**macleay valley coast**

# Tourism Marketing Strategy & Action Plan

2023- 2026

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines a marketing strategy and supporting short-term action plan aimed at positioning the Macleay Valley Coast (MVC) as a premier regional visitor destination. The plan is designed to increase the desirability of the region as a travel destination and encourage visitors to stay longer in the region. Combining this short-term strategy with our long-term Destination Management Plan will enable us to maintain the relevance needed to achieve and sustain a competitive advantage in the tourism industry.

The plan includes an updated analysis of the current tourism landscape, including key travel and tourism trends, brand positioning, target markets, and competitor and SWOT analysis. It also outlines our approach to marketing and tourism development and concludes with our strategic action plan and KPIs for marketing and facilitating the sustainable development of tourism in the region.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

## Tourism Market Overview

### Current Travel Trends

**Transformative Travel Experiences –** These are experiences that are less about just looking at things and more about experiencing something new that engages and connects visitors, in a meaningful way, to the place, its history and heritage and its people.

**Rural Experiences –** Rural and regional destinations in Australia will continue to benefit from the desire of source markets for city escapes that continue to boost domestic tourism.

**Conscious Travel –** Travel to more distant destinations, but with prolonged durations of stay, as consumers look to enjoy as much of each place they visit as possible.

**Travel as Self Care –** Travel will become an essential form of self-care. Travellers agree that travel helps their mental and emotional wellbeing more than other forms of self-care.

**Community First –** Authentic connection with the local community will be a priority. Travellers agree it's important that their trip is beneficial to the local community at their destination.

**Green Travel** – Climate change is a problem that is present and growing. Consumers now are much more responsible and aware of the reality they live in daily.

**Embracing the Unpredictable –** People will use technology to embrace travels continued unpredictability with travellers agreeing that technology will be more important than ever while on vacation.

**"Gramping" –** A new type of multi-generational trip is emerging; expect to hear more about "gramping" holidays that pair kids with their grandparents for a weekend away as the year goes on.

Sources: DNC Destination Management Plan, TOURISM TRENDS 2022 (ie.edu); Top 10 travel trends for 2023 | escape.com.au, and Gramping Is the Sweet New Travel Trend of 2023 – Motherly

### Customer Journey Trends

**Personalisation** – Digital and mobile technology have empowered visitors to take more control of their travel experiences and increased their expectations. As a result, the expectation of personalised and tailor-made experiences is growing.

**Digital** – Digital technology will continue to advance, facilitating all stages of the customer journey and experience, e.g., search, booking, payments, augmented reality, real time translations etc.

**Mobile** – Mobile will be the preference of travelers throughout their customer journey, so mobile optimisation of the customer experience will be key.

**Social media** – Sourcing user generated content through social will be key in producing new content at a rapid rate as well as further engaging our audience.
Source: Parts of this taken from - NSW Government and Destination NSW, Feb 2019

## Destination Overview



**Destination Profile**

**529,000 Total Visitors**

**Reasons for Visit:**
1. Holiday
2. Visiting Friends & Relatives

**Stay Length: 3.8 Nights**

**Spend: $218/Night**

**Visitor Expenditure $206M**

**5%**

**Share of Total Visitation to North Coast**

Spend has gone **up** and Visitor numbers have **gone down.**

Source: TRA, 2022

The North Coast (NC) is Regional NSW's number 1 region for domestic visitor nights & expenditure.

The smaller regions, including the Macleay Valley Coast, that make up the North Coast Destination Network, represent about **20% of the state's Tourism Consumption**. This is mostly delivered through intrastate tourism.

The Macleay Valley Coast receives **4% of the North Coast's total visitor expenditure** and 5% of the total visitation to the North Coast.

Source: Value of Tourism to the North Coast, 2022

## MVC Tourism Operators

Total: 304
Source: TRA, 2019

## MVC Visitation

Sources: TRA LGA Profiles, 2019; NSW DNC Report, 2018-2022, TRA 2022 calendar year

| Metric | 2018 (TRA) | 2022 (TRA) |
|---|---|---|
| Domestic Daytrips | 237,600 | 218k |
| Domestic Overnight Trips | 302,400 | 311k |
| Total Domestic Visitors | 540,000 | 529k |
| Total Expenditure | - | $209 million |
| Avg Length of Stay | 4 | 3.8 |
| Avg Spend per night | $121 | $218 |

## MVC Visitor Profile

Source: TRA, 2019

| Life Stage | Location | Reasons for Travel |
|---|---|---|
| • 55+<br>• Families<br>• Young couples no kids<br>• Millennials | • Domestic<br>• Interstate - Victoria & SE Queensland<br>• Intrastate - Sydney & surrounds, Hunter region, North West & Central West NSW & Coffs and Port Macquarie for day trips | • Visiting friends and family<br>• Caravanning<br>• Youth travel<br>• Outdoors and adventure<br>• Escaping and relaxing |

