Rural City of
Wangaratta

Events & Attractions Strategy

2025-2029



Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	2
Executive Summary	3
Introduction & Strategic Alignment	4
Definitions	8
Council's Event Roles & Responsibilities	9
The Events Landscape	10
Rural City of Wangaratta Funding	11
Event Delivery Structure	13
Opportunities & Challenges	14
How this Strategy was developed	16
Strategic Objectives	20
Strategic Objective 1 – COLLABORATION	20
Strategic Objective 2 – ATTRACTION & MARKETING	21
Strategic Objective 3 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	22
Strategic Objective 4 – ALIGNMENT	23
Strategic Objective 5 – REVIEW & ASSESS	24
Decision Making Criteria	25
Implementation Plan	26



Acknowledgement of Country

The Rural City of Wangaratta acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, on which our communities reside. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging, and celebrate and respect their continuing cultures. We are committed to walking beside all traditional owners as we move toward reconciliation.

Executive Summary

This Events and Attractions Strategy sets out the Rural City of Wangaratta's future intentions in the support, design and delivery of events within the municipality. Aligning with the vision of the community, and the Council Plan, this strategy provides direction on decision making, event opportunities, goals and aspirations for the delivery of council events, attraction of marquee events and the support of community events.

There are various challenges and opportunities that are addressed throughout this strategy that are specific to event delivery within Wangaratta. We aim to be aware of the challenges, be creative in addressing them and capitalise on the opportunities that our City presents.

Listening to the community to develop a diverse events program that benefits the social, cultural and economic wellbeing is a key priority. By curating a program of free and low cost events that aligns with the direction of council and the strengths of the region, we can ensure that the economic benefit and return on investment is elevated to new heights and Wangaratta is known as an idealistic events destination.

Enhancing community connection and resilience is a by-product of this strategy however one that is an essential element that we hope to grow throughout the delivery of this strategy.

Council intends for this strategy to be a guide, yet aspirational in scope to ensure that opportunities presented are able to be realised. We want our community to be inspired by what they see, do and feel when they are at events. We want to generate positive conversation about Wangaratta and people to be amazed by the city we live in. This strategy has defined five objectives that will be the anchors of the work in the coming years. Those objectives are:

1 – COLLABORATION

Develop partnerships that support the delivery of events within the Municipality.

2 – ATTRACTION & MARKETING

Increase the tourism and economic benefit to the community through marquee event delivery and support, via council funded or commercially operated events.

3 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Reduce environmental impacts, improve sustainability and increase community accessibility at events held within the Municipality.

4 – ALIGNMENT

Formalise event funding criteria and post event evaluation to ensure investment aligns with the council plan.

5 – REVIEW & ASSESS

Review the current council event program and event attraction program to ensure community satisfaction, and assess council supported events in line with community and council priorities.

Event Strategy **Vision**

Wangaratta will be an established and welcoming events destination, stimulating economic activity, encouraging new residents, and delivering memorable experiences to everyone.

Event Strategy **Mission**

Enable a vibrant events program that fosters strong community spirit, celebrates diversity and contributes to the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of the community and visitors to the region.

Introduction

This strategy is tasked with adapting to a different community and events delivery landscape than has been previously experienced by Wangaratta and indeed the nation. We know that the way people engage with events has changed in light of the years of covid-19 that have been endured and this strategy will address the landscape that events now operate.

Council has liaised with the community and user groups in regard to what you want to see and a set of deliverable actions define this strategy for Council. We asked, What people wanted to see in our community, What are our best assets, What are areas that we should focus on and How can we be more sustainable, to name a few. The feedback has been critical in driving the decisions around how events look in the future and we thank the community for their feedback.

Council has also incorporated professional industry expertise and regional data to inform our approach, while also aligning with a number of existing Council strategies.



This strategy has aligned with the following documents. Actions connected to the Events & Attractions Strategy are listed below.

- Community Access & Inclusion Plan
- Council Plan
- Economic Development & Tourism Strategy
- Environmental Sustainability Strategy
- Recreation Strategy (reference document, no actions)
- Playspace Strategy (reference document, no actions)
- Waste Management Strategy

Community Access & Inclusion Considerations

- Increase inclusivity of Council events, activities and festivals to enable more people with disability to participate.
- Continue to be an organisation that advocates for equal and fair treatment of people of all abilities.
- Increase accessibility of high-use public facilities in the Rural City of Wangaratta.
- Continue to improve and maintain Council's public spaces to ensure areas are accessible and support physical activity for the whole community



Current Council Plan Considerations

2.1.1.2 Deliver arts, culture and exhibition programs that recognise, support and address issues of mental health and social inequities.

2.3.1.1 Deliver annual events and initiatives that focus on celebrating diversity, connection, belonging for everyone within our community.

2.4.5.1 Include the delivery of drug, smoke and alcohol-free events into the annual events calendar.

3.2.3.1 Reduce waste, paper and water usage in Council facilities and events through education.

5.2.1.1 Increase the representation of our cultural story and history throughout our community and recognise its impact on our sense of place.

5.2.1.2. Deliver projects in partnership with our indigenous and cultural groups to celebrate the diversity and history of our region.

5.2.2.2 Organise the Wangaratta Australia Day ceremony and support rural community to deliver Australia Day events.

5.2.2.3 Continue to promote recognise and celebrate NAIDOC week within our community.

5.2.2.4 Partner with local community groups to increase the support and inclusion of our population that were born overseas.

