Macleay Valley Coast
Tourism Strategic Plan
January 2005 – December 2009

Tourism New South Wales | Department of State and Regional Development — First for Business | National Parks & Wildlife Service NSW | MACLEAY VALLEY COAST | ATS CONSULTING SOLUTIONS

CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Macleay Valley Coast (MVC) is the brand of the Kempsey Shire and is contained within the North Coast tourism region of New South Wales that includes the local government areas of Coffs Harbour, Bellingen, Nambucca, Kempsey, Hastings, Greater Taree, Great Lakes and Port Stephens.

The MVC occupies approximately 3,355 square kilometres and incorporates Kundabung and Crescent Head to the south, Stuart's Point and Grassy Head to the north and Willawarrin and Bellbrook to the west. The Shire is bounded by Nambucca Shire to the north, Hastings Shire to the south, Walcha Shire to the South West and Armidale-Dumaresq Shire to the North West. These western shires are contained in the New England North West region.

The Shire is defined by the Macleay River catchment that extends over a variety of distinctive settings and is epitomised by the following features:

- The Macleay River itself that transects the valley;
- Remote wilderness settings and elevated terrain flanking the river system;
- Undulating rural pastures in the Upper Macleay that support small rural townships steeped in history such as Bellbrook and Willawarrin;
- Significant areas of coastal flood plain that contain the Shire's major commercial and heritage township of Kempsey and a number of smaller river townships of heritage character such as Frederickton, Gladstone and Smithtown;
- A dramatic coastline characterised by rocky headlands, small secluded beaches, sweeping beach systems and picturesque coastal reserves and protected areas;
- Major cultural heritage attractions of Trial Bay Gaol and the Smoky Cape Lighthouse;
- Popular coastal tourism townships of South West Rocks and Crescent Heads and a number of small fishing villages and secluded seaside hamlets of seachange appeal such as Stuart's Point and Hat Head;
- A significant Aboriginal and European heritage and a large traditional economy associated with the landscapes productive capabilities and the strong history of association between the river and the local economy; and
- A large traditional Aboriginal and European population and a vibrant and creative community who value the Shire's undeveloped and relaxed lifestyle, rural character and coastal sea-change appeal and express these values through creative endeavours.

While these authentic and powerful features provide a basis for developing the MVC's tourism capabilities these attributes are currently not harnessed to their full potential. For example:

- Tourism and recreation use of the Macleay River is limited. River access infrastructure is currently not configured to promote river-based recreation and tourism experiences and the townships of the MVC have lost their historic physical and symbolic connection with the river;
- The areas to the west of the Pacific Highway are virtually untapped with respect to their tourism potential as the historical focus of tourism efforts has been directed towards the coastal areas of the MVC;
- The creative community of Kempsey currently operate as a distinct sector that is not comprehensively integrated as part of the MVC tourism experience;
- The townships located on the Pacific Highway such as Kempsey and Frederickton are regarded as service towns, refuelling points and overnight travel pit stops as opposed to being tourism attractions in their own right;
- Aside from its heritage assets of Trial Bay Gaol and Smoky Cape Lighthouse, the MVC does not feature any large built tourism attractions of drawcard potential that showcase the Shire's environmental, cultural and economic capabilities;

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- Access to many of the remote features of the MVC is problematic for the tourism traveller. The MVC does not currently possess a coordinated tourism road network that comprehensively features the Shire's array of discrete dimensions;
- The Shire's tourism industry is fragmented and comprises an array of small industry operators who currently operate in isolation or in small collectives and vary widely in their degree of quality service provided; and
- The tourism industry in the Shire is accommodation rich but experience poor. The Shire hosts a large number of accommodation providers in the coastal areas but is deficient in the provision of experiences such as tours and activities.

1.2 MVC MARKET SEGMENTS

The MVC like the wider North Coast NSW Region attracts two broad visitor segments that reflect different travel motivations. These segments comprise:

- The Destination Specific Visitor; and
- The Regional Traveller.

1.2.1 The Destination Specific Visitor

This broad segment comprises the dominant segment for the entire North Coast NSW Region and includes the traditional domestic family and 'empty nester' markets who frequently return year after year to engage in a coastal holiday ritual. This highly seasonal market displays destination specific behaviour, as they tend to stay in one locality during their summer holiday vacation and do not stray far from their accommodation base.

Due to this markets large size and traditional association with the North Coast NSW Region, the majority of tourism marketing and development activities have been directed towards this sector. This segment has primarily been responsible for the strong growth in the coastal tourism destinations of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Nelson Bay.

Despite the traditional association between the Region's tourism industry and this major segment, market research clearly highlights that this market is declining in raw numbers. A number of factors have been cited as potential causes of this decline including:

- That recent development activity at popular coastal tourism 'hotspots' has changed the character and appeal of these settings. As a result, these traditional coastal holiday-makers may now be looking for less developed alternate locations along the eastern seaboard to undertake their summer coastal holiday experience;
- That the coastal features that made the Region a popular destination for this segment is now mirrored in a large number of emerging coastal regions along the eastern seaboard of Australia. Improved highway access and competitive marketing activities may have resulted in traditional markets going elsewhere for their holidays;
- That this traditional segment is now expressing a desire for more experiential holiday experiences. Market research supports the notion that traditional market sectors are evolving towards the motivations of the experiential traveller. As a result, this traditional market may be shrinking as the regional traveller segment is growing.

As the emphasis of tourism marketing and development has been directed towards this sector, this shrinking traditional market has seen increased competition arising within the region for a share of this dominant segment. The issue has been exacerbated in the 'low season' by virtue of the fact that significant seasonality exists with this market segment.

The MVC's tourism industry is currently configured to address this dominant market segment. This market can be found in large numbers during the summer holidays within the coastal townships of South West Rocks and the camping areas of the popular coastal protected areas such as the Arakoon State Conservation Area, Hat Head National Park, Goolawah Reserve and Limeburners Creek Nature Reserve.

The concentrated nature of this market's activities often create social impacts with the local community and significantly contribute to environmental impacts within sensitive settings of high environmental and cultural value. The economic benefits generated by this sector are typically localised and as a result frequently contribute to intensive development pressures in the coastal areas.

While the MVC has received considerable economic benefits from this sector in the coastal destinations of the Shire, fortunately development impacts have not been as severe as the major coastal tourist destinations of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Nelson Bay. The MVC has therefore been able to preserve its authentic character and core values which is now beginning to pay off as more traditional coastal holiday makers are now viewing the MVC as an alternate less developed coastal tourism destination enabling the Shire to capture a larger share of this regional market.

While the future of tourism for the MVC appears bright, a proactive stance needs to be adopted that strictly manages visitor impacts to prevent the coastal areas of the Shire falling victim to the same coastal pressures experienced by the more popular tourism destinations of the Region. Signs are already beginning to emerge associated with negative impacts from intense coastal tourism activity. For example:

- The South West Rocks township is rapidly becoming another major coastal tourism hotspot in the region. Similar issues of coastal pressures and visitor impacts are being observed within this setting as evidenced in the larger urban coastal centres in the region such as Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie and Nelson Bay;
- The Arakoon State Conservation Area is one of the most intensely used protected areas on the Eastern Seaboard of New South Wales and suffers similar symptoms to the Cape Byron Headland Reserve; and
- Intense visitor impacts are also being experienced at other popular tourism hotspots along the coast such as Point Plomer that is located to the south of Crescent Head.

1.2.2   The Regional Traveller

Unlike the destination specific visitor, this emerging segment does not tend to stay in one locality and is often present throughout a region or locality. This segment comprises:

- The In-Transit Traveller that represent those visitors who are travelling through a region to an alternate destination or are part of a wider multi-regional travel experience; and
- The Experiential Traveller who comprise a rapidly growing market segment that seek a diversity of experiences within a region and include the self-drive traveller and the high yield niche markets such a backpacker nature-based, ecotourism, food and wine and cultural heritage travellers.

This emerging market has tended to be overlooked by the tourism industry and necessitates a significantly altered tourism marketing and development approach to the destination specific segment. As this market engage in regional experiences and typically stray considerably from their accommodation base across local government boundaries, a regional response is required to address this segment's tourism needs.

The benefits to the tourism industry of directing efforts to attract the Regional Traveller segment are significant. For example this sector:

- Appreciates authentic and enriching natural, cultural and adventuresome experiences that the North Coast NSW Region and MVC is strategically capable of providing;
- Is a rapidly growing segment that comprises high yield market segments. Market research concludes that this segment is a growth segment of the future and a particularly viable segment that delivers considerable economic benefits across regional communities; and
- Does not exert the same localised social and environmental impacts as the destination specific visitor. This segment view themselves as travellers rather than tourists and wish to positively interact with the host community and appreciate and understand the environmental values of a locality or region.

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The North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan has targeted the Regional Traveller as the growth sector of the future and encourages local governments contained within the Region to partner in regional initiatives that specifically respond to this segment's needs.

The MVC is strategically configured to become a major beneficiary of this regional effort. The Shire already possesses core values and authentic capabilities that can be harnessed to target this segment.

The In-Transit Traveller already use Kempsey and Frederickton as important service points along the Pacific Highway for their long distance travel experience. While this market is on their way to somewhere else, they can be encouraged to extend their length of stay in the MVC by providing alternate tourist drive trails that briefly explore the Shire. These markets can also be encouraged to return at a later date to holiday within the MVC through improving the tourist capabilities of these service townships and via the provision of marketing collateral and road signage measures that increases awareness to these travellers of the tourism capabilities of the Shire.

The Experiential Traveller currently bypasses the MVC due to the lack of available tourism experiences in the Shire that respond to their experiential needs. Packaged experiences are limited and very few commercial self-guided and guided tours and activities exist in the Shire. The development of powerful networked experiences is regarded as a necessary pre-requisite to respond to the needs of this sector.

A major thrust of the MVC Plan seeks to develop the tourism capabilities of the Shire into a powerful local area network that leads the way for the Region in addressing the Regional Traveller's tourism needs. The Plan forges connections with neighbouring local government areas and progressively encourages the entire Region's tourism industry to develop strong packaged connections with the MVC tourism network.

1.3 A LOCAL REPONSE TO THE REGIONAL INTENT

The MVC Tourism Strategic Plan takes a lead role for the Region in being the first local government area tourism plan that has been prepared to implement local tourism planning measures that respond to the overarching direction of the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan.

The major mechanisms proposed by the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan that respond to the issues facing the region's tourism industry and lay the foundations for a sustainable industry include:
- The creation of a hub and spoke network that connects the region's coastal and hinterland tourism townships via an experiential network; and
- The creation of thematic districts in the Region that creates experiential diversity and encourages regional exploration and travel.

A hub and spokes planning approach to tourism development seeks to increase and spread economic benefits of tourism throughout the region in a strictly managed way through the following mechanisms:
- Concentrate tourism support services in locations that can sustain ecological impacts such as existing town centres throughout the region (coastal and non coastal) or robust environmental settings;
- Integrate cultural heritage and public art into these hubs to create 'living culture' that re-injects character back into these developed settings;
- Promote and facilitate multi-market use and extended stays at these hubs as base camps that service the wider region yet strictly manage negative social and economic impacts;
- Address seasonality issues through encouraging a range of different non-seasonal markets to use these hubs in conjunction with traditional seasonal markets. Examples

include local resident recreation users, event markets and non-seasonal experiential market sectors such as backpackers and ecotourists;

- Diversify local economies in non-coastal areas by sensitively integrating tourism initiatives within local townships that address visitor needs, re-instate important community services and assets and turn non coastal townships into tourism hubs;
- Develop experiential spokes that interconnect the hubs with the region's tourism product to create a packaged tourism network;
- Strictly manage access from these hubs into sensitive areas of high natural or cultural value using protected area management measures; and
- Extend spokes into neighbouring regions to connect with complementary tourism hotspots outside the regional boundary.

While the hub and spoke approach provides the device to explore the region, measures need to be established to create regional diversity that encourage travel throughout the network. At present, the experiences delivered within each setting of the region are similar and do not promote wider regional exploration.

A thematic district approach is therefore proposed that collectively groups similar experiences under a unique district theme. The unique positioning of each district will provide three different dimensions to the North Coast NSW Region, prevent the replication of experiences throughout and encourage wider regional travel. The approach seeks to capitalise on what each district does best.

The MVC has been collectively grouped with the adjoining Hastings Shire and Manning Valley (Greater Taree Shire) as a cultural heritage district reflected by the undeveloped nature and significant cultural and heritage character of this setting. These core values set this district apart from the balance of the region. As a result, the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan proposes to focus on developing and promoting industry capabilities in this district to provide experiences that respond to these core values.