## SWOT Analysis

### STRENGTHS

The Macleay Valley Coast offers adventure and walking tourism with pristine beaches, national parks, and forests. It has a country living connection, a rich indigenous heritage, and an active arts and culture sector. Economic and educational opportunities come from the Macleay Valley Food Bowl and New Country University. Repeat visitation and a large VFR market are supported by world-renowned diving sites off South West Rocks and a national surfing reserve. The region's diverse fauna and natural assets contribute to its appeal.

### WEAKNESSES

Weaknesses include limited tourism infrastructure, an immature industry, a small tourism team, inadequate tourist information services, limited family and wet weather attractions, and a lack of community engagement with the visitor economy. There are also gaps in food bowl and food tourism, events and festivals, and infrastructure for inclusive tourism, business events, and sports tourism. Additionally, there is a shortage of 'after dark' hospitality services and a lack of infrastructure for Aboriginal tourism.

### OPPORTUNITIES

The MVC has opportunities to grow its following, attract investors, and capitalize on trends such as domestic travel, local food and produce tourism, and nature tourism. It can leverage its proximity to Port and Coffs, extend festivals and events, build a Business Events portfolio, and develop adventure tourism, wedding sector, and walking trails. By working closely with DNSW and DNC, enhancing signage, developing a new visitor services strategy and engaging local communities, the region can also grow its VFR market to become more inclusive.

### THREATS

The Macleay Valley Coast region faces various threats to its tourism industry, including local communities opposing tourism growth, increasing competition for visitors, highly seasonal demand, the possibility of another pandemic, and the potential impact of bushfires during peak season. Furthermore, if tourism numbers continue to increase without proper management, it may have negative impacts on the environment and local communities
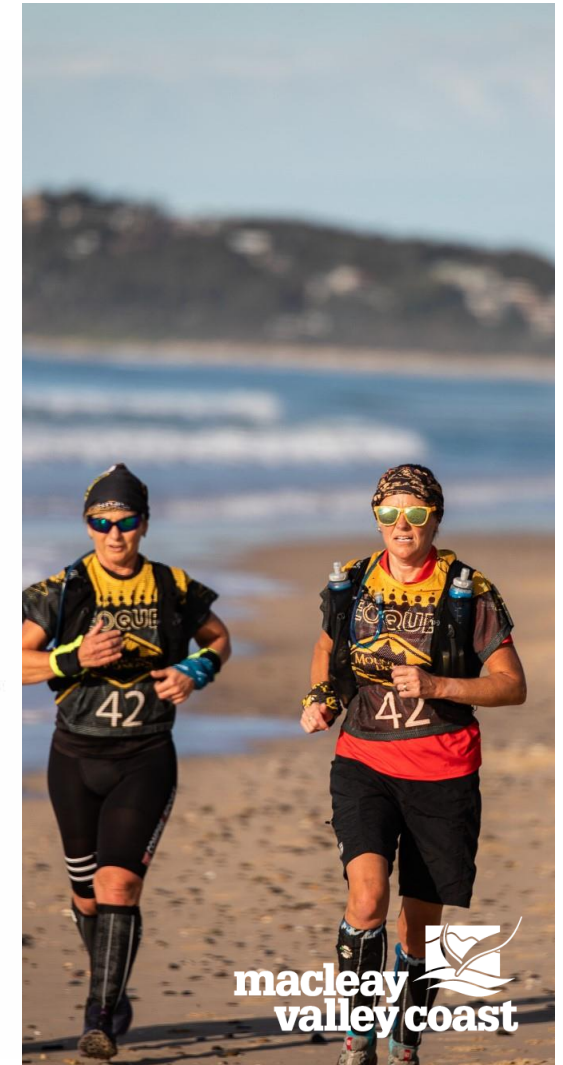
## Competitor Profiles

Within the competitive landscape of the tourism industry, it can be challenging for smaller destinations such as the Macleay Valley Coast to stand out. Many of our competitors have significant marketing budgets, making it difficult for us to compete on the same level.

Our advantage lies in our pristine and natural environment as well as our communities, which offer visitors a unique and memorable experience.