5.5.1.1 Deliver a diverse and engaging annual program of events that caters to the needs of the community.

5.6.1.1 Deliver a diverse annual calendar of accessible community events throughout the municipality that provide opportunities for community members to connect.

5.6.1.2 Plan for and develop infrastructure in key strategic spaces that can facilitate the delivery of community-based events.

5.6.2.1 Support groups and clubs to deliver events to their members and the broader community.

5.7.1.1 Ensure planning for new and redeveloped community facilities incorporates universal design principles



Environmental & Sustainability Considerations

- Ensure sustainability criteria are strengthened for the community grants program and to support relevant applicants through the process.
- Integrate environmental considerations & climate change risk in the Council plan and council strategies during their review.
- Develop and implement a single use plastic policy for Council's operations & events, that includes an educational workshop and bin audit.
- Reduce waste, paper and water usage through education & changing processes.
- Work in partnership with the community & local groups to increase awareness of resource consumption and improve waste avoidance.
- Develop 'Waste Wise' event guidelines that include waste minimisation guidelines for all event applications

Waste Management Considerations

- Reduce waste and maximise resource recovery from Council's offices and operations, including services provided to local communities.
- To be recognised as a leader in municipal waste management and inspire the business sector to move towards a circular economy for waste management to boost innovation and resource recovery.
- Foster sustainable consumption and waste management practices among the community.
- To ensure maximum participation and support for waste minimisation, Council will participate in public awareness and education programs for both the community and business, particularly with regard to the need to avoid or reduce packaging.



Definitions

In the development of this strategy, the definition of an event was considered. The primary focus of the Rural City of Wangaratta is on the approval and curation of events on public land, however, events held on private property is also included within this plan to ensure that some significant, privately funded tourism events are captured and supported.

This plan specifically excluded normal day to day activities, sporting matches, exhibitions and presentations at the Wangaratta Performing Arts & Convention Centre, Wangaratta Art Gallery, and Wangaratta Library and at individual sporting clubs, commercial businesses and tourism attractions.

In defining an event for the purposes of event approval policy and procedures, the following definition has been applied:

An event is any organised activity, where an open area, facility, venue, road or temporary structure is to be used by more people than are usually found in that location.

For the purposes of funding decisions and permit approvals and delegations, the following categories of events should be applied.

Marquee Events

Events with attendances in excess of 3,000 people. Marquee events should drive overnight stays within the Rural City of Wangaratta and will require significant event planning and approval processes.

Major Events

Events with attendances in excess of 500 people. Major events will require event approval on public land involving a number of permits dependent on the event complexity

Minor Events

Events with attendances between 100 and 500 people (depending on the event complexity). These events will require approval, but should be relatively simple to review with a focus on public safety and infrastructure impact

Public Gatherings

Gatherings of community organisations, friends or families for the purpose of celebration, protest or organised activity of up to 100 people. Public gatherings will require a booking approval to ensure there is no conflict within an event venue.



Council's Event Roles & Responsibilities

The curation, funding and approval of events within the Rural City of Wangaratta is an all of Council responsibility. All directorates have a level of responsibility in the delivery of events on Council land, with some areas also responsible for the approval of events and activities on private land.

The Arts, Culture and Events team within the Sustainability & Culture Directorate undertake a lead, coordinating role in the delivery and approval of events. This team provides strategic and operational advice to other departments as required and acts as advocates for external event providers staging events on public land.

Responsibilities for each directorate as they currently stand are as follows:

The Office of the Chief Executive Officer

Responsible for:

- Coordination of function VIP guest lists, invitations and communication
- Civic protocols
- Councillor liaison and attendance at events

Sustainability & Culture

Responsible for:

- Delivery of the Rural City of Wangaratta's events program
- Development and application of event policies and procedures
- Attracting and bidding for marquee events
- Event promotion through the Wangaratta Visitor Information Centre
- Delivery of youth events through the FREEZA program
- Venue management of the Wangaratta Performing Arts & Convention Centre, Wangaratta Art Gallery, Wangaratta Library and Wangaratta Showgrounds
- Places of Public Entertainment and Temporary Structure approvals
- Food trader and commercial activity approvals
- Permit approval under Local Laws
- Grants funding program for tourism and sporting events
- Business event attraction
- Tourism promotion and development
- Advertising and media management
- Social media campaigns

Corporate & Leisure

Responsible for:

- Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre booking and management
- Financial management, invoicing and supplier payments
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Risk assessment approvals
- Governance advice
- Permit approvals through Customer Service

Community & Infrastructure

Responsible for:

- Traffic management planning
- Building and services maintenance
- Waste management
- Venue preparation including horticulture services
- Road closures on local roads
- Event support through plant, equipment and labour
- Venue inspections
- Venue design and development
- Booking of sporting venues and spaces
- Management of community halls and recreation reserves
- Coordination of aged care activities
- Delivery of Early Childhood events and activities
- Sponsorship grants program
- Community grants funding

The Events Landscape

With a population of around 30,000 residents, Wangaratta is located in picturesque North East of Victoria and is home to some of the world's best wineries, off-road biking and entertainment.

The Wangaratta local government area has a median age of 45 and census data estimates that there are 64% of the population with children, a median weekly household income of $1,367 and 5% speak a language other than English at home (>.6% since 2016). The diversity of the community is increasing and our community is made up of many amazing people who are eager to be entertained and build a genuine connection.