In responding to the intent of the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan, the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan seeks to:

- Apply the hub and spoke approach as a local solution that networks with the proposed wider regional tourism network. In this way, the MVC will be able to lead the way for the region and provide a model that can be applied by other local government areas;
- Adopt a proactive sustainable approach to tourism marketing and development that responds to local and wider regional tourism impacts and preserves and protects those core values that are primary drawcards for residents and sustainable visitor markets; and
- Lead the way in applying the proposed thematic district approach for the region by harnessing industry capabilities to respond to the authentic rural character, strong cultural heritage and remote and undeveloped nature of the natural settings in the Shire.

1.4 VISION FOR THE MVC

The following vision statement has been developed to reflect how the MVC tourism industry will operate in ten years time and closely adheres to the Kempsey Shire Council's vision statement.

The tourism industry of the MVC will be regarded by the community as a valuable industry for the Shire and a positive contributor to the environment, culture and local economy. The beauty of the natural environment and the country and coastal lifestyles will be both preserved and enhanced by a tourism industry of high productivity and employment.

The MVC tourism industry vision complements the broader ten-year sustainable vision of the North Coast NSW Region and responds to the unique capabilities of the Shire. In this way, the MVC will be derive significant tourism benefits from becoming an integral part of a wider regional tourism network but at the same time provide another dimension to the regional tourism experience through its unique positioning within the regional context.

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1.5 STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

The MVC Tourism Strategic Plan proposes 6 strategies and 99 actions that pave the way in the first five years to achieve a strong foundation to deliver the intended sustainable tourism vision for the Shire in ten years time.

1.5.1 Strategy 1 - Adoption of a New Tourism Management Model

In establishing a sustainable tourism industry for the MVC, all stakeholders that have a direct or indirect role to play in tourism need to be involved collectively under a shared vision in tourism decision making and strategy.

The current tourism management model places too much emphasis on Council to drive industry directions and the majority of this focus is directed towards marketing and product development. The current model:

- Does not encourage industry to contribute resources and collective effort towards empowering the MVC to become a powerful tourism destination. Industry places too much reliance on Council to be the principle driver of tourism and there is currently no membership based tourism association for the MVC. A number of small associations exist that promote local interests within the Shire, but these bodies do not necessarily work towards the interest of the entire MVC. Very little funding is received by industry to assist Council in promoting the Shire's tourism industry;
- Places too much emphasis on marketing and product development and does not provide a framework to engage important agencies and stakeholders in other critical areas of tourism planning such as infrastructure planning, protected area management, community involvement in tourism and industry training/ assistance and incentives. The ambitious aims of the MVC Tourism Strategy necessitate that a wider set of stakeholders are involved in tourism decision making and implementation to comprehensively address industry issues;
- Is not capable of assisting the North Coast NSW Region in implementing regional initiatives at the local level and is not sufficiently resourced by way of finance and skills to be capable of implementing actions contained within the MVC Strategy.

A new tourism management model is proposed that uses an industry cluster model to drive the implementation of projects contained within the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan by:

- Engaging all stakeholders that have a role to play in tourism to participate under a shared vision to contribute resources and partner in the implementation of projects identified within this Plan;
- Using a contributory based industry core at the heart of the cluster to empower industry to take a lead role in driving destination marketing and product development which is supplemented by a support service network comprising public sector partners;
- Increasing industry capabilities in a managed and sustainable way through progressively attracting additional resources and skills to the membership base. If the cluster proves to be an effective management model that enhances industry capabilities, it may be possible to use this model to 'seed' new clusters to respond to specific industry segment needs; and
- Progressively reducing Councils need to become the principle driver of industry directions and converting its role to become a coordinator and facilitator of the cluster during the initiation and formation phases of its development. As the cluster's capabilities are enhanced over time Council will be capable of reducing its commitment to tourism and focus on facilitating general industry development across all sectors.

Clusters evolve through a typical development path that involve four stages of development:
1. Cluster Initiation - Where industry issues are discussed and strategic plans are developed and reviewed through participatory workshops.
2. Cluster Formation - Where the cluster is mobilised and members are attracted;
3. Cluster Growth - Where the cluster begins to build from its base; and

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4. Cluster Maturity - Where the cluster looks to generate new business for its members or may generate new clusters that specifically respond to segmented industry needs.

The critical phases of development of a cluster are during the initiation and formative phases of its development. A cluster cannot be developed overnight and requires considerable planning in its inception and formation.

During the initiation phase which is scheduled within the MVC Plan to operate between January 2005 and June 2005, the focus of cluster planning is on providing incentives to attract industry to participate in informal workshops, networking opportunities and social events. A fee paying membership arrangement is not developed during this stage of the cluster's development.

The intent of these preliminary cluster activities is to encourage all stakeholders that have a role to play in tourism to:
• Review the MVC Strategic Plan and collectively discuss industry issues;
• Break down competitive barriers to achieve a shared vision for the industry's future; and
• Attract industry interest in becoming members of the cluster.

Council has a strong role to play during this phase in:
• Facilitating networking opportunities and promoting participation in workshops;
• Ensuring cluster meetings are positive and pro-active;
• Identifying industry leaders and decision makers that need to be involved in the cluster;
• Assessing skill capabilities of cluster participants and identifying potential candidates to appoint to the cluster management committee and as leaders of project teams; and
• Managing the appointment of an interim Management Committee to oversee and plan for the cluster's commencement and operation.

During the formation phase that is scheduled to commence within the MVC Plan in July 2005, the cluster is mobilised, a membership-based association is established and members are attracted. This phase of the clusters development typically adopts a two year planning horizon and involves the following tasks:
• The election of a Management Committee to manage the ongoing activities of the cluster;
• The official commencement of the cluster as a non-profit association;
• The attraction of paying and non-paying members;
• The regular conduct of formal cluster meetings and workshops;
• The appointment of project teams to manage the implementation of prioritised projects identified within the MVC Plan;
• The engagement of an agency (eg. MDAP) or the appointment of a project team to prepare funding submissions for identified projects; and
• The appointment of cluster representatives to participate as members of organised funding lobby groups for targeted projects.

Effective project teams appointed by the cluster are the critical ingredients of a successful cluster. Project teams typically comprise 3-5 participants who have a relevant skill that is required by the project. A small size is critical to enable project teams to focus on the task at hand, actively engage cluster participants in action and ensure that ownership and responsibility over the project is assigned to discrete members.

During the formation phase, an emphasis is placed on focussing on those projects that deliver significant benefits to its members and as a result encourage additional members into the cluster. As cluster membership grows over time and the financial and skill capabilities of the cluster evolve, more substantive and involving projects identified within the MVC Tourism Plan can be conducted that require significant capital and skill resources in their implementation.

1.5.2 Strategy 2 - Preserving and Showcasing the Core Values of the MVC

The core values of the MVC include:

- The undeveloped nature of the Shire's environmental settings;
- The rural character and vibrant heritage of the Shire's landscape, economy and community; and
- The heritage character of the Shire's townships and the seachange appeal of the coastal villages.

These core values underpin the future success of the tourism industry and are also essential factors responsible for maintaining a quality of life and enhancing the well being of a sizeable resident population.

These core values are currently under threat in the coastal areas of the MVC attributed to growing visitor impacts and development pressures. For example:

- South West Rocks has experienced a recent boom in development activity associated with improved property yields and strong residential and tourism demand at this location. New development is beginning to alter the character of this popular coastal location and may negatively impact on local residents and traditional visitors who live within or holiday at this location. The seaside character and strong heritage of the township may be compromised unless ecologically sustainable development practices are adopted to mitigate existing impacts and proactively respond to future potential development pressures;
- The balance of the coastal townships of Stuarts Point, Hat Head and Crescent Head have been able to retain their traditional relaxed seaside character and appeal but need to embrace ecologically sustainable development practices to protect these drawcard features while at the same time providing an opportunity for sustainable growth and development in the future;
- All the coastal protected areas of the MVC are suffering from intense visitor impacts and in particular the protected areas of the Arakoon State Conservation Area and Limeburners Creek Nature Reserve. Protected area managers currently apply a large range of management measures in an attempt to mitigate negative impacts but a need exists to expand on current management measures across all protected areas in the coastal setting to manage existing and future visitor impacts. A holistic protected area management approach is proposed across all these settings more effectively focus resources towards important protected area management objectives and generate enhanced revenues that can be re-directed back into enhanced protected area management efforts in these locations. Important measures proposed within the Plan include:
  - ➢ The implementation of a day use permit system to be applied to non-residents in all coastal protected areas of the MVC;
  - ➢ The rationalisation of walking trails in the protected areas and the networking of existing trails into a 'signature' long distance walking trail between Trial Bay Gaol and Port Macquarie;
  - ➢ The further engagement of the local community to assist in protected area management;
  - ➢ The adoption of enhanced visitor impact and visitor tracking monitoring measures;
  - ➢ The divestment in non-core infrastructure and the development of high quality experiences throughout the balance of retained infrastructure;
  - ➢ The promotion of Gateway Projects at alternate robust settings that assist in reducing visitor impacts and pressures in sensitive coastal protected areas;
  - ➢ The participation by protected area managers in cluster planning activities and MVC tourism marketing activities; and
  - ➢ The provision of assistance to commercial operators through training and business incubation that assist industry to meet commercial licensing policy developed by protected area management agencies.

In response to visitor impacts and development pressures, a major focus of this Plan has been directed towards the need to:

- Address existing visitor impacts within all areas of high environmental and cultural value and in particular the coastal zones of the MVC; and
- To ensure that future tourism marketing and development initiatives promote the Shire's core values, encourage sustainable tourism behaviour and sensitively integrate tourism activities and development into the host environment, community and local economy.

Tourism marketing and development where possible should be used as a device to respond to both existing visitor and community needs and seek to attract new 'high yield' markets that appreciate and do not compromise the Shire's core values. Tourism marketing and development needs to ensure that:

- Environmental impacts are minimised and that the sensitive environmental and cultural settings of the Shire are showcased to create increased awareness and encourage sustainable development, practices and visitor behaviour;
- Social impacts are minimised to prevent the alienation of the local community from tourism and encourage community involvement in tourism; and
- Economic benefits of tourism are delivered to the local community and spread throughout the MVC.

While visitor and development impacts are growing issues within the Coastal District, the non-coastal settings of the MVC such as the River District and the Hinterland District are virtually untapped with respect to their tourism potential. Opportunities exist to take the 'heat off' coastal areas by showcasing and enhancing the tourism capabilities of these alternate settings and delivering economic benefits from tourism to these areas.

The townships of Kempsey and Frederickton currently serve as tourism service townships as opposed to being tourism destinations in their own right and contain a large number of accommodation options and town services that respond to travellers using the Pacific Highway as a major travel path through the Shire. Their current role as tourism townships is likely to be challenged when the proposed Pacific Highway Bypass is developed in approximately 6 to 7 years time. Proactive measures are proposed to protect these local economies by converting these townships into popular drawcard heritage townships that showcase the core values of the MVC prior to the bypass being developed.

The history of use between the Macleay River and the local townships of Stuarts Point, South West Rocks, Gladstone, Kempsey, Frederickton and Bellbrook has been lost as river transport use has subsided over the last 50 years and river recreation and tourism use is virtually non-existent. A number of heritage precinct planning measures are proposed in the Plan that pay tribute to the river's integral connection with the community and reinstate its traditional role of the river as an important economic, recreational and tourism asset for the Shire.

The MVC Tourism Plan proposes a large number of proactive planning and management measures that seek to deliver a positive triple bottom line outcome (environmental benefits, social benefits and economic benefits) for the community. Tourism will be used as a device to deliver significant tangible benefits throughout the entire Shire, engage local residents and industry to actively participate in the future of tourism and showcase and preserve the core values of the MVC for future generations of visitors and residents.

1.5.3   Strategy 3 - Developing the Capabilities of the Hub and Spoke Network

A hub and spoke tourism network is proposed for the MVC that:

- Enhances the tourism capabilities of the Shire's townships and robust remote locations in the Hinterland to become supply points and service centre's for the tourism network;

- Interconnects these hubs via the 'spokes' that comprise packaged tourism experiences and transport connections; and
- Extends the hub and spoke network through packaged experiences and drive trail connections to connect with neighbouring local government areas.

