mac Arts monthly newsletter 2867 recipients, seven clicks
  - DSSN industry e-newsletter 1115
  - Tourism partners and industry e-newsletter 138 recipients
- Printed copies on exhibition in each cultural facility – 12 in total.

- Direct emails sent to local event organisers and stallholders (350) and to LG NSW Events network.

A Shape Lake Mac Community Engagement Survey was conducted from 4 March-1 April 2024 with 284 respondents.

From 21 May to 21 June 2024, the public exhibition of the Plan was extended. During this time the following promotion was undertaken there were no new submissions:

- Lake Mac Arts e-newsletter June – Sent to 2916 subscribers, 52 per cent opened, six people clicked
- Social post published on Lake Mac Arts channel – 312 people reached, 12 engagements
- Social media published on Council channels
  - Overall Impressions – 8962
  - Overall Engagements – 188 (2 per cent rate)
  - Video Plays – 5625

Additionally, the following targeted consultation has occurred:

- Four internal stakeholder workshops
- Discussions with external stakeholders – Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Events network, Hunter Joint Organisation, professional event organisers and suppliers, and existing organisations and groups Council currently work with.

This was supported by a professional analysis of events and festivals performance, data from 2019-2024 with a focus on economic outcomes including ticketing data and audience trends.

## Assessment of options

It is recommended that Council adopts the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 as outlined in Attachment 1 of this report. In developing the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 Council staff have ensured that the strategies are realistic and achievable within existing resources.

All public exhibition submissions received were reviewed. Only minor amendments have been made and it is considered that re-exhibition of the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 is not required.

Council may elect to not adopt the revised Plan, and re-exhibit the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 including the minor amendments or to make further changes. These options are not recommended as it is not believed that re-exhibition would result in any changes to the revised plan and the adoption of the revised plan. The Strategic Action Plan provides the framework for the next four years of event delivery through Council, ensuring decisions and future directions for the service are informed and endorsed.

## Next steps

If Council approves the Events and Festivals Action Plan 2024-2028,

- Council officers will notify those who made a submission during public exhibition of Council's decision.
- The action plan timeline will be included in yearly operational plans and implemented.
- Staff will report on the actions of the plan as part of the key performance indicators in monthly reports and through Council's quarterly reporting cycle.

- Council will report on the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan in the Annual Report.
- The Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan will be reviewed and updated in 2028.

## Key considerations

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### Economic

The Strategic Action Plan acknowledges that events and festivals stimulate economic activity, attract investment, and create opportunities for local businesses to thrive. Through strategic partnerships and innovative programming, including the activation of the night-time economy, Council is committed to delivering impactful experiences that generate tangible economic benefits, fuelling sustainable development and enhancing the overall prosperity of our city.

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### Environment

The Strategic Action Plan identifies strategies and actions that promote and facilitate sustainability through the development of zero waste to landfill goals and actions.

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### Community

The recommendations will support accessible entertainment options for the community as well as manage growth in the frequency and scale of events in our city.

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### Civic leadership

The Strategic Action Plan supports sustainable governance by providing a clear direction for future investment in events and festival programming for the next four years. It aligns with and builds upon identified opportunities in Council's existing suite of community and cultural strategies.

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### Financial

The Strategic Action Plan actions focus on aligning Council's priorities using the existing capacity of staff and resources. Therefore, only three actions rely on external funding to be achievable. Actions that are unsuccessful in obtaining resources from external grants and other revenue streams will be reviewed and alternative actions will be developed.

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### Infrastructure

The actions outlined within the Strategic Action Plan provide opportunities and identify event infrastructure as a limitation in growing the sector. Where funds are required to implement asset upgrade, construction or replacement, these works are already within Council's capital works program or funds will be sourced through grants.

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### Compliance

The documents have been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation and government guidelines and stakeholder feedback has been considered in preparing the documents. Council's public liability policy covers all activities in the recommendation.

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## Attachments

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|----|--|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. | Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 - FINAL             | Under separate cover | D11605126 |
| 2. | Submissions for the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028 |                      | D11510495 |

**Attachment 2: Summary of Public Exhibition submissions received for the Events and Festivals Strategic Action Plan 2024-2028**

Submission from resident	Summary of submission	Comments/ Council response
MARMONG POINT, NSW	The document suggests that Black Rock Motor Resort will accommodate large-scale motorsports events. This is not permitted in the DA for the resort	Noted <b>Outcome:</b> Change Black Rock Motor Resort as a location for large events.
WAKEFIELD, NSW	The document suggests that Black Rock Motor Resort will accommodate large-scale motorsports events. This is not permitted in the DA for the resort.	Noted <b>Outcome:</b> Change Black Rock Motor Resort as a location for large events.
SPEERS POINT, NSW	<p>Local community not-for-profit event organiser suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improvements to traffic management at Speers Point Park for major events.</li> <li>• consideration for established community events to have special event status - which entitles them to Council support – financial and organisational.</li> <li>• Review of level of public recognition required of events funded by Council.</li> <li>• To be advised of other funding sources of opportunities for collaboration with Council</li> </ul>	<p>Noted: Traffic management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advised of events and festival funding factors in decision making</li> <li>• Referred commentary about Council recognition to the ACT Marketing team</li> <li>• Referred respondent to Community Partnerships Department to explore possible collaboration on future events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcome:</b> No changes to the document.</p>
MEREWETHER HEIGHTS, NSW	Positive commentary supporting the need for more events and live music in the area.	Noted <b>Outcome:</b> No changes to the document.