With the economic challenges facing households, alongside the expectations of our community, the aim is to pivot our event planning to make the most of Councils budget allocation and commercial opportunities as they arise.

People



29,900
Population (2022)
Annual growth from 2001
Wangaratta: 0.6%
Victoria: 1.6%



45 yrs
Average Age (2021)
Increase from 2016
Wangaratta: 0.4 years
Victoria 0.7 years (to 39)



45.9%
High School Completion (2021)
Change from Dec 2016
Wangaratta: 4.4 ppt
Victoria : 4.0 ppt (to 63.3%)

Economy



$1.9B
GRP (2021-22)
Annual growth from 2011-12
Wangaratta: 1.0%
Victoria: 2.5%



3.3%
Unemployment (Dec 2022)
Change from Dec 2019
Wangaratta: -0.6 ppt[1]
Victoria : 1.5 ppt (to 3.5%)



14,200
Jobs (2021-22)
Annual growth from 2006-07
Wangaratta: 0.9%
Victoria: 2.1%

In the 23/24 financial year Council funded 15 events at a cost of $287,610, which attracted 26,401 people, delivering an approximate boost to the economy of $7.8m*

(*largely on accommodation, hospitality, and retail. Data from REMPLAN 2025)

Rural City of Wangaratta Funding

Events deliver community engagement and connectivity that can't be measured in numerical data. The social, well-being and emotional benefits of events present in various ways including an increased appeal of liveability and a connectedness that disperses through our community.

Events can be used to educate people about challenging topics, support a larger message and introduce our community to enriching experiences that they may otherwise overlook.

The promotion of diversity can instil a sense of community pride and identity that can encourage acceptance and understanding of situations and difficulties that others face.

The Connection needs analysis commissioned by the Council's Grit & Resilience Program says that "Connected communities are engaged, safer and are more likely to have higher rates of volunteerism than those with less connection. Social connection provides meaning, purpose, support and a sense of belonging. With connection, we are better able to regulate stress".

The Rural City of Wangaratta recognise the combined economic and social benefits of events to the community and will prioritise providing free and low cost events. Funding will be allocated in a way that brings experiences to delight residents, and offers a way for everyone to be involved, no matter their circumstances.

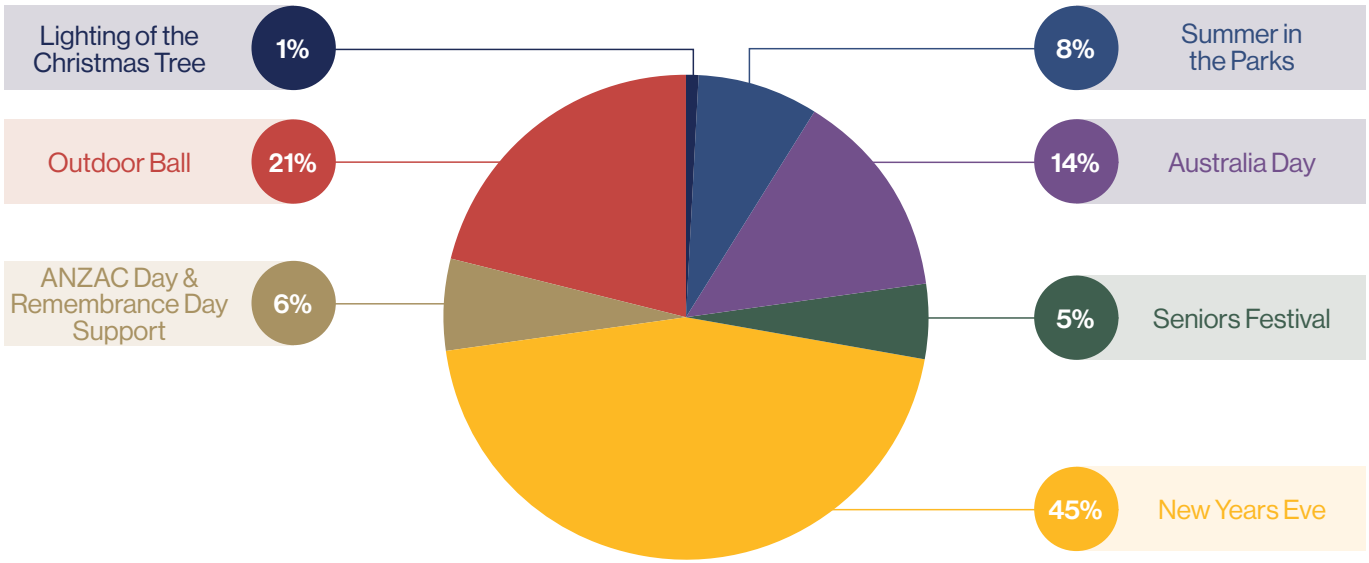
It is critical when assessing the benefits of events for the community that we don't discount the impact that events can have on the business sector and community amenity. Council makes site recommendations that are in the best interests of the event and the community when considering site access, parking, overcrowding and temporary event precincts that are erected.

Council has been working hard to make New Years Eve the largest community and regionally significant event and is making major headway, attracting thousands of people annually.