The Plan proposes that the townships of Kempsey and South West Rocks will become primary hubs of the tourism network supported by secondary tourism hubs established in Council owned tourist parks of Crescent Head, Stuarts Point and Hat Head and the Hinterland township of Bellbrook. The township of Gladstone also has the long term capability of becoming a local tourism hub through developing its capabilities as a feature heritage precinct of the MVC. Remote hubs are also proposed for the strategic river access points of Toorooka, Temagog and the Blackbird Flat Recreation Reserve and the Carrai Plateau base camp of Kookaburra.

A range of measures are recommended within this Plan that increase the tourism capabilities of these hubs and concentrate visitor demand at these locations. For example the Plan proposes that:

- That VIC services are established in the townships of Kempsey, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point, Hat Head, Crescent Head, Bellbrook and Gladstone. The proposal seeks to encourage visitors to use the VIC's as principle booking agencies and obtain advice and information at these locations before participating in a range of self-guided and commercial guided tours and activities that emanate from these locations into the wider setting of the MVC;
- Commercial operators will be encouraged to use the VIC's of the MVC as commencement and end points for a diverse range of day and multiple day experiences that emanate throughout the Shire;
- Each hub provides a diverse array of accommodation styles to service a wide range of market segments and in particular experiential segments and encourage an increased length of stay in the MVC;
- Assistance is offered to further develop 'signature' built attractions within the primary hubs of the MVC that value-add to the strategic intent of the Plan.. Examples include the Slim Dusty Heritage Centre, Macleay River Historical Museum & Settlers Cottage, the Wigay Aboriginal Food and Culture Park, the Wutuma Keeping Place project, the Kempsey Agribusiness Park, the Kempsey Regional Saleyards, Trial Bay Gaol improvements and the Arakoon Aboriginal Youth Hostel and Field Studies/ Conference Centre;
- The hubs will become important event venues for the MVC and that strategic events will be networked with the MVC tourism experience;
- A series of 2WD and 4WD drive trails will connect with the hubs and provide high quality self-drive experiences that explore the Shire's core values;
- The drive trail network will extend into neighbouring local government areas as part of a wider regional tourism network;
- Negotiations will be undertaken with regional and local transport providers in an attempt to improve bus transport services between the hubs for tourist markets and in particular group markets;
- A long distance walking trail is developed between Arakoon State Conservation Area and Port Macquarie that uses existing trail networks and camping areas in the coastal area to evolve into a 'signature' long distance walking trail of Australia;
- Enhanced river access and marine access infrastructure will be developed and linked with the MVC tourism network to promote river recreation and tourism opportunities as part of the MVC tourism experience;
- A number of high quality navigational aids and user pay interpretive devices are developed that showcase the MVC tourism network and its capabilities and facilitates visitor access and experiences associated with all strategic assets of the tourism network; and
- Symbolic markers are developed throughout the MVC to visually highlight places of strategic tourism importance and unify the tourism assets of the MVC into a cohesive themed experience.

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The hub and spoke network not only provides a solution to creating a coordinated tourism network for the Shire that links with the wider Region but also seeks to inject economic benefits from tourism into local economies throughout the Shire. For example, increased visitor activity in the hubs will assist local commerce, reinstate essential services for remote communities and provide local employment.

1.5.4 Strategy 4 - Nurturing and Assisting Industry Development

In creating a MVC tourism experience that responds to the experiential needs of the Regional Traveller segment, attention has been placed within the Plan on developing the tour, activity and event product capabilities of industry. At present, the MVC is accommodation rich but experience poor that can in part be attributed to the traditional emphasis placed by industry on the Destination Specific visitor segment.

While the hub and spoke network provides the foundation upon which the tourism industry can develop value-added experiences, assistance and incentives need to be provided to encourage industry to:

- Proactively nurture guided tours and activities for the MVC and enhance event capabilities of the Shire;
- Develop industry quality standards that ultimately meet national accreditation benchmarks and enhance the overall quality of experience delivered by the entire MVC tourism network;
- Encourage industry to adopt ecologically sustainable development practices and principles to reduce development and visitor impacts and preserve the Shire's core values; and
- Prompt industry to target future growth opportunities that respond to the strategic and sustainable intent of the Plan such as the progressive development of:
  - ➢ Cultural heritage, nature based and ecotourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Indigenous tourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Creative art, performance and craft capabilities;
  - ➢ River recreation and tourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Hinterland tourism capabilities; and
  - ➢ Adventure tourism and backpacker tourism capabilities.

A range of projects are proposed in the MVC Plan that increase industry capabilities and provide incentives for industry to participate in the sustainable vision sought by the Shire. For example:

- The appointment of a project team is proposed to strategically manage and coordinate local events, attract regional events to the Shire and assist in increasing the event capabilities of the MVC;
- A business incubator is proposed for the MVC that provides a low risk commercial environment to support the trial of new product development initiatives that respond to the sustainable intent of the MVC tourism Plan. The skill capabilities of candidates selected to manage the operation of incubated products will be progressively enhanced under incubation to ultimately meet accreditation standards through training and mentoring support. Successfully incubated products will be released from the incubator for a commercial fee and immediately participate as endorsed and high quality products of the MVC tourism network;
- A comprehensive training program will be delivered by the MVC training support network that makes use of existing available training programs and business support services and augments these capabilities with specialised training programs and support services targeted towards the specific needs of the MVC tourism industry;
- Assistance will be provided to encourage industry to meet national accreditation benchmarks. Local accreditation benchmarks will be established for all tourism operators that wish to participate and receive benefits from the MVC tourism network and the standards of these benchmarks will be progressively raised over time to raise the quality

standards of the MVC tourism network and ultimately meet national accreditation guidelines;

- Awareness programs will be implemented that inform the community and the wider industry of the importance of tourism to the MVC and how residents and industry can participate in tourism decision making and strategy and use tourism as a device to deliver significant community and wider industry benefits;

- Awareness programs through trade representation and famils are also proposed at the local and regional level to increase tourism industry awareness and knowledge of the MVC tourism network capabilities and its strategic intent to draw on wide support in promoting MVC tourism capabilities of the network and encouraging the regional stakeholders to participate in packaged tourism experiences with the MVC network;

- A range of investment incentives are also proposed by the Plan including:
  - ➢ The examination of current development hurdles faced by the tourism industry and the investigation of potential remedial measures that could be adopted to assist industry in investment and development approval processes; and
  - ➢ The provision of an investment prospectus to potential investors that highlights worthwhile tourism projects for the MVC and includes information to assist further enquiry.

1.5.5 Strategy 5 - Consolidating and Rationalising Marketing Activities

As the traditional focus of local government marketing in the North Coast NSW Region has been directed towards the Destination Specific Visitor segment, each tourist 'hot spot' within the Region has historically competed to capture a market share of this segment.

With the decline in volume of this market segment over the last decade, competitive marketing activities has increased over the last decade and has led to a plethora of locally applied marketing measures. The vast array of localised marketing activities creates significant information overload and confusion for visitor markets and dilutes the ability of the North Coast NSW Region to compete with alternate coastal tourism regions along the Eastern Seaboard of Australia.

The MVC has also fallen victim to a host of locally applied marketing efforts and provides a range of marketing collateral and media of varying quality that seek to promote discrete areas in the MVC and do not necessarily work in the interests of the entire Shire.

The North Coast New South Wales Regional Plan has proposed a number of measures that seek to consolidate and rationalise existing marketing activities undertaken at the local government and local area level and funnel these marketing savings into more effective and powerful marketing efforts that create a stronger Region.

The MVC Tourism Plan supports this regional intent and addresses ways in which local marketing solutions can more effectively used to promote the entire Shire's interests and increase its profile in regional marketing activities. Significant savings achieved through these efforts will be re-directed into more effective and efficient marketing solutions that support the MVC tourism network and sustainable intent of the Plan. For example the Plan recommends that:

- The MVC will continue to participate as a paying member of the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and ensure that the Shire's interests are equitably marketed at the regional level;

- Tourism New South Wales and the RTO will be encouraged to participate as active members of the proposed tourism cluster for the MVC;

- The MVC tourism industry will assist the RTO in integrating the Macleay Valley Coast Website and the online VIC network booking systems into the 'Total Tourism Web Portal' for the Region and State Tourism Data Warehouse (STDW) project;

- The MVC will actively participate with Hastings Shire and Greater Taree Shire in developing cooperative marketing measures that promote this wider area as a thematic district of the North Coast NSW Region;

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- A revised brand for the MVC will be adopted that continues to use the name and logo of the MVC but adopts a new slogan that is more representative of the Shire's emerging tourism capabilities;

- A marketing campaign will be developed to coincide with the revised brand and increase awareness of the MVC and its new vision and strategic intent;

- Attention will be placed on developing the website capabilities of the Macleay Valley Coast website to become a one stop shop for visitor needs and also a major communication and research portal for the MVC tourism network; and

- A large number of individually produced marketing brochures will be consolidated into a definitive high quality brochure for the MVC and become recognised as the 'travel bible' for visitors to the Shire.

1.5.6 Strategy 6 - Enhancing Tourism Decision Making Through Research

The lack of effective and timely tourism research for the Region and the MVC has been identified as a major obstacle that hinders effective tourism decision making. Currently it is impossible to accurately determine the value of tourism to the Regional and local economy. As a result the tourism industry often does not receive the recognition and support it deserves from local and regional stakeholders and investors due to the perception that the industry is not a major economic contributor to the Region or the MVC.

While the overt signs of the tourism industry for the Region and the MVC are predominantly concentrated within the popular coastal destinations, it is easy to naively conclude that the tourism industry is not a significant contributor to the overall economy. Unlike many other industry sectors whose economic contributions can be easily quantified, the economic impacts of tourism are spread across a variety of sectors that include:

- Those tourism operators that rely on tourism as a principle source of business (eg. accommodation operators, tour and activity providers, travel agents etc);

- Those commercial operators that use tourism as a major device to supplement their primary income (eg. farm stays, the food and wine industry, the arts/craft sector);

- Those commercial operators and support service providers that service both community and visitor needs (eg. the events sector, cottage industry, the retail sector, the transport sector); and

- The support agencies and the construction industry that are responsible for developing tourism infrastructure and supporting commercial capabilities.

The only available data that provides an indication of the size and economic contribution made by tourism is through Local Government Area estimates. This data is based on latest available figures that may be 4 years old and still falls short in estimating the total value of tourism. Local Government Area Estimates do not:

- Include the value of visitor expenditure associated with international tourism;

- Identify the level of capital investment made towards tourism;

- Consider the short term job creation benefits provided by construction of tourism projects; and

- Consider the long term job creation benefits provided by ongoing employment in the industry.

Despite these shortfalls, the Local Government Area Estimates provide an indication of the large contribution that tourism makes to the economy. Important results highlighted through tis survey instrument include the following:

- Domestic day visitors and domestic tourists to the North Coast NSW Region contribute approximately $1,530M to the regional economy comprising $415M from day visitor expenditure and $1,115M from domestic tourist expenditure;

- Domestic day visitors and domestic tourists to the MVC contribute approximately $126M to the local economy comprising $37M from day visitor expenditure and approximately $90M from domestic tourist expenditure;

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- The LGA's of Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Great Lakes and Port Stephens have attracted the greatest domestic tourism expenditure in the Region;
- The MVC is the 5th greatest beneficiary of domestic tourism expenditure in the Region with the Hastings Shire being the largest beneficiary;
- The economic contribution of day visitor expenditure is fairly consistently spread across the entire Region; and
- The MVC is out-competed by all other local government areas in the Region in attracting day visitor expenditure while its next door neighbour of Hastings attracts the greatest share of day visitor expenditure in the Region.

Not only is it impossible to accurately gauge the economic contribution and size of the tourism industry, but existing market research conducted for the Region is insufficient in providing timely and relevant information on the nature and behaviour of the major market segments to allow for informed decision making. As a result, previous planning activities were often based on 'gut instinct' or anecdotal evidence or simply responses made to 'fix' problems after they occurred.

Tourism New South Wales and the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan recognise that a deficiency in industry data and market research exists and have commenced a number of measures to respond to this issue and allow for more informed and proactive decision making.

The Plan recommends that the MVC tourism network assists TNSW and the RTO in implementing these regional research initiatives and also develops additional specific research programs and benchmarking tools tailored to the decision making needs of local industry. For example, the MVC tourism network is encouraged to:
- Participate with the RTO and TNSW in the Statewide Regional Data Package project;
- Include the MVC visitor information centre network within the State VIC Barometer project;
- Encourage the implementation of the Hastings Industry Benchmarking System for Tourism (HIBS-T) within the MVC as a powerful industry benchmarking tool;
- Conduct ongoing monitoring of visitor activities and impacts in protected areas of the MVC;
- Monitor bookings made through the MVC visitor information centre network;
- Monitor the sales of Self-guided Interpretive Devices to identify potentially viable new commercial guided tours and activities for the MVC; and
- Use the definitive brochure as a powerful market research and visitor monitoring tool.