We are committed to leveling the playing field through leveraging our strengths and opportunities while implementing our plan.

| Competitor | Share of NC Visitor Spend | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Barrington Coast | 17% | * An amalgamated council group of 3 Shires with a recognised brand name and large tourism team has increased following and interest<br>* Diverse tourism offering across the region that is mature<br>* Big marketing budgets | * A lot of stakeholders to work with - harder to get get things done quickly<br>* Considered too far from Brisbane for a weekend drive market |
| Clarence Valley | 7% of NC | * Gets a great following from their Jacaranda season<br>* Similar strengths to the MVC<br>* The longest white-water trail in Australia | * Considered too far from Sydney for a weekend drive market |
| The Tweed | 13% of NC | * A mature tourism market with strong marketing tools<br>* A team of 5 tourism specialists<br>* Big marketing budgets<br>* Great food and wine offering | * Considered too far from Sydney for a weekend drive market<br>* Struggling currently with border closures |
| Port Macquarie | 12% of NC | * Great food and wine offering<br>* Airport<br>* A mature tourism industry<br>* Family attractions<br>* Key events held here | * Not as many family-friendly beaches as MVC<br>* Lacking internal tourism team at PMHC |
| Coffs Harbour | 14% of NC | * A team of tourism specialists<br>* Big marketing budgets<br>* Airport<br>* Great range of nature-based & soft adventure tourism experiences<br>* Key family attractions | * Community doesn't allow them to promote surfing |

# MARKETING

## Brand Positioning

The Macleay Valley Coast is a premier regional visitor destination working to drive growth in high-yield and environmentally sustainable tourism through the development and promotion of its iconic natural visitor attractions.

## Target Audiences

| Audience | Life Stage | Location | Attributes | Alignment to Experience Pillars |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Escape and Connect:**<br>• Looking to disconnect and break from responsibilities<br>• Holidays a chance to reconnect with partners & children<br>• Will pay for quality<br>• Relax and unwind – sightseeing, natural attractions, food & wine | • 60+<br>• Empty nesters<br>• Couples no kids | • Sydney<br>• Newcastle<br>• Brisbane<br>• Canberra | • Value relationships<br>• Passionate & busy with hobbies<br>• Interested in Food & Wine, dining out and at home<br>• Value fashion and style<br>• Motivated in their careers | • Nature tourism - pristine setting to reconnect<br>• Journey & Touring routes - independence of getting in the car & exploring<br>• Aquatic & Coastal - Serenity, peace - the feeling it gives<br>• Food & Drink - quality experiences & want to buy local produce<br>• Cultural tourism - what to know the locals and history of the area |
| **Walk on the Wild Side:**<br>• Avoiding crowds and 'touristy' destinations<br>• Nature and wildlife experiences<br>• More likely to holiday in Australia & prefer regional destinations<br>• Want to get the best value for money<br>• Stay in standard accommodation, with friends and family or in caravanning & camping accommodation | • 60+<br>• Empty nesters<br>• Couples no kids | • NSW<br>• VIC<br>• SE QLD<br>• ACT | • Love the outdoors<br>• Seek value for money<br>• Practical and carefully make decisions<br>• A lot of free time but keep active with hobbies<br>• Not so fussed about socialising/shopping /restaurants<br>• Are environmental and love the simple life | • Nature tourism - vastness, nobody around, exploration<br>• Journey & Touring routes - independence, exploration<br>• Cultural tourism - a means to lean about the destination<br>• Camping - at one with nature<br>• Adventure tourism - exciting and fun |

| **Family Fun:**<br>• More likely to visit the same destination year on year<br>• Ease and convenience & experiences that are family friendly<br>• Coastal and self-drive particularly appealing<br>• Value for money<br>• If not staying with friends and family they stay in a standard hotel or self-contained apartment | • 35–49-year-old parents<br>• Kids under the age of 16 | • NSW<br>• VIC<br>• SE QLD | • Live a busy family life<br>• Like convenience & troutaine to maximise family time<br>• Bargain hunters & budget conscious<br>• Enjoy days at the beach, sports & cooking at home | • Nature tourism - spending time in the great outdoors with family<br>• Journey & Touring routes - ease & inexpensive of driving<br>• Aquatic & Coastal - enjoying time at the beach & on the water with family<br>• Food - convenient & satisfying experiences the whole family will enjoy<br>• Sports tourism<br>• Festivals & events |
| **Rest and Relax:**<br>• Take life slowly & enjoy the simple pleasures<br>• Seek peace and comfort<br>• Keep active with light exercise like walking, golf & pilates<br>• Are conscientious, risk-averse and resistant to change<br>• Have a lot of spare time & enjoy time spent with their pets and partner | • 55+ | • NSW<br>• VIC<br>• SE QLD<br>• ACT | • Relaxing, unwinding & spending time with their partner<br>• Complete break from responsibilities & worries<br>• Rest & relaxation<br>• Affordability is a major concern<br>• Don't want to holiday with crowds - shoulder season | • Nature tourism - ease & simplicity of being amongst nature<br>• Journey & Touring routes - ease & inexpensive of driving & setting up camp<br>• Aquatic & Coastal - peace and tranquility<br>• Heritage - love to explore the history of a place when traveling |

## Our Marketing Mix

The elements outlined below form our Macleay Valley Coast 'Marketing Mix'. This marketing mix is comprised of the owned, earned and paid channels we leverage to achieve our desired marketing objectives.