- 2021 – 3,800 attendees
- 2022 – 6,200 attendees
- 2023 - 8,500 attendees
- 2024 - 10,100 attendees

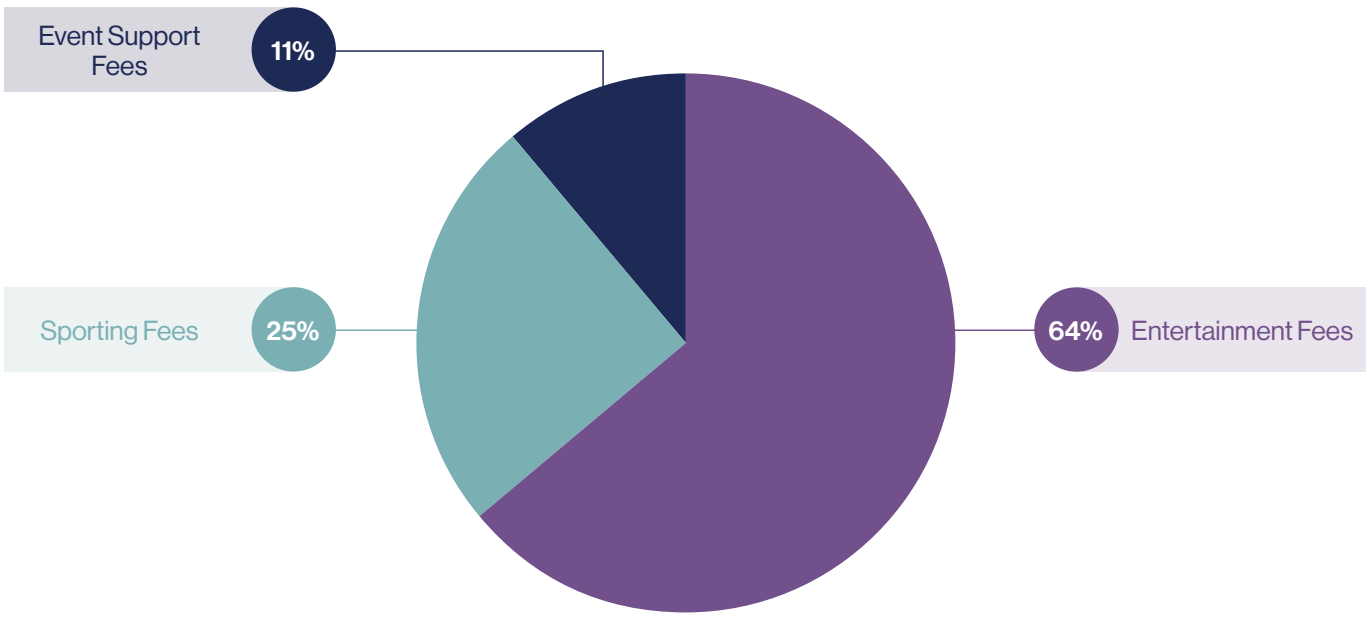
Council cannot deliver all events in the community, and we work with larger event organisers to incentivise and bring them to town for the economic benefit of the wider community. Having the Event Attraction budget is an outcome of the 2019-2023 Events & Attractions Strategy which identified this to progress events locally.

The below table shows the breakdown of Council event funding and how it was allocated throughout the 23/24 financial year.



Event Attraction Funding breakdown 23/24

Entertainment Fees • RegFest - County Music event and Rodeo • New Years Event entertainment contribution, 2024 event & 2025 deposit • Project 365 event support	**64%**
Sporting Fees • Winter Junior Baseball Championships • Esports as part of Geekcon at Wangaratta Library • Great Victorian Bike Ride event contribution • NBL Basketball event contribution	**25%**
Community Event Support Fees • Operational: Waste for supported events, room hire, signage • Venue hire for N Scale National Train Convention	**11%**



Event Delivery Structure

Council Programmed Events	Collaborative Events	Community Events
• RSL support of ANZAC Day & Rememberance Day • New Years Eve • Australia Day Awards • Outdoor Ball • Lighting of the Christmas tree	• Major Professional league partnerships eg.. AFL, Basketball, Cricket, Football • Reg Fest - Country Music event & Rodeo • Project 365 • Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues • Seniors Festival* • Summer in the Parks*	• Wangaratta Farmers Market • La Dolce Vita Festival • Trails, Tasting & Tales • King Valley Challenge • Wangaratta Fun Run • PLUS many, many others!
Managed and run solely by Council with some community involvement. Usually free or low cost. *Budgeted for annually.*	Usually a collaboration between Council and an external organisation. *Funded from Event Attraction budget.*Events budgeted for annually.*	Planned & executed by community organisations with varying levels of Council support. *Not funded by Council's events budget.*

This table outlines some of the events that are managed or supported from the Council Events team. Various other Council departments are responsible for delivering events according to their specific needs and area of expertise e.g. Youth, Sustainability, Environment and Economic Development.

Council's support of community events is by way of knowledge sharing and up-skilling groups in order for them to deliver the best event possible. This support is often human resource support rather than monetary and equates to around 60% of the work delivered by the events team.