1.6 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

While the initiatives contained within this Plan are ambitious and challenge stakeholders to deliver a vision of worth, it is well within the capabilities of the MVC to achieve provided that all stakeholders unite and actively participate in strategy implementation under a shared vision for the future. The Plan calls for active participation and investment of resources by a vast range of stakeholders that directly or indirectly play a role in tourism at the local, regional and State level.

Involvement by a wide range of stakeholders to partner in important strategic projects through a cluster model will enable the MVC to achieve significant in-roads in the first five years of implementation of this Plan and develop a strong foundation that is capable of delivering a sustainable tourism vision in ten years time.

The Plan's intended outcome is:
- To preserve and showcase the core values of the MVC for future generations by proactively addressing emerging impacts and reducing coastal impacts and development pressures;

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- Enhance the quality of life and well being of the MVC community;
- Use tourism as a device to create local employment and deliver substantive economic benefits to the host community and local industry;
- Use the core values of the Shire to attract a greater market share of high yielding experiential market sectors;
- Encourage existing markets to stay longer, spend more and spread economic benefits throughout the entire Shire;
- Uniquely position the MVC in the regional context and become an important player of the proposed cultural heritage thematic District of the North Coast NSW region; and
- Create a sustainable tourism industry for the MVC.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Macleay Valley Coast (MVC) is the marketing brand for the Kempsey Shire and is located in the North Coast NSW tourism region of New South Wales. The MVC was formerly part of the Mid North Coast tourism marketing region which in July 2001 was expanded to amalgamate the Coffs Coast and Port Stephens area. This expanded tourism region was renamed the North Coast NSW region and comprises the eight local government areas of Port Stephens, Great Lakes, Greater Taree (Manning Valley), Hastings, Kempsey (Macleay Valley Coast), Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour.

A three year regional tourism plan for the North Coast NSW Region was launched in late March 2004 and represents one of 16 regional tourism plans currently being prepared for Tourism New South Wales as part of the Towards 2020-New South Wales Tourism Masterplan. The North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan establishes a planning framework over a three year time period that establishes momentum towards the delivery of a sustainable ten year vision for the entire region. The Plan seeks to achieve this through the implementation of an array of actions that can be applied at both the regional and local area level to develop a powerful regional tourism network.

To maintain the momentum of the Regional Plan's implementation, the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan was identified as a logical next step in the implementation of the regional tourism plan at the local government level. If the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan achieves success in the localised implementation of regional initiatives, then this model may serve as a template that can be rolled out across the balance of local government areas contained within the North Coast NSW Region.

The strategic importance of this project is reflected by the following agencies that have financially contributed towards this study:
- Kempsey Shire Council (KSC);
- Tourism New South Wales (TNSW);
- NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD); and
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).

A Working Group was established in November 2003 to manage the tendering process, appoint a consultant and oversee the study process. ATS Group Pty Ltd was appointed as the successful consultant engaged to prepare the study. The study commenced in February 2004.

The 5 year plan comprises two separate reports:
- MVC Tourism Strategic Plan - **Background Paper**; and
- MVC Tourism Strategic Plan **- Five-Year Plan**.

This report represents the **Five Year Plan** for tourism in the Macleay Valley Coast and should be read in conjunction with the **Background Paper** that:
- Contains a comprehensive account of the issues facing the MVC tourism industry;
- Provides a context to understand the desired intent of the MVC Tourism Strategy and its long term vision;
- Includes detailed recommendations that provide further information on how to implement actions described within this *Five Year Plan*; and
- Includes recommendations for consideration that fall outside the first five year planning period.

This *Five Year Plan* has been deliberately configured to quickly drill down to the specific strategies and actions required in the first five years to provide a strong foundation for the delivery of a sustainable vision for tourism in ten years time. This document includes a

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detailed executive summary derived from findings in the Background Paper and provides a summary planning framework to guide tourism planning for the future. Individual actions contained in this Plan include cross-references to the Background Paper for further clarification and detail.

Please note: While the recommendations made within this Plan have been based on stakeholder feedback and the Consultant's independent opinion, they do not necessarily represent endorsed opinion of any agency nominated in this study.

3.0 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Consultants would like to sincerely thank all those who provided input and assistance in putting this report together. A comprehensive list of stakeholders who participated in this planning process is contained in Appendix 4 of the supporting *Background Paper*.

The significant positive contributions made by a diverse set of stakeholders towards this tourism plan augers well for the ability of this plan to become a powerful planning template that sows the seeds towards a vision of sustainability for the Macleay Valley Coast's tourism industry.

In particular, the Consultants would like to acknowledge the considerable time and input from the following individuals who were assigned to manage the strategic planning process and to assist and guide the Consultants progress. The working party comprised:

- Steve Read - Tourism Manager, Macleay Valley Coast Tourism
- Toni Shannon - Tourism Officer, Macleay Valley Coast Tourism;
- Ian Flood - Parrabel Park Farm Stay;
- Rod See - Nature Tourism & Recreation Coordinator - Northern Directorate, National Parks & Wildlife Service;
- Bill Mabey - Northern Area Manager, Tourism New South Wales;
- Leanne Mayne - Trial Bay Tourist Park;
- Richard Emerson - South West Rocks Tourist Park and Macleay Development & Promotion;
- Peter Milner - Executive Officer, Australia's Holiday Coast Area Consultative Committee; and
- Louise McMeeking - NSW Department of State & Regional Development.;
- Janet Hayes – Mayor, Kempsey Shire Council; and
- John Bowell – Councillor, Kempsey Shire Council.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

ATS Group were appointed by the project steering committee to prepare the study on 18th December 2003 and the project commenced on 12th February 2004.

The Terms of Reference reflected the need for the study to:

- Provide ample opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in and contribute to the Plan's development and implementation;

- Provide a detailed implementation plan that identifies resource requirements, potential funding sources, assigned responsibilities, timeframes and key performance indicators;

- Provide a model for the localised implementation of objectives contained within the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan;

- Undertake a comprehensive literature review of visitation and tourism research undertaken in the region to identify current target markets and new potential markets;

- Explore specific tourism opportunities that capitalise on the unique strengths of the Macleay Valley Coast and broaden market appeal, attract new potential markets and address 'of season' opportunities;

- Evaluate the current status of the tourism industry in the MVC and identify strategic gaps and opportunities;

- Identify infrastructure related impediments to the development of tourism and industry in the Shire;

- Examine the following opportunities in detail that are regarded as critical projects for the Strategy (Please note, these projects were redefined, edited or embellished during the course of the study in response to study findings):

  - Examine the Arakoon tourism product (in particular Trial Bay Gaol and Smoky Cape Lighthouse) and make recommendations to improve the standard of the attraction base and accommodation options;
  - Assess future needs, demand and location for developing a high standard regional coastal walking track eg. Trial Bay Gaol to Smoky Cape Lighthouse;
  - Investigate the location, development and management options of a multi-purpose visitor information centre at South West Rocks to be a joint initiative of Kempsey Shire Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service;
  - Examine enhancement opportunities and marketing strategies for 'Up River' hinterland, indigenous and nature and river based tourism development. Investigate ecologically sustainable development opportunities in respect of both hinterland and river based tourism; and
  - Generate the business case for a contributory tourism industry association.

The methodology applied the following processes:

- A 9 day field review of the MVC undertaken by the Consultant and initial targeted stakeholder interviews between 12th February 2004 to 20th February 2004;

- A detailed on-site investigation of critical strategic projects and targeted consultation process between 23rd March 2004 and 1st April 2004;

- A comprehensive planning session with the MVC Tourism Unit to review recommendations made in the Background Paper between 1st July 2004 to 2nd July 2004;

- Industry and community workshops at Bellbrook, Kempsey and South West Rocks between 5th August 2004 and 6th August 2004;

- Finalisation of Five Year Plan and amendments between 7th August 2004 and 30th November; and

- Launch of the Final MVC Tourism Strategic Plan planned for December 2004.

5.0 VISION FOR THE MACLEAY VALLEY COAST

5.1 10 YEAR VISION STATEMENT

The following 10 year vision statement has been established for the MVC tourism industry:

The tourism industry of the MVC will be regarded by the community as a valuable industry for the Shire and a positive contributor to the environment, culture and local economy. The beauty of the natural environment and the country and coastal lifestyles will be both preserved and enhanced by a tourism industry of high productivity and employment.

5.2 AIMS

To achieve the desired end state vision in 10 years time, the overall intent and individual strategies contained within the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan seek to:

- Complement the intent of the wider North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan and participate in wider regional initiatives driven by the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Organisation;
- Become an integral part of the regional hub and spoke tourism network through creating a local area hub and spoke network that establishes connections with neighbouring local government areas and the wider region;
- Preserve, protect and showcase the Shire's authentic core values such as its impressive cultural heritage, rural lifestyle, seachange appeal and undeveloped natural settings and play a feature role in the proposed thematic positioning of the MVC as part of the wider central district of the North Coast NSW Region;
- Develop the capabilities of industry to respond to the Shire's authentic core values and develop a unique positioning within the wider regional context that assists in creating regional diversity of tourism experiences;
- Engage a wide set of State, regional and local stakeholders across government, community and industry sectors to actively participate in the Plan's implementation;
- Extend tourism planning activities beyond traditional marketing and product development solutions and address other important industry planning needs such as infrastructure planning, risk management and investment, industry regulation and management and industry training and assistance; and
- Adopt ecologically sustainable development principles and practices and deliver triple bottom line returns for the environment, community and local economy.

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6.0 THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

While the sustainable vision relates to a 10 year planning period, the MVC Tourism Strategic Plan identifies strategic and actions required within the first five years of planning. The intent in the first five years of implementation is to concentrate on developing a solid foundation for future planning that creates momentum towards sustainable directions.

The five year plan has identified 6 key strategies.

STRATEGY 1	**Adoption of a New Tourism Management Model**
STRATEGY 2	**Preserving and Showcasing the Core values of the MVC**
STRATEGY 3	**Developing the Capabilities of the Hub and Spoke Network**
STRATEGY 4	**Nurturing and Assisting Industry Development**
STRATEGY 5	**Consolidating and Rationalising Marketing Activities**
STRATEGY 6	**Enhancing Tourism Decision Making Through Research**

Each strategy is briefly described within the Plan including desired outcomes and objectives and then attention drills down in detail to a number of Summary actions that respond to each strategy's overriding intent. A total of 99 actions have been identified within the plan.

Each action includes:
- A summary description of the desired action for implementation;
- Cross-references with the Background paper to enable the reader to obtain more detail about each action and review Consultant recommendations on how to implement identified actions;
- Timeframes for the proposed implementation of each action;
- The identification of stakeholders who need to work in partnership to implement each initiative and a lead agent (highlighted in bold) to project manage each task/project;
- Potential funding sources that may be worthwhile targeting to fund each action; and
- Key performance indicators that will be used to monitor the degree to which each action has been implemented.

While the emphasis of the Plan has been placed on defining actions for implementation in the first five years of the 10 year vision, a number of longer term actions have also been identified that may be considered for implementation beyond the five year planning period.

The Plan seeks to evolve the capabilities of the MVC tourism industry in an incremental manner that initially focuses on developing the capabilities of the industry cluster before seeking to implement resource intensive actions or more complex projects.

The following table defines acronyms used within this Plan.

Acronym	Name
4WD	Four Wheel Drive
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Adult and Community Education
AEDO	Aboriginal Enterprise Development Officer
AHCACC	Australia's Holiday Coast Area Consultative Committee
ALO	Aboriginal Liaison Officer
ALOS	Average Length of Stay
AMNC	Arts Mid North Coast
ANZIC	Australia and New Zealand Industry Classification
ASCA	Arakoon State Conservation Area
BEC	Business Enterprise Centre
BSC	Bellingen Shire Council
BTR	Bureau Tourism Research
CPAC	Cultural Planning Advisory Committee
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CTA	Council of Tourism Associations
DIPNR	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
DSRD	Department of State and Regional Development
EAA	Ecotourism Association of Australia
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
FIT	Free Independent Traveller
GTC	Greater Taree Council
HSC	Hastings Shire Council
HIBS-T	Hastings Industry Benchmarking System - Tourism
KSC	Kempsey Shire Council
LGA	Local Government Area
MRHS	Macleay River Historical Society
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions
MNCRDB	Mid North Coast Regional Development Board
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MPA	Marine Parks Authority
MVAC	Macleay Valley Arts Council
MVC	Macleay Valley Coast
NSC	Nambucca Shire Council
NEAP	Nature Based and Ecotourism Accreditation Program
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service. Please note that this document was written during the transition phase of the incorporation of NPWS into the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) and is currently referred to as the Parks and Wildlife Division (P&WD) of DEC.
NSWCB	New South Wales Conventions Bureau
NSWF	New South Wales Fisheries
RTA	Roads and Traffic Authority
RTO	Regional Tourism Organisation
SCB	Sydney Conventions Bureau
SCU	Southern Cross University
SFNSW	State Forests of New South Wales
STDW	State Tourism Data Warehouse
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TASAC	Tourist Attraction Signposting Assessment Committee
TNSW	Tourism New South Wales
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
WHA	World Heritage Area

6.1 STRATEGY 1 - Adoption of a New Tourism Management Model

An industry cluster model will be adopted as a new tourism management model for the MVC and attract a diverse membership base comprising those stakeholders that have a direct or indirect role to play in tourism.