## Digital

### Website

Through the Macleay Valley Coast destination website, we aim to offer a user-friendly and intuitive experience. This means conducting regular usability testing and implementing changes based on feedback received from visitors. We also work to improve its optimisation for search engines, using relevant keywords and incorporating effective content writing techniques to improve our ranking on search engine results pages.

We utilise this owned platform to feature high-quality visuals and engaging content that highlights the unique offerings of the region, such as stunning natural landscapes, exciting outdoor activities, and local cultural experiences.

Integration with social media channels and email marketing campaigns helps drive traffic to the website and keep visitors engaged with the destination.

We measure the website's performance monthly using analytics tools to track key metrics such as page views, bounce rates, and conversion rates, allowing us to continually refine our content and improve the effectiveness of the website as a marketing tool.

Google Analytics (November 2023):

| Metric | 2019 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|
| Total Users | 49,209 | 58,012 |
| Average pages per session | 1.85 | 1.79 |
| Average session duration | 1 min 16 seconds | 1 min 24 seconds |
| Average bounce rate | 71.94% | 66.86% |

### Visitor EDM

To engage our target markets, we have prioritised building our database and communicating with it consistently since initiating the distribution of seasonal Visitor-facing EDMs in Winter 2023. As our audience grows, segmenting by interest group will allow for tailored communication and inspiration. Accurate and secure data is also crucial. In the future, a CRM system will help maintain the integrity of our data and enable better communication management.

Mailchimp (November 2023):

| Metric | Peer Average | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| Audience size (subscribers) | N/A | 763 |
| Open rate | 40.2% | 57% |
| Click rate | 7.2% | 12% |
| Unsubscribe rate | .1% | 1.9% |

## Social Media

Brandwatch (November 2023):

| Metric | 1 Jan 2022 – 31 December 2022 | 1 Jan 2023 – 31 October 2023 *Incomplete year |
|---|---|---|
| Facebook Audience | 10% ^ to 2,812 | 5% ^ to 2,950 |
| Instagram Audience | 12% ^ to 3,340k | 8% ^ 3,618 |
| Facebook Impressions | 124.32k | 188k |
| Instagram Impressions | 137.4k | 244k |
| Facebook Reach | 95.8k | 152.3k |
| Instagram Reach | 101.4k | 177k |
| Instagram Clicks to MVC Website | 164 | 155 |

# Brand Creative

## Print

It is important to maintain an up-to-date range of print collateral that we can deliver to visitors via visitor information outlets both within and outside of our region as well as for distribution at trade events. How many pieces of collateral we distribute is good to track however, even more important to our success in this space will be creating high quality, useful tools that inspire visitors and residents alike.

## Asset Library

Images are vital to inspiring visitation and promoting dispersal across the region to lesser-known attractions. We will continue to build our suite of tourism imagery and video footage to highlight the region in a way that appeals to our target audiences.

We may need to investigate options for a Digital Asset Management system as our content library continues to grow.

## Communications

A targeted and effective approach to communications is essential for reaching our desired audience and gaining media coverage. This can be achieved through a variety of tactics, such as building a comprehensive media contact list, conducting outreach efforts to key industry publications and influencers, and leveraging relevant events and press opportunities. Paid partnership and owned campaigns are crucial to complementing our public relations efforts to build brand awareness and enter new markets.  By taking a strong and proactive approach, we will amplify our message to raise awareness around and generate positive word of mouth for the Macleay Valley Coast.

## Advertising

### Digital

According to Lyfe Marketing in 2020, 64% of people have been influenced to make a purchase after watching an online video, while 52% of buying decisions can be traced back to Facebook. This data highlights the importance of online presence and utilizing digital content marketing to target new and existing visitors. The Macleay Valley Coast needs to strengthen its online presence to generate brand awareness and attract leads that convert to bookings for our local tourism operators.

### Traditional & Out of Home

While traditional media is quite broad in its target markets and can be expensive, it does have notable leverage, especially locally. We will continue to investigate and take advantage of opportunities that provide us with the highest return on our investment in this space.

## Events

Events improve livability, enable active lifestyles, reflect local culture and heritage, connect people with nature, support local economies, and build collaboration and volunteerism.