63.0%
Daytrip Visitors 2022-23

9.4%
Interstate Visitors 2022-23

27.6%
Intrastate Visitors 2022-23



841,000
Visitors 2022-23

2.5 Nights
Length of Stay 2022-23

$191 / Night
Daytrip Visitor Spend 2022-23

$248 / Night
Domestic Overnight Visitor Spend 2022-23

Opportunities & Challenges

Opportunities	Challenges
• Rich Indigenous culture and history • Well established community groups willing to collaborate with Council • High quality parks/gardens and green spaces • First class Performing Arts & Convention Centre and Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre • High interest in local community events • Opportunity to further develop commercial relationships to support marquee event attraction • Increase sustainability expectations for events on council land • The Wangaratta Creative Precinct development project that will create new opportunities for events to take place • Consider iconic locations for events to take place	• Limited large indoor venues for events during periods of adverse weather • Limited post event assessment criteria • Contested Indigenous Land makes first nations work complex • Volunteer burnout with limited new committee members • Dated infrastructure and facilities at major sports grounds • Increase in sport participation (multi-gender) putting pressure on the quantity of grounds and unsuitable and dated facilities • Neighbouring Councils developing high quality venues, attracting marquee events • Cost of infrastructure and event delivery is increasing • Flood inundation and aging tree risk (Apex Park & Merriwa Park) • Limited services and infrastructure at the Events Precinct (Rodeo Ground) • Marquee event attendance limited in line with accommodation limitations (2,400 beds) • Lack of tourist attractions in urban Wangaratta to attract tourism

Major Challenges

a. Infrastructure is falling behind other regional councils which is making it increasingly difficult to attract marquee events of regional significance. This was evident in the awarding of the Ovens and Murray Football & Netball Grand Final to Lavington Sports Ground for the 23, 24, 25 years rather than the Wangaratta Showgrounds.

b. AFLW have advised that the facilities required to attract this sport Wangaratta must be specific to participants of AFLW (individual showers etc.). Currently there are minimal venues that can accommodate this.

c. The Events Precinct (Rodeo Grounds) is without essential services such as irrigation, multi-access water, and lighting for public safety at events and for relief centre use. Accessing funding for these works will be essential to how the space can be used and recover from marquee events in future.

d. Limited accommodation capacity when using marquee events to attract overnight stays. With a current hard limit of 2,400 on guest beds this may limit the appeal for event organisers and tourists alike.

e. Wangaratta community is generally conservative in their interests and tend not to engage in events that are too far out of their cultural and creative preferences.



How this Strategy was developed

In 2018 Council adopted the 2018-2023 Events & Attractions Strategy which set out the future direction in support, curation, and delivery of events within the municipality. The strategy outlined some key challenges and shortcomings to be addressed throughout the implementation plan such as;

- Required consolidation of event funding
- Development of policies, procedures and application forms pertaining to events and their delivery
- Collate venue maps of public spaces and fact sheets that support event organisers
- Increased resourcing in the events team to support community and commercial organisations to work with Council
- Develop signage to be used at Council supported events
- Support community events with knowledge, reduced rates and identifying funding opportunities
- Formalise the old rodeo grounds as the preferred events precinct for major events
- Support the attraction and delivery of major events to boost the economy and tourism

From the actions identified in the strategy some were unable to be completed due to covid-19 and changes in feasibility which changed their application. Of the actions that were completed, there was effective framework set up for events with the documents, policies and procedures in place to support event delivery.

The events landscape has changed, and it is timely that the strategy is reconsidered to meet the needs of the community where they are today and looking into the future.

In 2023 engagement commenced to gather community data to inform this strategy. Methods for engagement included face to face sessions open to the community, consultation sessions with interested user groups, feedback from Councillors and Council staff from various departments and an electronic survey was open for 46 days to the community and staff.



From the data, Council and the community unanimously agree that events bring many benefits to our community, such as;

Community Connection & Inclusion:
Events help build a sense of belonging and community by bringing people together. This can be especially important for those who might be experiencing challenging situations.

Celebration & Pride:
Celebrating local culture, achievements, or milestones through events fosters pride in the community and creates a shared experience that enhances local identity.

Economic Impact:
Local events can drive economic growth by encouraging people to spend money in the community, supporting local businesses, and creating employment opportunities.

Social Interaction:
Events offer a platform for people to meet others with similar interests, engage in social activities, and strengthen community bonds.

Tourism & Local Growth:
Well-organized events can attract tourists, increasing visibility and tourism opportunities for the area, and sometimes even prompting people to move or invest in the community.

Health & Wellbeing:
Participation in community events can positively impact mental health by reducing isolation, promoting physical activity, and providing opportunities for social engagement.

Educational & Cultural Enrichment:
Events can offer opportunities for learning and cultural enrichment, enhancing the community's knowledge and appreciation of diverse topics and skills.

Specifically, there were several standout priorities identified by the community, and a desire to participate in more events **more frequently.** Top five community priorities include,

1. **Rock Music, Pop Music, Acoustic Music, Country Music –** There's strong interest in live music across various genres.
2. **Food & Wine Events –** including festivals and affordable produce markets.
3. **Cultural Experiences –** Including a diverse range of events like LGBTQIA+ specific events, family-friendly events, environmental seminars, and multicultural events including First Nations celebrations.
4. **Markets –** Affordable, frequent markets (like weekly farmers markets) are a high priority.
5. **Public Art Installations –** Residents are also interested in public art installations to beautify the town and create engagement.



Noticeably sport did not appear as a top priority from the data collected however when considering the top five community assets, sport and recreation assets featured highly with the top five being,

1. **Sports and Events Precinct –** This is a major focus for hosting large-scale music and sporting events.
2. **Wangaratta Sports & Aquatic Centre (WSAC) –** This centre is seen as key for attracting national-level competitions and community engagement.
3. **Merriwa Park and King George Gardens –** Both spaces are highlighted as key venues for community events, including possible activation through cultural festivals and live performances.
4. **Rodeo Grounds (Events Precinct) –** Identified for future event ideas, including Monster trucks, Supercross, and a candidate for infrastructure upgrades (power, water, lighting).
5. **Norm Minns Oval and North Wangaratta Oval –** Important venues for sporting events, both recognized as valuable assets for future event planning.