The central core of the cluster will comprise those commercial operators that receive financial benefits from cluster activities. These commercial members will pay a membership fee that assists in funding the ongoing business activities of the cluster ad be expected to take a driving role in marketing and product development activities of the cluster.

The commercial heart of the cluster will be supported by non-paying members comprising those stakeholder groups that support the tourism industry yet do not receive financial benefits from their involvement in tourism. Examples include KSC, protected area management agencies, economic development agencies, training and business support services etc.

6.1.1 Desired Outcome

The intended outcome of this strategy is to develop a strong industry cluster that is sufficiently resourced and possesses the pre-requisite skills base to implement actions contained in this Five Year Plan. If this new model serves as a powerful economic growth model for the tourism industry, then it serves as a template that may have application for other industry sectors of the MVC.

Active participation from a wider set of stakeholders will provide access to a far greater resource base and reduce the current reliance on Council to be the principle driver of tourism marketing and development in the MVC.

Industry will be encouraged through progressive development of their skills capabilities and resources to take a stronger role in marketing and product development for the MVC tourism network.

The cluster will also actively involve other important agencies through cluster project teams to assist in tourism planning and development and encourage resource contributions and investment of skills and effort by these agencies that assist in implementing a wide range of projects that address tourism industry needs of the MVC.

While Council will continue to play a strong role in facilitating industry growth, its primary focus will be directed towards buildings the cluster's capabilities and facilitating and coordinating the implementation of actions contained in this Five Year Plan through managing and coordinating the Cluster's project teams.

As the cluster's capabilities and membership base progressively increase over time, it may be possible to develop sub-clusters for discrete tourism sectors such as the arts/crafts sector, tours/activities sector, accommodation sector, backpacker sector etc. that operate under this broader overarching cluster model for the tourism industry.

6.1.2 Objectives

The cluster seeks to:
* Consolidate a fragmented industry into a powerful coordinated network and peak body for MVC tourism;
* Become an industry led planning device that empowers industry to take a lead role in directing industry marketing and product development directions;

- Progressively reduce Council's role in driving tourism marketing and product development for the Shire and increase its industry facilitation capabilities;

- Bring significant tangible benefits to its membership base through collective activities conducted by the cluster;

- Provide access to and involve a wide set of important decision makers in tourism strategy;

- Use paying members to finance the ongoing activities of the cluster;

- Encourage paying and non-paying members to contribute finances, skills and effort using appointed specialist project teams to secure sufficient resources to implement actions contained within the Five Year Plan; and

- Progressively enhance the capabilities of the cluster to address issues facing the industry by building its membership base and pool of skills and resources.

6.1.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
1	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Appoint Council's Tourism Unit to become cluster coordinators for the initiation and formation phase of the cluster's development. Seek training assistance to develop the facilitation capabilities and skills of the cluster coordinator.	Year 1+	**KSC,** TNSW, BEC's, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC	KSC, TNSW, BEC's, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC.	Appointment at commencement of Year 1 (January 2005) and training programs held on a ongoing basis through Year 1 and Year 2.
2	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Commence an awareness campaign and encourage all stakeholders that have a direct or indirect role to play in tourism to participate in the initiation phase of the clusters development.	Year 1	**KSC,** TNSW, BEC's, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC	.KSC	Level of industry attendance at cluster meetings, workshops and social events between January 2005 and June 2005.
3	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Use informal meetings and workshops in the first six months to plan for the clusters commencement by July 2005 and review the MVC Tourism Plan to identify projects for future implementation by the cluster. Conduct social evenings for participants during this period to break down competitive barriers.	Year 1	**KSC**	.KSC	Number of meetings, workshops and events held in the first 6 months .
4	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Appoint an interim management committee to oversee the setup and operation of the cluster in the first year.	Year 1	**KSC**	NA	Interim Management Committee appointed in March 2005m for the period March 2005 to June 2005..
5	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Prepare a business plan for the cluster.	Year 1	**Cluster Management Committee**, KSC	KSC, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC	Business plan prepared by the end June 2005.
6	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Seek seed funding assistance to establish the cluster and provide working capital for its initial operation.	Year 1	**Cluster Management Committee**, KSC	KSC, DSRD, AHCACC	Seed funding obtained by the end of June 2005.
7	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Design a membership brochure (also available through the website) that will be used as a basis to attract members and establish information on the cluster and how to apply to become a member within the MVC website.	Year 1	**Cluster Management Committee**, KSC	KSC and cluster membership	Methods of attracting membership established by the end of June 2005 for implementation commencing July 2005.
8	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Register the cluster as a non-profit association, obtain an ABN number, establish a trading account and implement an accounting system.	Year 1	**Cluster Management Committee**, cluster membership	Cluster membership	Cluster formed at the commencement of July 2005.
9	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Conduct a media campaign to attract paying members to the cluster and appoint a project team to conduct targeted promotional drives to attract paying members.	Year 1+	**Cluster Management Committee**, cluster membership	Cluster membership	Media campaign implemented at commencement of July 2005. Number of members attracted each year.
10	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Use the MVC Tourism Plan as the principle planning document to guide cluster planning directions. Appoint project teams to implement prioritised projects and initially focus on simple projects that deliver substantive benefits to its paying members.	Year 1+	**Cluster Management Committee**, cluster membership	Cluster membership	Commence the use of project teams from July 2005 to implement actions identified in the MVC Tourism Plan. Number of projects implemented each year.

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
11	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Annually re-elect the Management Committee through Annual General Meetings held by the Cluster.	Year 1+	**Cluster**	NA	Elections held at the commencement of each financial year.
12	Sect 3.3.1 Sect 3.3.2 Sect 3.3.3 Sect 3.4.1 Sect 3.4.2 Sect 4.1 Sect 7.1.1	Invite industry participants to become members of the cluster and conduct monthly cluster marketing and product development workshops with participants to develop the MVC tourism network.	Year 1+	**Cluster**	KSC, Cluster membership	Monthly workshops held from July 2005.
13	Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Consider engaging MDAP or a project team skilled in preparing funding submissions to identify projects that could attract funding and prepare and distribute funding submissions to targeted agencies and grant programs.	Year 2+	**Cluster Management Committee, KSC, MDAP**	KSC, MDAP, Cluster membership	Fund raising agent or project team appointed at the commencement of Year 2 (July 2006). Number of funding submissions prepared and number of successful submissions.

6.2 STRATEGY 2 - Preserving and Showcasing the Core Values of the MVC

A major thrust of this Plan has been directed towards the need to sensitively integrate tourism into the host environment, community and local economy. Future tourism marketing and development responses will be used as a device to respond to both existing visitor market and community needs and seek to attract new 'high yield' markets that appreciate and do not compromise the Shire's core values.

Proactive planning and management measures are proposed that seek to deliver a triple bottom line outcome to the MVC and harness the positive benefits of tourism while strictly managing negative impacts.

The core values of the MVC are the key assets that underpin the future success of the tourism industry and as a result, future tourism marketing and development needs to:

- Address negative impacts associated with intense visitor use and development pressures in the coastal areas of the MVC;
- Minimise negative social impacts of tourism to prevent the alienation of the local community from tourism and encourage community and wider industry involvement in tourism;
- Ensure that the sensitive environmental and cultural settings of the Shire and its core values are preserved and protected from future impacts through proactive planning measures;
- Showcase and promote the core values of the MVC to industry, visitors and the community of the MVC to create increased awareness and encourage sustainable development, practices and visitor behaviour; and
- Use the core values of the Shire as a basis to develop the capabilities of the tourism industry, attract new 'high yield' markets, spread the economic benefits of tourism throughout the Shire to assist remote local economies and take the heat off coastal areas.

6.2.1 Desired Outcome

The Macleay Valley Coast will be regarded both internationally and domestically as a Shire that has taken a proactive stance through the adoption of ecologically sustainable marketing and development principles to preserve and showcase its:

- Undeveloped and pristine environmental settings;
- Authentic rural character, vibrant heritage and creative community; and
- Heritage character and seachange appeal of it's townships and villages.

The Shire's unique experiential capabilities will appeal to those travellers seeking to immerse themselves in authentic and high quality adventuresome, rewarding and enriching experiences.

This high quality tourism experience will be available throughout the Shire's townships, villages and coastal, river and hinterland areas and will encourage visitors to move off the Pacific Highway on entering the MVC to participate in an extended tourism experience throughout the MVC.

The authentic settings of the Shire and its cultural heritage capabilities will be regarded as a drawcard asset of the North Coast NSW Region and important contributor to the proposed cultural heritage district of the Region.

MVC stakeholders will regard tourism as an essential industry for the Shire and a major contributor to delivering environmental, social and economic benefits to the host community.

6.2.2   Objectives

- To enhance, protect and showcase the core values of the Shire that include its pristine undeveloped natural settings, seachange coastal and rural appeal and vibrant culture and heritage;
- Take the heat off existing coastal tourism hotspots that are suffering symptoms of negative visitor impacts by providing incentives for visitors to explore the river and hinterland districts of the MVC;
- To invest in the cultural heritage capabilities of the MVC's non-coastal townships through precinct planning measures that increase the drawcard tourism appeal of these locations, increase commercial activity, restore authentic traditions, build community pride and foster improved community relations with the tourism industry;
- To encourage the creative community and traditional custodians to participate with the tourism industry in developing the cultural heritage capabilities of the MVC and showcasing this creative talent to the wider community and visitor markets;
- To proactively prepare for the eastern bypass of the Pacific Highway ad protect the local economies of Kempsey and Frederickton; and
- To symbolically re-connect the townships of the MVC to the Macleay River and foster river recreation and tourism.

6.2.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
14	Sect 3.4.4 Sect 3.4.5 Sect 3.4.6	Consider updating or preparing new management plans that include recommendations made within this MVC Tourism Strategy	Year 1+	**NPWS**	NPS, KSC	Degree to which Management Plans are updated to reflect recommendations made within the MVC Tourism Strategy
15	Sect 3.4.4.1	Consider the full implementation of recommendations made within the Trial Bay Gaol Conservation Plan	Year 1+	**NPWS**	Refer to Conservation Plan	Refer to the Trial Bay Gaol Conservation Plan
16	Sect 3.3.1.1 Appendix 3	Continue to fully implement recommendations made within the Plan of Management for the Horseshoe Bay Reserve.	Year 1+	**KSC**	Refer to Horseshoe Bay Reserve Management Plan	Refer to Horseshoe Bay Reserve Management Plan
17	Sect 3.3.1 Sect 3.3.2 Sect 3.3.3	Encourage new development in the coastal areas of the MVC to adopt Ecologically Sustainable Development guidelines and principles.	Year 1+	**KSC**	NA	.Degree of acceptance by the community and visitors towards new development through existing feedback channels or periodic surveys conducted by KSC.
18	Sect 3.4.3.1 Sect 3.4.4	Consider implementing yield management improvements proposed within the Background Paper and in particular the proposed day use fee for all protected areas of the MVC coastline.	Year 2+	**KSC, NPWS**, DIPNIR, cluster,	KSC, NPWS	Preliminary planning to assess the validity of a holistic yield management approach to commence in Year 2.
19	Sect 3.4.3.3	Consider enhancing existing visitor monitoring and market research undertaken in the coastal areas of the MVC	Year 2+	**KSC, NPWS**	NPWS, KSC	Investigation undertaken in Year 2 and annually reviewed.
20	Sect 3.3.2 Sect 3.3.3	Consider preparing heritage precinct plans for the townships of Gladstone, Bellbrook and Willawarrin.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster, AMNC, CPAC, MRHS,	ACC, NSW Heritage Office, Area Assistance Grants Scheme, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Towns and Villages Futures Program	Commence planning studies in Year 2.
21	Sect 3.4.3	Seek enhanced funding for MVC coastal protected area management through the adoption of locally applied yield management and user pay measures proposed within the Background Paper	Year 3+	**KSC, NPWS**	NA	Degree of additional funding secured for protected area management in the coastal areas of the MVC.