The Macleay Valley Coast aims to host a thoughtful portfolio of destination events that sustainably drive overnight visitation and build awareness and love for the region.

# TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

## Visitor Information

To support tourism operators across the Macleay Valley Coast, we have developed a Visitor Servicing Strategy which aims to grow tourism by providing potential visitors with information on accommodation, entertainment and experiences in an easily accessible manner tailored for their desired travel experience.

Tourism information is diverse in nature and consumers require access to different information to support each stage of the travel lifecycle covering; travel need identification, pre-trip planning, booking, experience and post trip reflection. Technology has also seen increasing expectations for control and individual tailoring of information for the consumer to support the different types of traveller mindset e.g., business, holiday, family, luxury, adventure, nature, sporting etc.

In delivering Visitor Information, we employ a set of clear strategies to deliver a sustainable, comprehensive, and relevant service that will attract new high yield visitors, encourage visitors to stay longer, enhance the overall visitor experience and grow the visitor economy.

## Tourism Listings

Tourism listings enable businesses to gain access to larger audiences than they can reach on their own. We aim to educate and support our local industry in creating and keeping their listings up to date to give them the best shot at reaching new customers and sharing important information with return customers to make it easier for them to plan their visit to the region.

### ATDW

The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) is a trusted database and distribution platform created by the joint effort of Tourism Australia and all Australian State and Territory Government Tourism Organisations. Its main purpose is to provide small and medium-sized tourism businesses with a one-stop shop to advertise their business information and have it widely distributed and published – not to mention making it easier for travelers to find the right information while planning their itineraries. With a single listing, operators can keep everything up to date for their customers across relevant travel websites and smartphone apps including State, Territory and Regional Tourism websites.

Source: Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

|  | 2020 | 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| Number of Listings | 200 | 309 |

### TripAdvisor

With TripAdvisor, your business gets a global reach. There are about 490 million new visitors on the website each month. This boosts your potential revenue as more travelers from around the world can spot your company on the website.

## Strategic Guidance

### Horizon 2030:

Horizon 2030: Macleay Valley Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is a blueprint for enhancing the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the Macleay Valley economy. It has been prepared to support Kempsey Shire Council's vision to create a vibrant lifestyle destination where business, industry and investment can prosper in harmony with the Macleay Valley's natural environment.

### Macleay Valley Coast Destination Management Plan 2019 – 2029 (DMP):

The Macleay Valley Coast developed the DMP with the ten-year goal of establishing itself as a premier regional visitor destination through the development of iconic natural visitor attractions, driving growth in high-yield and environmentally sustainable tourism.

## Collaboration

### Local Industry

Collaborating closely with our local tourism operators is crucial as they are our biggest stakeholders. We will prioritize their input and offer opportunities for upskilling and education. To achieve this, we aim to regularly deliver affordable, valuable training on relevant topics.

### Destination Networks

We work collaboratively with contacts at Destination North Coast, Destination New South Wales and Tourism Australia to make sure we are up to date, receiving the latest market data and not missing any opportunities.

Attending conferences and workshops helps us sharpen our skills, stay on top of trends, grant and other opportunities and best practises in the tourism market and strengthen critical relationships.

### Community

"One of the core elements of tourism development is to encourage local communities' participation as it is central to the sustainability of the tourism industry" Ezra et. al 2017. It is important to make sure that our local communities are involved in tourism and educated on the importance of tourism to the MVC.

## Experience Pillars

To attract new visitors, encourage them to stay within the region, travel further, spend more and return, we need to offer outstanding and unique experiences based on visitor interests. We will leverage current experiences and attractions through targeted marketing campaigns and work with current operators to increase the quantity and quality of experiences.

They are as follows:
- Nature Tourism
- Journey & Touring Routes
- Arts, History & Heritage
- Food & Drink
- Weddings
- Caravanning & Camping
- Adventure Tourism
- Family Aquatic & Coastal