Respondents also believe that Wangaratta has a level of cultural and social vibrancy that portrays a progressive, happy and resilient city. This belief is established by a thriving layer of arts and culture, combined with natural beauty, cultural events and its centrality to the wine and food regions that continue to define Wangaratta's identity.

Sport continues to play a large role in community engagement and participation, appealing to a broad demographic, fostering local pride as well as providing an important channel for local talent to be recognised.

It is evident that there is a strong desire from the community to ensure that we are a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive community with a culturally diverse event calendar. This is something that Council will be focusing on in the revised strategy to build a community that is strong and connected to ensure that we can withstand challenging situations together.



Based on the consultation conducted, the strategic objectives for Council in the coming five years are:

1 – COLLABORATION

Develop partnerships that support the delivery of events within the Municipality.

2 – ATTRACTION & MARKETING

Increase the tourism and economic benefit to the community through marquee event delivery and support, via council funded or commercially operated events.

3 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Reduce environmental impacts, improve sustainability and increase community accessibility at events held within the Municipality.

4 – ALIGNMENT

Formalise event funding criteria and post event evaluation to ensure investment aligns with the council plan.

5 – REVIEW & ASSESS

Review the current council event program and event attraction program to ensure community satisfaction, and assess council supported events in line with community and council priorities.

These objectives will feature throughout the remainder of the document alongside actions to address the objectives are further detailed.

In addition to the community consultation carried out, the below organisations and strategic documents have also been referenced throughout the development of this strategy.

- Creative State 2025 (document)
- REVIVE – Australian Government Cultural Policy (document)
- Council's Grit & Resilience Program
- Alpine Shire
- Warrnambool City Council
- City of Melbourne
- City of Ballarat
- City of Greater Bendigo
- City of Freemantle
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Shire of Campaspe
- Government of South Australia
- Tourism North East
- The University of Melbourne



Strategic Objectives

The strategic objectives have been translated into a detailed list of tasks and actions, ensuring the successful delivery of the community's wants and needs. These actionable steps will bring us closer to realising our vision of becoming a vibrant and welcoming events destination.

Strategic Objective 1 – COLLABORATION

Develop partnerships that support the delivery of events within the Municipality.

Our community is made up individuals and community groups that bring knowledge and diversity to the events scene within our municipality. Council places a high value on this and can see the importance in empowering people and groups to design and deliver events to the community. Of particular community interest are those that celebrate our past, present and future.

Council will be a proactive enabler of such events and ensure that the community is skilled to do so in addition to providing support as needed. It is important that events of this nature can build and grow into an event to be rivalled.

Task	Action
Funding opportunities	1.1 Develop a database of event contacts that Council can communicate with when funding opportunities arise (tourism grants, sponsorship grants). 1.2 Monitor state and federal grant activity to keep abreast of upcoming opportunities. 1.3 Develop a library of event concepts and design funding ready event plans to make the most of grants as they arise.
Increase capability	1.4 Support training of community organisations/committees in event delivery best practise (RCOW web presence, social media, event planning). 1.5 Support local event organisers to design events for the community in line with community interests. 1.6 Develop a digital compendium of event management documents for internal and external use. Store on RCOW website for customer access. 1.7 Investigate ways to activate public spaces within the CBD.
Rural Hall Committees	1.8 Identify training opportunities and support for Rural Hall Committees in relation to event planning and best practice.
Relationships	1.9 Build on relationships with key sporting, event and tourism organisations such as but not limited to AFL, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Tourism North East, Visit Victoria and School Sports Victoria. Engage with these organisations a minimum of twice yearly or as needed, to develop opportunities and enhance benefit for our municipality. 1.10 Continue to utilise local artists where possible to foster growth and support professional development.

Strategic Objective 2 – ATTRACTION & MARKETING

Increase the tourism and economic benefit to the community through marquee event delivery, via Council or commercially operated events

Develop collateral to support Wangaratta being known as a premier event destination to support and encourage commercial relationships to bring events to Wangaratta. Ensure easy to follow processes and procedures are in place to make working with Wangaratta straightforward and a positive experience.

Task	Action
Commercial partnerships	2.1 Develop an external facing prospectus and video clip to promote Wangaratta to attract large events and high-profile sport. 2.2 Work with Sports Marketing Australia and other regional/national touring organisations to build on commercial partner relationships. 2.3 Actively seek and bid for two additional sporting or live performance marquee events each year through the Event Attraction budget.
Event support & collateral	2.4 Summarise key regional information, marketing and promotional opportunities, local supplier database, helpful links and significant local contacts in a toolkit to provide to event organisers. Annually update the RCOW website with the above information. 2.5 Utilise CBD track banners and "Welcome to Wangaratta" entrance signs for large scale Council events in Wangaratta. 2.6 Continue to add to the RCOW stock image library with current event images and video footage.
WSAC activation	2.7 Working with the WSAC team and local users, build partnerships with State and National sporting bodies to promote activation of the new multipurpose stadium. 2.8 Working with the WSAC team advocate for State and Regional aquatic events to take place at WSAC.

Strategic Objective 3 – RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Reduce environmental impacts, improve sustainability and increase community accessibility at events held within the Municipality.