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Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
22	Sect 3.4.3.2	Seek ways to further involve and engage the community in protected area management.	Year 3+	**KSC, NPWS**, cluster	NPWS, KSC	Level of involvement by the community in protected area management each year.
23	Sect 3.4.3.5	Assess existing protected area management infrastructure to identify core and non-core assets and focus efforts towards a more selective investment in protected area management infrastructure.	Year 3+	**NPWS, KSC**	NPWS, KSC	Evaluation of core and non-core assets undertaken in Year 3.
24	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.1.3.1 Sect 3.3.2.1.1	Consider preparing heritage precinct plans for West Kempsey, Central Kempsey, Frederickton and Crescent Head.	Year 4+	**KSC**, cluster, AMNC, CPAC, MRHS,	ACC, NSW Heritage Office, Area Assistance Grants Scheme, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal	Commence studies in Year 4.
25	Sect 3.3.1.1.1	Seek grant funding to plan for the development of an estuarine boardwalk for Back Creek at South West Rocks.	Year 4+	**KSC,** Dept of Lands, NPWS, cluster	Dept of Lands, Environmental Trust Funding, Natural Heritage Trust, Regional Partnerships, NPWS Gateway funding.	Seek grant funding in Year 4.
26	Sect 3.3.1.1.1 Sect 3.3.1.1.3	Consider the development of a feature South West Rocks cultural heritage precinct within or adjacent to the Horseshoe Bay Reserve.	Year 4+	**KSC**, cluster, AMNC, CPAC, MRHS,	ACC, NSW Heritage Office, Area Assistance Grants Scheme, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, Maritime Museums of Australia Project Support Scheme, Regional Arts Fund, Cultural Grants Program.	Investigative studies undertaken in Year 4

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6.3 STRATEGY 3 - Developing the Capabilities of the Hub and Spoke Network

A hub and spoke network is proposed as a foundation to develop the capabilities of a powerful tourism network for the MVC that interconnects with the wider region.

The hubs comprise the tourism townships and robust strategic settings of the MVC that service the tourism needs of an array of market sectors by concentrating tourism attractions and services at these locales such as accommodation opportunities, visitor information services, event venues, 'signature' attractions, river and marine access points.

The spokes deliver packaged tourism experiences for an array of market sectors throughout the MVC. The spokes interconnect the hubs through self-guided drive trails and commercial guided tours and activities and establish physical and packaged experiential connections with the wider region.

6.3.1 Desired Outcome

The intended outcome delivered by this strategy is to establish a tourism network throughout the Shire that:

- Encourages existing Destination Specific Visitors to explore more of the Shire and take the heat off coastal areas;
- Encourages In-Transit Travellers to move off the Pacific Highway on their journey through the MVC or return at a later date for an extended MVC holiday experience; and
- Attract 'high yield' experiential markets to the Shire through the provision of a high quality tourism network that connects with the wider Region.

The hubs will become strategic collection points for visitor markets and the critical mass of visitor activity in these locales will inject significant economic benefits towards local economies and remote communities and create economies of scale for local transport and tourism providers.

The spokes will consolidate a current fragmented tourism industry into an array of high quality packaged experiences that deliver value-added economic benefits to tourism operators throughout the MVC.

6.3.2 Objectives

- To facilitate visitor access to the identified tourism hubs of the MVC through signage and tourist road network measures;
- To concentrate visitor activity at nominated hubs to create a critical mass of demand that can be commercially harvested by the MVC tourism network and transport operators;
- To develop the event, attraction and service capabilities of the hubs to service an array of market sectors;
- To enhance bus transport capabilities;
- To provide enhanced river access and marine access infrastructure at strategic hubs to promote river and marine recreation and tourism;
- To assist local commerce in the hubs by increasing visitor activity and expenditure in these zones and using tourism as a device to reinstate lost essential services for remote communities;
- To reduce visitor impacts by concentrating visitor impacts within robust zones and strictly managing visitor movements and impacts through the spokes;

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- To provide incentive at the hubs to encourage visitors to participate in experiences delivered by the spokes;
- To package existing tourism assets and products/services into comprehensive experiences that encourage extended stays and expenditure in the MVC and respond to the experiential needs of an array of market segments;
- To re-configure the MVC tourism drive trail network to more strategically address the intent of the MVC tourism Plan;
- To network existing walking trails in the coastal area into a long distance coastal walking trail that interconnects with the coastal hubs and provides serviced base camps along its length; and
- Improve access to geographically isolated areas and ensure these remote areas are part of the tourism network.

6.3.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
27	Sect 3.2 Sect 4.3.3	Assist the Rotary Association in developing interpretive installations at feature locations along the course of the river.	Year 1+	**Rotary Assoc**, KSC, MRHS	Regional Tourism Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, KSC, Rotary	Complete project by Year 2.
28	Sect 3.3.1.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.1.4.2 Appendix 3	Implement recommendations made within the Caravan Park Management Plans for the Four Shore Holiday Parks.	Year 1+	Refer to Management Plans	Refer to Management Plans	Refer to Management Plans
29	Sect 3.3.1.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.1.4.2	Commence the trial of safari style camping options in the Four Shore Holiday Parks that cater to experiential sectors, group markets and event markets. Consider making these safari tents available for hire by MVC Tourism operators.	Year 3+	**KSC**	NA	Safari style camping options established in Year 2 and evaluated at annual intervals.
30	Sect 3.3.1.3.3	Encourage the retention of the Sky Show at the Crescent Head Holiday Park.	Year 1+	**KSC**	NA	A permanent location for specified Sky Show event elements from Year 1 onwards.
31	Sect 3.3.1.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.1.4.2	Encourage private sector operators to develop bicycle hire and canoe hire facilities for use in the coastal areas of the MVC.	Year 1+	**Cluster**	Private sector initiative	Hire facilities established by Year 1.
32	Sect 3.3.1.1.3 Sect 3.3.1.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.1.4.2 Sect 3.3.2.1.3 Sect 5.5.4.4.2 Sect 7.1.1	Progressively develop online booking and permit distribution capabilities of the VIC network.	Year 1+	**KSC**, Four Shore Holiday Parks NPWS	KSC NPWS	Progressive development of on-line capabilities from Year 1 commencing with the Kempsey VIC
33	Sect 4.3.2	Make the VIC network the primary information source on all local road conditions and encourage the VIC network to provide updates on road conditions to local radio.	Year 2+	**KSC**, NPWS, SFNSW, RTA, cluster, Four Shore Tourist Parks, Local radio.	NA	Road report information services centralised within the VIC network by Year 2.
34	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.1 Sect 8.2.1.2.1	Plan for the enhancement of the Kempsey VIC to provide a venue for the cluster and business incubator.	Year 1+	**KSC**, AHCACC, BEC, DSRD, MNCRDB	ICT Incubator program, AusIndustry, AHCACC, MNCRDB, BEC's	Planning completed within first 6 months of Year 1.
35	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.1	Continuously improve VIC capabilities through interior modifications, display revisions and equipment enhancements.	Year 1+	**KSC**, AHCACC, BEC, DSRD, MNCRDB	ICT Incubator program, AusIndustry, AHCACC, MNCRDB, BEC's	Improvements ongoing.

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
36	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.4	Provide endorsement and assist the Wutuma Keeping Place Committee in their efforts to develop the Wutuma Keeping Place project in South Kempsey Park.	Year 1+	**KSC**	Indigenous Art Fund, Indigenous Small Business Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office.	Launch a committed drive to secure funding for project implementation in year 1 and make a final decision to either proceed or halt the project in Year 2.
37	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.3	Consider the implementation of recommendations identified within the Background Paper for the Wigay Aboriginal Food and Culture Park.	Year 2+	**Wigay Committee**, KSC, cluster	Indigenous Art Fund, Indigenous Small Business Fund, Foundation for Young Australians Grant Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Aboriginal Youth Grants, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office,	Improvements commenced in Year 2 and completed by Year 4.
38	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.6	Maintain adequate representation of Council on the Board of the Slim Dusty Foundation and seek more Council involvement and participation in the SDHC project.	Year 1+	**Slim Dusty Foundation**, KSC	NA	Level of representation by Council on the Board.
39	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.6	Establish lobby groups comprising influential decision makers to put pressure on State and Federal government for further funding support to enable the SDHC project to be fully implemented. A staged development is not recommended.	Year 1+	**Slim Dusty Foundation**, KSC, industry stakeholders, cluster	Foundation for Young Australians Grant Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Aboriginal Youth Grants, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office, Communications and IT Grants, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, NSW Regional Assistance.	Number of funding drives undertaken for the project.

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Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
40	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.7	Obtain support from the Kempsey Regional Saleyard stakeholders to value-add to the enterprise through the delivery of tourism experiences.	Year 1+	**Kempsey Regional Saleyard Stakeholders,** KSC	NA	Commitment obtained by the end of Year 1.
41	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.1	Consider updating the South Kempsey Park Plan of Management to include recommendations made within the Background Paper such as: - Signage rationalisation and improvements and the development of an entry statement to the Park; - Internal road loop and reconfigured parking arrangements; - Improved night lighting and increased site security.	Year 3+	**KSC**	KSC	Management Plan reviewed by Year 3.
42	Sect 3.3.2.2.2	Seek grant funding to develop the capabilities of the Gladstone/Smithtown Community Hall to become a gallery of locally produced art.	Year 1+	**KSC**, Creative community of Gladstone/ Smithtown, AMNC, MVAC, AHCACC	Foundation for Young Australians Grant Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Aboriginal Youth Grants, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office, Communications and IT Grants, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, NSW Regional Assistance	Work commenced in Year 1 and completed in Year 2.
43	Sect 3.3.2.2.1	Install feature road signage at Gladstone to direct visitors to the heritage precinct.	Year 2+	**Cluster,** KSC	Cluster membership	Signage installed by end of Year 2.
44	Sect 4.1 Appendix 3	Consider adopting the Tourism Signposting Manual as a policy guideline for the implementation of all tourist signage in the MVC across all regional and local roads	Year 2+	**KSC,** RTA, TASAC, TNSW	NA	Review of Tourism Signposting Policy for adoption in the MVC in Year 2 for implementation from Year 3 onwards.
45	Sect 4.2.1 Sect 4.3.3	Consider the application of signage measures proposed within the Background Paper for the Pacific Highway.	Year 3+	**KSC**, RTA, TASAC, cluster	KSC, RTA	Degree of implementation of recommendations.
46	Sect 4.2.2	Consider developing the drive trail capabilities of the Armidale Road (Slim Dusty Way)	Year 3+	**KSC**, RTA, TASAC, cluster, TASAC, RTA	KSC	Evaluation of the drive trail capabilities assessed in Year 3 for implementation from Year 4 onwards.

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Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
47	Sect 4.2.3.1.1	Seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the Shires of Bellingen and Nambucca to undertake a joint venture to develop the Bellingen to Bellbrook 2WD Trail and proceed with its implementation.	Year 2+	**KSC, BSC, NSC,** cluster, TASAC	KSC, BSC, NSC	Negotiate with Shires in Year 2 for possible commencement of the project in Year 3.
48	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.1.1.2 Sect 3.3.2.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.2.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.4.1	Investigate best practice river access infrastructure case examples and consider enhancing existing infrastructure and the development of new river access infrastructure at strategic locations and hubs along the Macleay River.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster, DIPNIR,	KSC, Regional Tourism, DIPNIR	Investigation of case examples commenced in Year.2
49	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.3.3.1	Develop Memorandums of Understanding and commercial arrangements with local land holders who own properties along the banks of the Macleay River to enable commercial access and use of these settings.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster,	NA	Progressive implementation from Year 2
50	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.1.1.2	Encourage and support the private sector to investigate potential sites for the location of an enhanced or new marina at South West Rocks.	Year 3+	**KSC**, cluster, Waterways, DOTARS, DIPNIR, MoT	DOTARS, DIPNIR, ACC, Regional Solutions Program	Investigations undertaken by the end of year 3.
51	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.3.1 Sect 3.4.3.5 Sect 3.4.3.6 Sect 3.4.4.1 Sect 3.4.4.2 Sect 3.4.4.3 Sect 3.4.4.4 Sect 3.4.3.3	Consider developing the capabilities of strategic locations in the Hinterland (Macleay River and Carrai Plateau) and at robust settings along the coastal areas of the MVC to become serviced base camps.	Year 3+	**KSC, NPWS** , cluster, DIPNIR,	Regional Tourism, DIPNIR	Consider developing one location each year.
52	Sect 3.3.1.1.4	Encourage transport providers to provide a scheduled tourist bus service from the Kempsey VIC to South West Rocks and Crescent Head.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster, NPWS	KSC	Dedicated tourism transport services sought for South West Rocks and Crescent Head by Year 2.
53	Sect 3.4.4.1	Prepare preliminary planning studies for the proposed Aboriginal managed youth hostel, field studies and conference/meeting venue and seek funding support for stage 1 of the project;	Year 2+	**NPWS**	NPWS	Preliminary planning studies completed by Year 2.
54	Sect 3.3.2.2 Sect 3.3.3.2	Encourage commercial operators in Bellbrook and Gladstone to consider providing VIC services and information from these locations.	Year 3+	**KSC,** cluster, commercial operators at Bellbrook and Gladstone	NA	VIC services established in Bellbrook and Gladstone by Year 3.