## Priority Sectors

| | |
|---|---|
| **Events** | Develop a strategic approach to events that leverages the MVC Brand, activates infrastructure, energises local communities, and drives visitation and yield. Target the high growth business events segment and establish (our community) as a recognised location for hosting top quality sporting events. |
| **Inclusive Tourism** | Grow inclusive tourism in the MVC. A key focus will be developing destinations, products and experiences that are accessible to all people, regardless of their limitations, disabilities or age. 20% of Australians have a disability and 90% of this market take holiday (2020, Inclusive Tourism). Accessible tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors and tourism operators in the MVC are not aware of the ease and their ability to tap into this market. There is growing evidence to show that businesses and councils that are prepared to provide better information and physical access as well as appropriate and respectful customer service will create more opportunities to tap into this market. |
| **Sustainable Tourism** | Establish the MVC as an industry leader in sustainably managed tourism. We want to make sure that the MVC does not bring in more visitors than we can handle and need to increase the offerings of sustainable tourism experiences in the region. |
| **Agritourism** | People are becoming more knowledgeable and conscious of where their produce comes from and supporting local businesses when visiting an area. The MVC needs to develop a strategic approach to agritourism, that leverages the local produce capacity of the MVC, assists in developing infrastructure, engages local producers and restaurateurs to develop this industry in the region. |
| **Aboriginal Tourism** | In the year ending September 2016, visitors to New South Wales who engaged in Aboriginal experiences spent a total of $1.141 billion during their time in the State. A total of 394,000 domestic and international visitors participated in an Aboriginal cultural tourism experience in New South Wales, an increase of 50 per cent on the previous year (DNSW, 2017). The MVC needs to develop a strategic approach to Indigenous tourism, that leverages the local produce capacity of the MVC, assists in developing infrastructure, engages local producers and restaurateurs to develop this industry in the region. |

## ACTION PLAN & TRACKING

# 2023-26 Action Plan

## Objectives

1. Increase the desirability of the MVC as a travel destination, inspiring more people to visit, stay longer and spend more – in a way that is sustainable for our region
2. Support MVC tourism businesses and stakeholders through education and engagement to develop and sustain a strong and mature tourism industry

## Marketing

| Website | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| End user stays on the site longer and ultimately converts to booking their holiday in the MVC | • Maintain an up to date and easy to navigate website that hosts engaging content<br>• Have clear calls to action to improve conversion rates for goals (examples: clicks to operators pages, itinerary views and PDF downloads) | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Engage and keep the audience on the site | • Host content specific to our target markets<br>• Execute direct and personalised marketing campaigns | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Improve Google ranking for our site and pages | • Optimise SEO across the site<br>• Research the best keywords to utilise for tourism in the MVC campaigns through Google Ads | Ongoing from 2023 | ▲ |
| Give the end user context as to where the things to do are | • Google Maps integration with ATDW data for map overlay and display across the site | 2026 | △ |

| Improve ROI tracking for marketing campaigns | • Create landing pages for marketing campaigns | 2026 | △ |
|---|---|---|---|

| **EDM** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Build EDM database of loyal and interested customers to ensure they visit and continue to come back | • Subscribe banner on website<br>• Send a welcome email when they subscribe & ask what information they would like to receive from us<br>• Link social media posts to subscribe<br>• Link in email signature<br>• Promotion of a free holiday to build database<br>• Banners at the bottom of engaging content with messaging such as: 'Like what you just read?' | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Improve audience engagement with EDMs | • Use A/B tests to compare the performance of different versions of the same emails | Ongoing from 2024 | ▲ |

| **Social Media** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Raise brand awareness on social | • Posting content regularly - once a day and posting content that is engaging to our audience through articles, blogs, itineraries and must do when in the | Ongoing | ▲ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | region<br>• Work with influencers on marketing campaigns<br>• Sponsored posts | | |
| Drive traffic to MVC website | • Targeted posts that push the audience to find out more by clicking through to an itinerary or article | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Deliver effective social customer service | • Respond quickly and accurately to visitor enquiries | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Increase brand mentions | • Host media famils<br>• Tag relevant accounts<br>• Work with influencers on marketing campaigns | Ongoing | ▲ |

| Brand Creative | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Maintain an up to date and relevant Destination Guide to inspire and help visitors make the most of their time in region | • Update the Destination Guide every two years<br>• Streamline warehousing and distribution of the Destination Guide | 2023 and 2025 | ▲ |
| A destination information Fact Sheet for distribution at Trade Shows | • A 2-page document featuring MVC experience highlights | 2025 | △ |
| Develop handouts that are easy to grab from Visitor Information Outlets | • 1-, 3- and 7-day itineraries that show what you can do across the region | 2024 | ▲ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | • Highlight our key experience pillars | | |
| Build a library of updated imagery and footage that appeals to our target market by capturing the raw beauty and uniqueness of the region - Coast, National Parks & Hinterland and showcase our tourism products & experiences | • Update our content for use across our website, social media, marketing collateral, media releases, EDMs and to share with local industry<br>• Leverage industry partners such as DNSW to fund the development of content for the region | 2024 | ▲ |