Council will endeavour to become more accessible to all people and employ sustainability practices to reduce the environmental impacts of events. Council will align with the goals of the Waste Management Strategy and the expectations of waste processing within the municipality.

Continue to manage human resourcing according to best practise to ensure high engagement of the staff and volunteers when delivering fantastic events for our community.

Task	Action
Sustainability	3.1 Develop waste wise event guidelines for events taking place on Council land including waste, recycling, sustainability and noise minimisation expectations. 3.2 Make the waste wise event guidelines accessible on Council's website and share with event organisers via the event approval correspondence. 3.3 Eliminate the purchase and distribution of single use plastics for Council delivered events. 3.4 Introduce clear signage for bins to identify where rubbish should be disposed.
Accessibility	3.5 Review the accessibility strategy and ensure alignment across Council and externally delivered events. 3.6 Ensure an equity impact assessment is completed and action taken for events delivered by Council. 3.7 When coordinating large scale or diverse events, consult with key professionals to inform decision making. (e.g., Security, Police, specialist staff/organisations). 3.8 Increase inclusion of culturally diverse elements in the event programming where suitable to do so.
Community Groups	3.9 Engage community groups to support major events where there are appropriate roles/tasks.
Staffing	3.10 Engage interdepartmental Council staff in an ad hoc manner to support peak periods of event delivery.
Benchmarking	3.11 Conduct benchmarking of other regional Council event teams to gauge event management procedures and align with best practice.

Strategic Objective 4 – ALIGNMENT

Formalise event funding criteria and post event evaluation to ensure investment aligns with the Council Plan.

Having a clear understanding of the community expectations and the return from events, we will be able to drive conversations, attract and select events that are in line with Council's goals. In addition to this, updating the assessment tools and documentation is critical to accurate data collection.

Providing clarity in this space will make working with Council much easier and proficient for external organisations

Task	Action
Funding alignment	4.1 Implement funding criteria to assess financial event support requests. 4.2 Create contract or MOU documents that are user friendly and easily accessible online.
Formalise funding agreements	4.3 Develop a funding MOU with clear event expectations, a summary of data required for acquittal and the roles and responsibilities for each party. 4.4 Coordinate council's logos and signage to be present in pre-event marketing and throughout event delivery.
Event Policy	4.5 Review and update councils event policy as needed.



Strategic Objective 5 – REVIEW & ASSESS

Review the current council event program and event attraction program to ensure community satisfaction, and assess council supported events in line with community and council priorities.

Implement measurement tools to encourage regular data collection from the community, event organisers and event attendees to inform goals and priorities of Council. This will also help to identify when a shift is required in event programming and planning.

Deliver a detailed venue assessment to identify opportunities and challenges in regard to our desired event direction and to inform future priorities for funding opportunities.

Task	Action
Annual survey	5.1 Conduct an annual events survey to assess the events program delivered and identify areas for growth. 5.2 Increase community satisfaction over the lifetime of this strategy.
Review event data	5.3 Develop a post event survey to assess visitation, overnight stays, employment and economic benefit of RCOW and commercial supported events. 5.4 Assess the post event return on investment of council funded events. 5.5 Provide Council with a post event season summary to evaluate satisfaction and alignment with the Council plan.
Economic benefit	5.6 Attract or curate events that encourage overnight stays and patronage to local businesses. 5.7 Consider event 'add-ons' that can encourage visitors to stay longer in the region and a dual marketing approach. 5.8 Continue to increase economic benefit to the community.
Assess event facilities and venues	5.9 Assess major council facilities and venues for works required to host major events of interest including club rooms, data and electrical services. 5.10 Consider works identified as part of the facilities assessment as part of Council's Long Term Financial Plan and annual Budget processes.

Decision Making Criteria

Event opportunities will be assessed based on the below comprehensive criteria to ensure their alignment with the goals and values of the Wangaratta community and the deliverables of this strategy.

1. Community Outcomes
The event will provide a positive outcomes to the community of Wangaratta, being either social, economic, wellbeing, tourism, or profiling.

2. Resourcing
Best practice will be used when managing staff, volunteers or community groups at the event.

3. Feasibility
Are the resources (budget, staff, venue) available to successfully execute the event?

4. Partnership Opportunities
Can the event be enhanced through partnerships with local organisations, businesses, or sponsors?

5. Accessibility
Are there plans to incorporate environmentally friendly processes, to eliminate and reduce waste at events?

6. Environmental
Are there plans to incorporate environmentally friendly practices and minimise waste?

7. Safety and Risk Management
Are there adequate safety measures in place to ensure the well-being of all participants?

8. Marketing and Promotion Potential
Is there a clear strategy for effectively promoting the event to maximize attendance and engagement? How will marketing of the event also incorporate the RCoW brand?

9. Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms
How will success be measured, and is there a plan for gathering feedback from participants?



Implementation Plan

The table below outlines how the actions contained in this strategy will be implemented and by who. Shaded boxes indicate the intended delivery year.