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
55	Sect 3.3.2.1.2	Enhance the revenue generating capabilities of the MRHS through involving their expertise in heritage planning and development.	Year 2+	**MRHS**, KSC, cluster	KSC, MRHS, cluster	The degree of enhanced revenues provided to the MRHS from engaging their skills and expertise in identified projects.
56	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.2 Sect 4.1	Negotiate with local bus transport providers to consider the provision of dedicated tourism shuttle transport services for the township of Kempsey. Encourage regional bus/transport providers that currently service the region to deliver and collect visitors from the Kempsey VIC.	Year 2+	**Cluster, KSC**	KSC	Dedicated shuttle transport services and the centralisation of bus services at the Kempsey VIC developed by Year 2.
57	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.2	Encourage all tourism operators to use their local VIC's as principle collection and distribution points.	Year 3+	**Cluster**	NA	The VIC's will become the predominant collection point for all commercial tours and accommodation pick ups from Year 3 onwards.
58	Sect 3.4.3.7 Sect 3.4.6.2 Sect 4.2.3.1.4	Consider undertaking planning studies to develop the capabilities of the Collombatti Drive Trail and Lookout.	Year 3+	**NPWS, SFNSW**, cluster	NPWS Gateway Funding, Envirofund, Integrated Environmental Program Grants, Natural Heritage Trust Envirofund	Planning commenced Year 3 with possible project completion by Year 4.
59	Sect 3.4.3 Sect 4.2.3.1.7	Seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding between HSC, KSC, Walcha and Dumaresq, SFNSW and NPWS to develop the Kookaburra Drive Trail as a joint venture and proceed with the trail's implementation.	Year 2+	**KSC, NPWS, SFNSW, HSC,** cluster	KSC, HSC, NPWS, Envirofund, Integrated Environmental Program Grants, Natural Heritage Trust Envirofund	MOU established in Year 2 with possible project completion by Year 3.
60	Sect 4.2.3.1.3	Consider enhancing drive trail capabilities of Tourist Drives 12 and 14 according to recommendations made within the Background Paper.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster, RTA, TASAC	KSC	Consider commencing this project in Year 2 with possible completion by Year 3.
61	Sect 4.3.1	Develop a comprehensive tourist travel map for the MVC to be used in conjunction with the Definitive Brochure.	Year 2+	**Cluster**, KSC	KSC, cluster membership	Map developed and distributed by Year 2. Ongoing updates at annual intervals.
62	Sect 3.4.4.1	Consider the development of user pay interpretive booklets and audio guides that can provide enhanced interpretation of the Trial Bay Gaol.	Year 3+	**NPWS,** Cluster, MRHS	Cluster membership	User pay interpretive devices developed by Year 3

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
63	Sect 3.4.2.1.3	Consider implementing recommendations made within the Background Paper for the Front Beach Camping Area. (eg. safari style group camping options, camp kitchens, caretakers residence, kiosk and office, appointment of caretaker.	Year 3+	**NPWS**	NPWS	Investigations undertaken in Year 3.
64	Sect 3.4.3.5 Sect 3.3.1.2.2 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.4.4	Commence planning for stage 1 of the proposed long distance walking trail between Trial Bay Gaol and Smoky Cape Lighthouse.	Year 3+	**NPWS**, KSC, cluster	Envirofund, Funding for the Environment, NSW Heritage Office, National Reserve System Program, Department of Environment and Heritage, Cultural Heritage Projects Program	Stage 1 commenced in Year 3 for completion in Year 4.
65	Sect 3.4.4.4	Consider the provision of seasonal safari style group camping options at Point Plomer.	Year 4+	**NPWS**	NPWS	Seasonal group camping opportunities established by Year 4.
66	Sect 3.3.1.2.1 Sect 3.3.1.3.3 Sect 3.3.1.4.2	Seek to develop accredited VIC services at the Four Shore Holiday Parks.	Year 4+	**KSC**, Four Shore Holiday Parks, NPWS	NPWS, KSC, cluster	VIC network established within Four Shore Holiday Parks by Year 4.
67	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.3	Assess the potential for a regional gallery, outdoor performing arts venue, riverine boardwalk and riverside event area adjacent to the Macleay River in Central Kempsey.	Year 4+	**Cluster**, KSC, AMNC, MVAC, AHCACC	Foundation for Young Australians Grant Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Aboriginal Youth Grants, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office, Communications and IT Grants, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal, NSW Regional Assistance,	Planning of riverside areas would be undertaken as part of Heritage Precinct planning proposed for Central Kempsey. Refer to Action 24.
68	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.1	Consider scheduling paid staff employed through Council's Tourism Unit to provide 7 day coverage for the Kempsey VIC to achieve Level 1 accreditation status.	Year 5+	**KSC**	KSC, cluster membership	Level 1 accreditation status achieved by Year 5.

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
69	Sect 3.3.2.1.3.7	Progressively develop Kempsey's MICE capabilities.	Year 5+	**Cluster**, KSC	KSC, cluster	MICE capabilities enhanced following the improvement of public transport capabilities.
70	Sect 3.3.2.1.2.3 Sect 3.3.2.1.2.4	If the proposed Wutuma Keeping Place fails to secure sufficient funding for its implementation, consider incorporating this project as an extension to the Wigay Park.	TBA	**Wigay Committee**, **Wutuma Keeping Place Committee,** KSC, cluster	Indigenous Art Indigenous Art Fund, Indigenous Small Business Fund, Foundation for Young Australians Grant Fund, Community Development Grants Program, Aboriginal Youth Grants, Area Assistance Scheme Grants Program, Community Heritage Grants Program, Cultural Heritage Projects Program, NSW Heritage Office,	Extensions to the Wigay Park commenced upon notification by the Wutuma Keeping Place Committee that their bid for developing the project at South Kempsey Park has been unsuccessful.

6.4 STRATEGY 4 - Nurturing and Assisting Industry Development

While the hub and spoke network provides the foundation for the MVC tourism network, assistance, incentives and awareness campaigns are required to:

- Proactively nurture guided tours and activities for the MVC and enhance event capabilities of the Shire;
- Develop industry quality standards that ultimately meet national accreditation benchmarks and enhance the overall quality of experience delivered by the entire MVC tourism network;
- Encourage industry to adopt ecologically sustainable development practices and principles to reduce development and visitor impacts and preserve the Shire's core values;
- Prompt industry to target future growth opportunities that respond to the strategic and sustainable intent of the Plan such as the progressive development of:
  - ➢ Cultural heritage, nature based and ecotourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Indigenous tourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Creative art, performance and craft capabilities;
  - ➢ River recreation and tourism capabilities;
  - ➢ Hinterland tourism capabilities; and
  - ➢ Adventure tourism and backpacker tourism capabilities;
- Inform the wider tourism industry, community and related industry sectors of the new capabilities of the MVC tourism network and encourage these stakeholders to positively promote its capabilities to visitor markets.

6.4.1 Desired Outcome

The desired outcome is:

- To deliver a comprehensive and high quality tourism experience by the MVC tourism network that is capable of attracting new 'high yield' experiential sectors to the Shire;
- To create an incentive for industry to adopt best practice standards in their development and ongoing operations; and
- Create wide awareness of the enhanced capabilities of the MVC tourism network.

6.4.2 Objectives

- To appoint an events coordinator for the tourism network that is responsible for strategically managing and coordinating local events, attracting regional events to the Shire and increasing the event capabilities of the MVC;
- To create a business incubator that provides a low risk supportive environment to proactively nurture the development of new product that responds to the intent of the MVC Tourism Plan and develops the skill capabilities of the local community and industry;
- To develop a comprehensive industry training program that uses existing training and business support services and augments these services with specialised programs to upskill the capabilities of the local tourism industry and increase quality standards throughout the network to meet accreditation benchmarks; and
- To undertake awareness and familiarisation programs that create regional awareness of the new capabilities and intent of the MVC tourism industry and inform the community and wider industry on the benefits of participating in and promoting MVC tourism.

6.4.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
71	Sect 3.3.2.1.3 Sect 6.1.5.1	Prepare a business plan, identify existing support programs that can assist the incubator, seek funding assistance and develop the business incubator as an extension to the Kempsey VIC in South Kempsey Park.	Year 1+	**Incubation Unit**, KSC, BEC's, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC	ICT Incubator program, AusIndustry	Funding secured, business plan prepared and initial planning for the incubator undertaken in Year 1. Development of the incubator and purchase of initial equipment undertaken at the commencement of Year 2. Commencement of the business incubator in Year 2.
72	Sect 6.1.6.1	Commence forums and workshops that increase awareness of the MVC tourism network and its benefits to the community and wider industry.	Year 1+	**KSC, cluster**	KSC in Year 1 and cluster membership from Year 2 onwards.	Awareness programs commenced from Year 1 onwards.
73	Sect 6.1.6.2	Increase awareness of the MVC tourism network by tourism representatives that service the North Coast NSW region through trade shows/events, cluster workshops/meetings and famil programs. Develop MVC displays that can be used at trade events.	Year 1+	**KSC, cluster**	KSC in Year 1 and cluster membership from Year 2 onwards.	Awareness programs commenced from Year 1 onwards.
74	Sect 6.1.6.3	Draw on the capabilities of existing training and business support services to provide general training and business assistance to the tourism network.	Year 1+	**KSC, cluster,** BEC's, AEDO, DSRD, TAFE, ACE	KSC, cluster, BEC's, AEDO, DSRD, TAFE, ACE	Plan for the provision of general training programs in Year 1 with implementation in Year 2.
75	Sect 6.1.6.5	Consider engaging the CRC to establish base level local accreditation standards for the MVC tourism network, annually evaluate standards and progressively raise benchmarks each year.	Year 4+	**CRC, KSC,** cluster	CRC, KSC	Local accreditation standards established by the end of Year 4 and annually evaluated and adjusted.
76	Sect 3.2 Sect 3.3.1 Sect 3.3.2 Sect 3.3.3 Sect 3.4	Incorporate potential opportunities identified within the Background Paper within the list of projects to be considered for trial by the business incubator. For information on these potential opportunities, refer to Background Paper section references.	Year 2+	**Incubation Unit**, cluster, KSC, BEC's, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC	ICT Incubator program, AusIndustry, incubation fees, KSC	Number of incubation projects commenced and number of projects successfully incubated.

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Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
77	Sect 6.1.4.1	Consider appointing a dedicated project team within the proposed industry cluster to become an event coordinator for the MVC. Promote this new role throughout the North Coast NSW region and up skill the capabilities of his position.	Year 2+	**KSC, cluster**, TNSW, RTO	KSC	Event coordinator established by Year 2 and skill capabilities progressively enhanced through training.
78	Sect 6.1.6.4	Plan for and develop specialist tourism training programs for the MVC tourism network	Year 2+	**KSC, cluster,** BEC's, AEDO, DSRD, TAFE, ACE	KSC, cluster membership, BEC's, AEDO, DSRD, TAFE, ACE	Plan for the provision of specialist training programs in Year 2 with implementation in Year 2.
79	Sect 6.1.6.5	Develop marketing incentives, promote the benefits of accreditation and provide training programs that encourage tourism operators to meet accreditation standards.	Year 2+	**KSC, cluster**, CRC, BEC's, AEDO, DSRD, TAFE, ACE	KSC, TNSW, DSRD, NPWS, Cluster membership	Accreditation programs, incentives and assistance commenced in Year 2 and annually evaluated.
80	Sect 6.1.7	Conduct workshops with cluster participants to investigate investment and development hurdles/ constraints for industry and identify remedial solutions and incentive measures.	Year 2	**KSC**, cluster, DSRD, MNCRDB, AHCACC, RTO, MDAP	Cluster membership	Workshops held in Year 2.
81	Sect 6.1.7 Sect 3.3.1	Identify strategic projects within the Background Paper that may attract private sector investment and develop an investment prospectus that highlights these strategic projects and provides support information to assist in the development of these opportunities.	Year 2+	**KSC**, MDAP, cluster	KSC, cluster, MNCRDB, AHCACC, DSRD	Prepare planning studies and incentives for one major project each year and update investment prospectus at annual intervals.
82	Sect 3.4.3.6	Provide incentives to encourage industry to meet NPWS commercial Licensing Policy standards and promote use of coastal protected areas by Licensed operators.	Year 3+	**NPWS, KSC**	NPWS, KSC	Incentives and accreditation assistance established in Year 3.