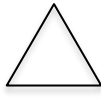| Communications | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Develop and distribute a Media Kit for the region | • Create a destination media kit for distribution via a USB that details the region and provides assets in a simple, easy-to-utilise format to media | 2026 | △ |
| Attend industry Trade Shows and conferences to make sure key messaging re: the MVC is delivered to the right audiences at the right time | • Work with Industry partners at DNC, DNSW and TA to identify and take advantage of opportunities to attend relevant trade shows | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Integrate local tourism operators into partnership campaigns | • Offer options for local operators to get involved in paid and earned media campaigns | 2026 | △ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Showcase our experience pillars to specific tourism journalists | • Send out quarterly product and other updates to industry i.e., Destination North Coast and Destination NSW<br>• Develop a database of tourism journalist contacts<br>• Distribute our own media releases to tourism journalist Database | 2026 | ▲ |
| Get media into the region | • Work with DNSW to host media famils | 2026 | △ |
| Capture and track media mentions | • Subscribe to a media monitoring platform | 2026 | △ |

| Advertising | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Track and improve on ROI from advertising campaigns | • Make sure that any marketing campaigns have a pay per click component with a valuable ROI | 2023 | ▲ |
| Build awareness with a travel focused audience | • Continue to advertise in tourism specific outlets | 2023 | ▲ |
| Build awareness among a broader more mainstream audience | • Update existing Macleay Valley Coast Billboards<br>• Consider other forms of out of home advertising with strong returns | 2026 | ▲ |

| Assist tourism operators in promoting their business to visitors while they are in region | • Increase signage around the Shire<br>• Execute paid social campaigns geo-targeted locally promoting specific experiences or businesses | 2024 | ▲ |

## Tourism Development

| Industry Development | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Encourage new visitor accommodation in the area or the revitalisation of existing accommodation | • Work with private investors and developers on business cases<br>• Share accommodation reinvestment prospectus with local operators | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Build on knowledge of Short-Term Rental Accommodation in region | • Subscribe to or obtain any information available from Airbnb and/or Stayz, etc. | 2026 | △ |
| Improve on visitor experience - especially during peak seasons | • Encourage current accommodation, restaurant and experience providers to refresh, have adequate and trained staff as well as extended opening hours - particularly during peak holiday periods<br>• Contribute feedback into road works and facilities plans that are in tourism hot spots<br>• Contribute to NSW National | Ongoing | ▲ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Parks Plans of Management | | |
| Assist with hospitality staff shortage | • Promote the MVC as a great place to live and work and the tourism industry as a vocation of choice<br>• Create local partnerships that leverage employment programs such as Indigenous traineeships and support flexible models of employment | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Advocate within Council on behalf of Tourism Operators | • Work collaboratively across council to enhance the way tourism operators work with different departments | Ongoing | ▲ |

| Collaboration | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Execute 'Game Changing Projects' identified in Horizon 2030 | • Apply for grants to execute projects<br>• Develop relevant business cases as needed<br>• Execute projects when feasible | 2026 (Five Headlands Coastal Experience) and ongoing | ▲ |
| Execute Next Tier Tourism initiatives identified in Horizon 2030 | | Ongoing | ▲ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Build industry engagement | • Collaborate with industry to develop the region's 'Place DNA' to gain buy in <br>• Regularly check in with local industry to get updates on the health of their business and any challenges they face or wins they have had <br>• Build out the tourism toolkit and make it easily accessible to operators <br>• Continue to meet in person with operators <br>• Continue to send out operator newsletters | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Provide education opportunities to Industry | • Offer tourism workshops that are in-line with DNSW's FIRST workshop program <br>• Encourage operator attendance at all workshops on offer via industry focused EDM | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Build community support through promoting sustainable tourism to the region | • Provide information and encouragement to visitors on how to tread lightly and care for country | 2023 | ▲ |
| Encourage the community to be tourists in their own region, know what there is to do and be advocates for the region | • Develop a Destination Guide they are proud to share <br>• Develop a map that is an accurate and useful tool <br>• Make these tools accessible to residents | Ongoing | ▲ |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Raise awareness around the importance of tourism to the economy | • Pitch local media<br>• Utilise Council's owned communications channels | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Maximise the MVC's marketing investment in domestic markets | • Leverage the investment of TA, DNSW and DNC organisation partner spend | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Increase MVC product inclusion and distribution in key state and regional programs and channels that support priority market objectives | • Send out quarterly product and other updates to industry i.e., Destination North Coast and Destination NSW (also inclused under Communications) | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Network and learn from industry peers and leaders | • Attend key industry conferences | Ongoing | ▲ |

| Visitor Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **What** | **How** | **When** | **Status** |
| Offer a more extensive range of information regarding experiences in the region to a more targeted audience | • Develop a comprehensive digital service driven by destination management and marketing strategy | Ongoing | ▲ |
| Improve and update model of operation | • Move the current visitor information centres to a more appealing, digitally focused and integrated service led by Council | 2024 | ▲ |

| Enable customer focused tourism ambassadors to become mobile and agile | • Introduce a Training & Volunteer Recruitment Program | 2024 | △ |
| Build a more proactive local tourism industry network | • Exchange information and branding with Council, share marketing and promotion, and communicate directly with visitors | Ongoing | ▲ |