Strategic Objective 1 – COLLABORATION			Responsibility	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Funding opportunities	1.1	Develop a database of event contacts that Council can communicate with when funding opportunities arise (tourism grants, sponsorship grants).	Event Support Officer					
	1.2	Monitor state and federal grant activity to keep abreast of upcoming opportunities.	Events Team Leader					
	1.3	Develop a library of event concepts and design funding ready event plans to make the most of grants as they arise.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Increase capability	1.4	Support training of community organisations/committees in event delivery best practise (RCOW web presence, social media, event planning).	Events Team					
	1.5	Support local event organisers to design events for the community in line with community interests.	Events Team					
	1.6	Develop a digital compendium of useful event management documents for internal and external use. Locate on RCOW website.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	1.7	Investigate ways to activate public spaces within the CBD.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Rural Hall Committees	1.8	Identify training opportunities and support for Rural Hall Committees in relation to event planning and best practice.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
Relationships	1.9	Build on relationships with key sporting, event and tourism organisations such as but not limited to AFL, Basketball, Cricket, Football, Tourism North East, Visit Victoria and School Sports Victoria. Engage with these organisations a minimum of twice yearly or as needed, to develop opportunities and enhance benefit for our municipality.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
	1.10	Continue to utilise local artists where possible to foster growth and support professional development.	Events Team Leader					

Strategic Objective 2 – ATTRACTION MARKETING		Responsibility	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Commercial partnerships	2.1 Develop an external facing prospectus and video clip to promote Wangaratta to attract large events and high-profile sport.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
	2.2 Work with Sports Marketing Australia and other regional/national touring organisations to build on commercial partner relationships.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
	2.3 Actively seek and bid for two additional sporting or live performance marquee events each year through the Event Attraction budget.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Event support & collateral	2.4 Summarise key regional information, marketing and promotional opportunities, local supplier database, helpful links and significant local contacts in a toolkit to provide to event organisers. Annually update the RCOW website with the above information.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	2.5 Utilise CBD track banners and "Welcome to Wangaratta" entrance signs for large scale Council events in Wangaratta.	Events Team Leader					
	2.6 Continue to add to the stock image library with current event images and video footage.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
WSAC activation	2.7 Working with the WSAC team and local users, build partnerships with State and National basketball and netball organisers to promote activation of the new multipurpose stadium.	Event Attraction Coordinator WSAC Venue Manager					
	2.8 Working with the WSAC team advocate for State and Regional aquatic events to take place at WSAC.	Event Attraction Coordinator WSAC Venue Manager					

Strategic Objective 3 – ATTRACTION MARKETING		Responsibility	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Sustainability	3.1 Develop waste wise event guidelines for events taking place on Council land including waste, recycling, sustainability and noise minimisation expectations.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader Waste Management Coordinator					
	3.2 Make the waste wise event guidelines accessible on Council's website and share with event organisers via the event approval correspondence.	Marketing & Communications Lead					
	3.3 Eliminate the purchase and distribution of single use plastics for Council delivered events.	Events Team Leader					
	3.4 Introduce clear signage for bins to identify where rubbish should be disposed.	Events Support Officer					
Accessibility	3.5 Review the accessibility strategy and ensure alignment across Council and externally delivered events.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	3.6 Ensure an equity impact assessment is completed for events delivered by Council.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Support Officer					
	3.7 When coordinating large scale or diverse events, consult with key professionals to inform decision making. (e.g., Security, Police, specialist staff/organisations).	Events Support Officer					
	3.8 Ensure that culturally diverse elements or events are included in the event programming where possible.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
Community Groups	3.9 Engage community groups to support major events where there are appropriate roles/tasks.	Events Team Leader					
Staffing	3.10 Engage interdepartmental council staff in an ad hoc manner to support peak periods of event delivery.	Events Team Leader					
Benchmarking	3.11 Conduct benchmarking of other regional Council event teams to gauge event management procedures and align with best practice.	Event Attraction Coordinator					

Strategic Objective 4 – ALIGNMENT		Responsibility	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Funding alignment	4.1 Implement funding criteria to assess event support requests.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
	4.2 Create contract or MOU documents that are user friendly and easily accessible online.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Formalise funding agreements	4.3 Develop a funding MOU for those accessing event funding with clear event expectations, a summary of data required for acquittal and the roles and responsibilities for each party.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
	4.4 Coordinate Council's logos and signage to be present in pre-event marketing and throughout event delivery.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
Event Policy	4.5 Review and update Council's event policy as needed.	Event Attraction Coordinator					



Strategic Objective 5 – REVIEW & ASSESS		Responsibility	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Annual survey	5.1 Conduct an annual events survey to assess the events program delivered and identify areas for growth.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	5.2 Increase community satisfaction over the lifetime of this strategy.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Review event data	5.3 Develop a post event survey to assess visitation, overnight stays, employment and economic benefit of RCOW and commercial supported events.	Events Team Leader					
	5.4 Assess the post event return on investment of council funded events.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	5.5 Provide Council with a post event season summary to evaluate satisfaction and alignment with the Council plan.	Events Team Leader					
Economic benefit	5.6 Attract events that encourage overnight stays and patronage to local businesses.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader					
	5.7 Consider event 'add-ons' that can encourage visitors to stay longer in the region and a dual marketing approach.	Event Attraction Coordinator Events Team Leader Events Support Officer					
	5.8 Continue to increase economic benefit to the community.	Event Attraction Coordinator					
Assess event facilities and venues	5.9 Assess major council facilities and venues for works required to host major events of interest including club rooms, data and electrical services.	Event Attraction Coordinator Manager – Infrastructure, Planning & Delivery					
	5.10 Consider works identified as part of the facilities assessment as part of Council's Long Term Financial Plan and annual Budget processes.	Event Attraction Coordinator Manager – Infrastructure, Planning & Delivery					


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