6.5 STRATEGY 5 - Consolidating and Rationalising Marketing Activities

The North Coast New South Wales Regional Plan has proposed a number of measures that seek to consolidate and rationalise existing marketing activities undertaken at the local government and local area level and funnel these marketing savings into more effective and powerful marketing efforts that create a stronger Region.

The MVC Tourism Plan supports this regional intent and addresses ways in which local marketing solutions can more effectively used to promote the entire Shire's interests and increase its profile in regional marketing activities. Significant savings achieved through these efforts will be re-directed into more effective and efficient marketing solutions that support the MVC tourism network and sustainable intent of the Plan.

6.5.1 Desired Outcome

The entire MVC tourism network will achieve a powerful and high marketing exposure in the North Coast NSW regional context through a small number of high quality and effective branded marketing measures.

In addition, the MVC, Hastings Shire and Greater Taree Shire will develop cooperative marketing campaigns that increase exposure of the cultural heritage capabilities of this wider District.

Visitors will be able to readily access this information in preparing their holiday itineraries prior to arriving in the MVC and be encouraged on arriving in the MVC to stay longer and spend more through:
- Enhanced visitor information services and strategic marketing and selling tools;
- The use of interpretive devices that showcase the capabilities of the MVC; and
- Cooperative marketing efforts of MVC tourism network participants.

The MVC tourism industry will:
- Continue to participate as a paying member of the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and ensure that the Shire's interests are equitably marketed at the regional level;
- Encourage Tourism New South Wales and the RTO to participate as active members of the proposed tourism cluster for the MVC;
- Assist the RTO in integrating the Macleay Valley Coast Website and the online VIC network booking systems into the 'Total Tourism Web Portal' for the Region and State Tourism Data Warehouse (STDW) project;
- Actively participate with Hastings Shire and Greater Taree Shire in developing cooperative marketing measures that promote this wider area as a thematic district of the North Coast NSW Region;
- Adopt the revised brand for the MVC within all marketing measures;
- Develop a marketing campaign that increases awareness of the MVC's revised brand, new strategic vision and sustainable intent;
- Develop the Macleay valley Coast's website capabilities to become a one stop shop for visitor needs and also a major communication and research portal for the MVC tourism network; and
- Consolidate individually produced marketing brochures into a definitive high quality brochure for the MVC that becomes recognised as the 'travel bible' for visitors to the Shire.

6.5.2   Objectives

- To increase marketing exposure of the entire MVC through consolidating existing marketing efforts conducted within the MVC and re-directing marketing expenditure into more powerful and high quality marketing measures;
- To reduce fragmentation of the MVC through encouraging all tourism participants to adopt the revised brand of the MVC and to channel marketing efforts to promote the tourism interests of the entire Shire;
- To reward tourism operators that achieve local accreditation or national accreditation standards through providing increased editorial exposure within marketing collateral;
- To ensure the MVC achieves high exposure in the North Coast NSW regional marketing context;
- To use the Macleay Valley Coast Website as the principle communication and research dissemination tool for the MVC tourism network;
- To ensure that all marketing activities deliver consistent and high quality messages that do not compromise the sustainable intent of the Plan; and
- To ensure marketing efforts target sustainable market sectors for the MVC and encourage appropriate visitor behaviour.

6.5.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
83	Sect 3.4.3.8	Encourage NPWS and KSC to develop a strong partnership in jointly promoting protected area values and objectives through the VIC network and MVC marketing collateral.	Year 1+	**KSC, NPWS**	NA	Joint marketing discussions commenced in Year 1 and joint marketing activities undertaken from Year 2 onwards.
84	Sect 7.1.1	Continue as a paying member of the RTO, contribute funds towards regional initiatives that deliver substantive benefits to the MVC and participate in regional marketing programs.	Year 1+	**KSC, RTO**, TNSW	KSC and cluster membership fees	Annual membership contributions made to RTO and additional funds allocated towards regional marketing initiatives.
85	Sect 7.1.1 Sect 7.1.2.1.3	Register a new domain name for the MVC website and develop website capabilities according to specifications suggested within the Background Paper. Work with the RTO in seeking to integrate the MVC tourism website with the proposed Total Tourism Web Portal	Year 1+	**Cluster**, KSC	Cluster membership fees	Registration of domain name in Year 1 and progressive development for launch of revised website for Year 2.
86	Sect 4.1	Distribute all MVC marketing collateral throughout the North Coast NSW VIC network and regularly review the VIC network to ensure the MVC receives quality marketing exposure.	Year 1+	**KSC**, RTO, VIC network	KSC, RTO and cluster membership fees	Number of regional VIC's visited each year.
87	Sect 7.1.1	Ensure reference is made to the North Coast NSW region within MVC marketing collateral such as the MVC website, Definitive brochure and MVC travel map.	Year 2+	**KSC, RTO**	NA	North Coast NSW name inclusion within marketing collateral by the end of Year 2.
88	Sect 3.3.2.1.2 Sect 7.1.2.1.1	Conduct brand development workshops within the industry cluster and engage a facilitator to consider the revision of the MVC slogan. Encourage all tourism stakeholders of the MVC and local media to apply the revised MVC brand within locally applied marketing efforts.	Year 2+	**Cluster, KSC**	KSC and cluster membership fees	Revised brand developed by Year 2 and applied through all local marketing efforts.
89	Sect 7.1.2.1.2	Consider undertaking a marketing campaign that responds to the revised brand and can be used across a range of media forms to create awareness of the MVC tourism experience and launch the revised brand.	Year 2+	**Cluster, KSC**	KSC and cluster membership fees	Marketing campaign developed during Year 1 and Year 2 and launched with the revised brand at the end of Year 2.
90	Sect 4.1	Ensure that the tourism cluster participates in proposed North Coast NSW marketing measures to encourage day trip and tourist road travellers to move off the highway and explore the region. Examples include the Pacific Coast Touring Route, the 'Drive yourself Sane' campaign, the Pacific Coast Bed and Breakfast Trail etc;	Year 2+	**Cluster, RTO**, TNSW	RTO, TNSW, cluster membership fees	Participation by cluster in regional marketing measures from Year 2 onwards.

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Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
91	Sect 4.1 Sect 7.1.1	Work collaboratively with Hastings Shire and the Greater Taree Shire within industry cluster workshops to develop district marketing capabilities through cooperative marketing programs. Consider the development of feature displays in accredited VICs along the Pacific Highway that showcase the cultural heritage strengths of the District.	Year 2+	**Cluster**, RTO, KSC, HSC, GTC	KSC, GTC, HSC, cluster membership fees	Cooperative marketing activities and VIC displays developed by Year 2.
92	Sect 4.1	Host annual famils through the cluster for regional VIC staff and volunteers.	Year 2+	**Cluster**, KSC	Cluster membership fees	Famil held each year within the MVC.
93	Sect 4.2 Sect 7.1.2.1.4	Develop a definitive brochure for the MVC according to specifications recommended in the Background Paper. Rationalise existing marketing publications and re-direct savings towards the definitive brochure publication. Feature the MVC drive trails within the definitive brochure, road map and MVC website. Develop a feature display for the VIC network that promotes the definitive brochure.	Year 2+	**Cluster**, KSC	Cluster membership fees.	Definitive brochure developed and distributed regionally by the end of Year 2.

6.6 STRATEGY 6 - Enhancing Tourism Decision Making Through Research

Informed decision making is an essential pre-requisite for a proactive and powerful tourism industry. A need exists to develop the research capabilities of both the North Coast NSW tourism industry and the MVC tourism network to provide timely and relevant research that promotes the ability to address existing and emerging issues and capitalise on growth opportunities for the Shire.

Tourism New South Wales and the North Coast NSW Regional Tourism Plan recognise that a current deficiency in industry data and market research exists and have commenced a number of measures to respond to this issue and allow for more informed and proactive decision making.

The MVC will assist TNSW and the RTO in implementing these regional research initiatives and also develop additional specific research programs and benchmarking tools tailored to the decision making needs of the MVC tourism network.

6.6.1 Desired Outcome

Regional and locally applied research monitoring measures will empower the MVC tourism industry to proactively respond to emerging issues and growth trends and enable the tourism industry to flexibly adapt and increase its competitive position in the marketplace.

All participants of the MVC tourism network will be kept up to date with timely and relevant research and be capable of responding to these implications to grow and adapt their businesses and keep at the forefront of industry directions.

The MVC tourism industry will:
- Participate with the RTO and TNSW in the Statewide Regional Data Package project;
- Include the MVC visitor information centre network within the State VIC Barometer project;
- Encourage the implementation of the Hastings Industry Benchmarking System for Tourism (HIBS-T) within the MVC as a powerful industry benchmarking tool;
- Conduct ongoing monitoring of visitor activities and impacts in protected areas of the MVC;
- Monitor bookings made through the MVC visitor information centre network;
- Monitor the sales of Self-guided Interpretive Devices to identify potentially viable new commercial guided tours and activities for the MVC; and
- Use the definitive brochure as a powerful market research and visitor monitoring tool.

6.6.2 Objectives

- To more accurately assess the true value of the tourism industry to the MVC local economy to elicit support in investing resources towards the tourism industry at the local level;
- To understand the nature and behaviour of visitor market sectors to the MVC that enable tailored marketing and development responses that respond to market needs;
- To continuously monitor the external environments impacting on the tourism industry to respond swiftly to emerging issues and capitalise on emerging growth opportunities;
- To monitor visitor impacts and activity and allow for proactive visitor management planning;

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- To establish industry benchmarks that can be used to monitor the performance of tourism enterprises in the MVC network and enact responsive measures to assist under-performing operations;
- To monitor self-guided experiences that could be potentially converted into new commercial guided tours and activities through the business incubator; and
- To monitor the performance of the MVC tourism network and assess achievements made by the MVC Tourism Plan.

6.6.3   Actions

Action	Background Paper Section Reference	Action Description	Timing (Year)	Lead Driver/ Partnerships (Lead Partner in bold)	Examples of Potential Funding Sources and/or Agencies	Performance Indicators
94	Sect 5.5.4.1	Participate in the Statewide Regional Data Package project (SRDP).	Year 1+	**KSC**, cluster, RTO, TNSW	TNSW, RTO, KSC	Ongoing involvement in project from Year 1 onwards.
95	Sect 5.5.4.2	Participate in the State VIC Barometer project.	Year 1+	**KSC**, cluster, RTO, TNSW	TNSW, RTO, KSC	Ongoing involvement in project from Year 1 onwards.
96	Sect 5.5.4.3	Conduct negotiations with the CTA, adapt the HIBS-T system for the MVC tourism industry and implement the benchmarking system in the MVC.	Year 2+	**KSC**, CTA, HSC, cluster, RTO, TNSW	TNSW, RTO, KSC, cluster membership	Commence negotiations with the CTA and adapt the system for MVC requirements in Year 2 and fully implement the system by Year 3.
97	Sect 5.5.4.4.1	Implement comprehensive and ongoing visitor tracking measures in the coastal protected areas of the MVC.	Year 2+	**NPWS, KSC**, cluster	NPWS, KSC	Comprehensive and ongoing monitoring measures established by Year 2 onwards.
98	Sect 5.5.4.4.2	Record bookings made within the MVC VIC network and collate and distribute this data through the MVC tourism network.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster	KSC, cluster membership	Monitoring systems established by Year 2.
99	Sect 5.5.4.4.4	Implement visitor surveys in conjunction with the Definitive Brochure to track visitor movements through the MVC tourism network.	Year 2+	**KSC**, cluster	KSC, cluster membership	Surveys and monitoring systems established by Year 2.