# KPIs

Progress towards the execution of this strategy and action plan will be measured as follows:

| What | Target |
| --- | --- |
| **OVERALL** ||
| **Overall** | Increase visitor spend at 2% per annum |
| | Achieve a 4% growth in visitors year on year |
| | Increase to hold 8% of the North Coast visitor share |
| | Increase in overall visitor and community sentiment through surveys in 2024 & 2024 |
| | Engage with 70% of tourism operators via meet ups, workshops or one on one meetings |
| **MARKETING** ||
| **Digital** ||
| **Website** | Increase user visits to MVC website by 20% |
| | Increase average time on site to 2.5 minutes |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Increase social media referrals to MVC website by 10% |
| | Decrease bounce rate for the MVC website homepage to below 40% |
| | Increase referrals to operator booking links by 10% |
| **Social Media** | Increase engagement and followers on Facebook and Instagram by 30% |
| | Deliver (3) social media competitions to increase engagement/following and drive sign-up to e-newsletters |
| | Engage in (3) distinct campaigns with social media influencers |
| **Brand Creative** | |
| **Brand Creative** | Double the size of image/video library and cover each of the experience pillars with supporting content |
| | Develop a new 'all of region' video that is more inclusive and highlights each of our key experience pillars |
| **Communications** | |
| **Public Relations** | Develop a media kit |
| | Build a contact list of >20 media contacts for Media release/kit distribution and familarisation tour invitations |
| **EDM** | Increase Visitor and Industry EDM databases by 20% |
| | Sit within the industry averages for visitor facing EDM:<br>• Open rate - 15%<br>• Click rate - 1.6%<br>• Unsubscribe rate - 0.10% |
| **Advertising** | |
| **Paid Advertising** | Deliver (4) paid advertising campaigns per year with a focus on our key experience pillars |

| | Be involved in all free of cost TA, DNSW & NC campaigns that are applicable to us | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Set up Google Ads with keywords for MVC | |
| **Events** | | |
| **Events** | Secure (2) sporting, business or arts and cultural events for the region each calendar year | |
| | Improve community awareness and understanding around the value events bring to the local economy | |
| | Develop (1) new, unique event concept for the region together with an event organiser external to Council | |
| **TOURISM DEVELOPMENT** | | |
| **Visitor Information** | | |
| **Visitor Information** | Improve quality and increase total number of (from 300 to 400) ATDW listings | |
| | Distribute 15,000 Destination Guides per financial year | |
| **Strategic Alignment** | | |
| **Horizon 2030** | Complete (1) Game Changing Project | |
| **Macleay Valley Coast DMP** | Next Tier Tourism Initiatives in place and on track | |
| **Collaboration** | | |
| **Industry** | Attend (2) tourism specific trade shows and/or conferences a year | |
| | Maintain at least (2) contacts at DNSW and DNC | |
| **Local Operators** | Host (4) quarterly get togethers for local Tourism Operators | |

| | Distribute monthly industry support newsletters | |
|---|---|---|
| **Community** | Work with KSC Comms to promote the value of tourism to the region | |
| **All Local** | Distribute bi-annual surveys to the following audiences to collect feedback:<br>• Residents<br>• Tourism Operators<br>• Visitors | |
| **Experience Pillars** | | |
| **Experience Pillars** | Execute (30) marketing campaigns featuring each of our experience pillars | |
| | Have dedicated sector market databases and assets to complement | |
| **Priority Sectors** | | |
| **Priority Sectors** | Host a workshop to build capabilities within each of the (5) priority sectors | |

# RESOURCES

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- Motherly, Brown 2023, https://www.mother.ly/travel/gramping-travel-trend/
- Ezra, Muganda, Sirima, 2017, *The Role of Local Communities in Tourism Development: Grassroots Perspectives from Tanzania*
- Lyfe Marketing, Sherman 2020 - https://www.lyfemarketing.com/blog/what-is-digital-advertising/
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- Profile ID, 2019, http://economy.id.com.au/kempsey/tourism-value
- Tourism Research Australia, 2018 *International & National Visitor Surveys for the Kempsey Shire Council*
- Value of Tourism to the North Coast, https://dncnsw.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/North-Coast-NSW-DN-report-YE-Dec-2022.pdf
- Tourism Australia, Resources for Industry: ATDW guide - Tourism Australia
- Regiondo, The Ultimate Guide to TripAdvisor for Business • Regiondo