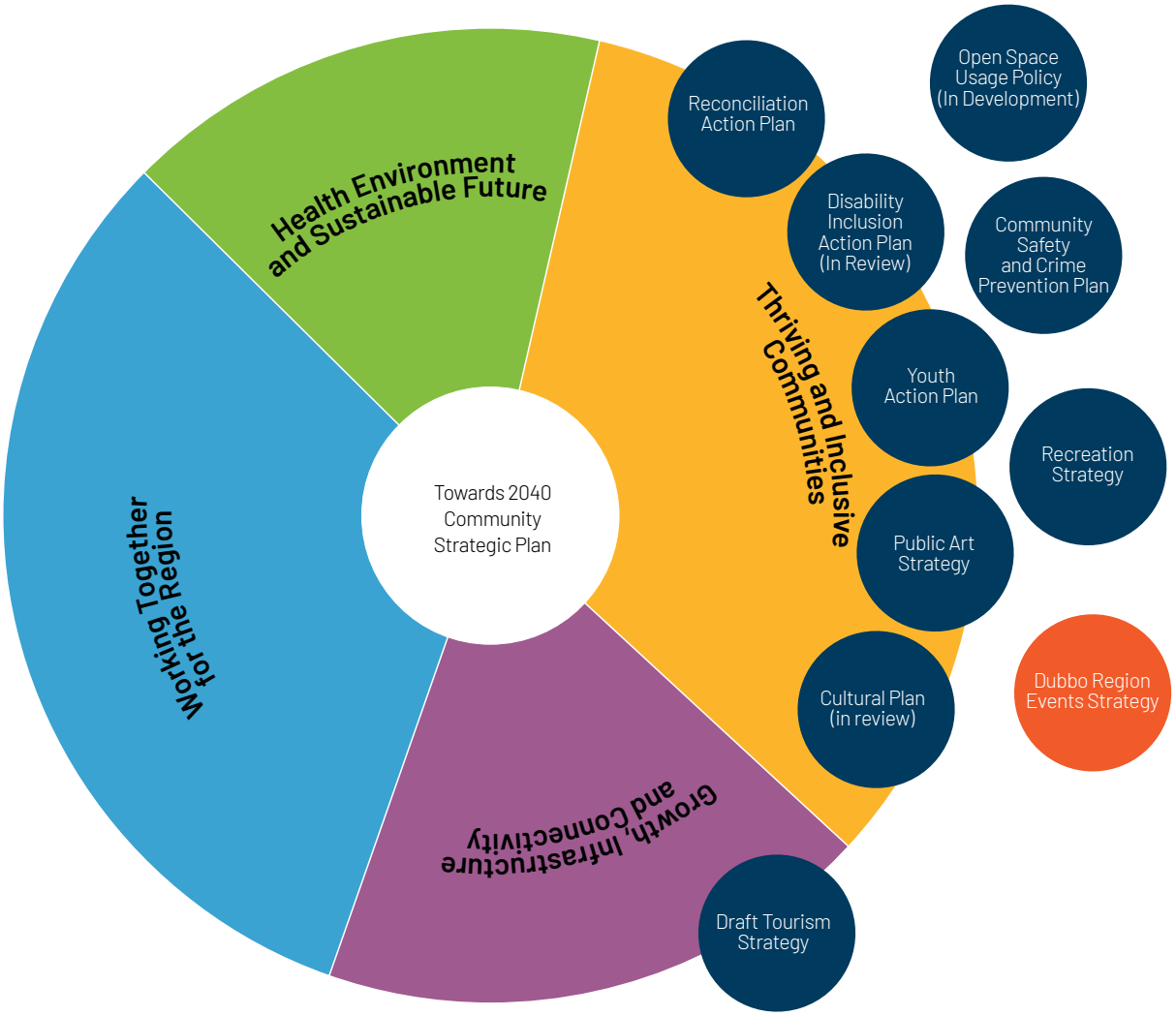
DUBBO REGIONAL COUNCIL

2025 - 2030 DUBBO REGION EVENTS STRATEGY

How the Dubbo Region Events Strategy connects with our other strategic plans

The 2025-2030 Dubbo Region Events Strategy will be embedded in our integrated planning and reporting framework to ensure what is committed is delivered through measured planning and resource allocations.

At the centre of the framework is the Towards 2040 Community Strategic Plan (CSP). The Dubbo Region Events Strategy is a key document providing strategic direction and sits alongside a range of other plans, strategies and polices as shown in the diagram below.



Strategic Context

- CSP Strategic Pillar 2: Thriving and Inclusive Communities
- 2.3: Our community enjoys diverse sports, recreation, and social activities
- 2.3.3: Increase opportunities for entertainment, recreation, and cultural activities for all ages.
- 2025/2026 Operational Plan action 2.3.3.1: Finalise the Dubbo Region Events Strategy

External Documents

- Event Research Paper 2021 (Mayvin Global Pty Ltd, MI Associates Pty Ltd)
- Central Orana Regional Economic Development Strategy
- ODIN360 draft report
- Developing a Council Community Events Policy – A toolkit for NSW Councils (NSW Premier & Cabinet)

The design of the strategy has a whole-of-community approach, to be used by everyone in the region, contributing to a thriving vibrant inclusive community.

For more information on Council's plans visit:
dubbo.nsw.gov.au/About-Council
(A-Z Plans and Strategies)

or scan the QR code

Disclaimer statement

The information is current at the time of completing this strategy and some information may change during the lifetime of the 2025-2030 Dubbo Region Events Strategy. Community members are advised to contact relevant service providers, organisers, authorities, and Dubbo Regional Council Customer Experience Team if they have any questions.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders past and present of the Wiradjuri Nation and thank them for their care of the land, water and sky and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Executive summary

The Dubbo Region Events Strategy is a blueprint designed to guide the creation of new events, nurture the growth and sustainability of existing events, and ultimately cultivate a vibrant, diverse, and culturally rich events calendar. By fostering a thriving events landscape, this strategy not only serves to enhance the social and cultural fabric of the community but also drives economic growth, tourism, and regional identity.

Beyond shaping the future of events in the Dubbo Region, this strategy establishes clear pathways for strengthening connections between events and the broader community. It also seeks to attract and secure new events that will deliver widespread benefits across the entire Local Government Area (LGA), supporting the dispersal of economic, cultural, and social benefits.

The development of this strategy has been informed by face-to-face consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, including event organisers, creative practitioners, event suppliers, hospitality venues, performers, tourism operators, and sporting organisations. Additionally, feedback from the wider community was actively sought and gathered through an online survey, providing valuable insights into community needs, preferences, and aspirations for the local events landscape.

A thorough analysis of the current events environment was undertaken as part of the strategic planning process, revealing critical gaps and untapped opportunities. This data-driven approach ensures that the strategy is not only responsive to existing challenges but also forward-thinking in its efforts to build on meaningful event activity. Further shaping this document is an extensive review of best-practice models, benchmarking against leading event strategies, and detailed online research to identify innovative and effective approaches to event development and management.

At its core, the Dubbo Region Events Strategy provides a structured and strategic framework for Council to undertake its role as a Provider, Leader, Collaborator, and Advocate for events. Through this approach, Council aims to develop a well-balanced and sustainable events portfolio that maximises social, cultural, and economic benefits, positioning the Dubbo Region as a premier destination for events.

Events provide compelling reasons for communities to come together and celebrate. They enrich communities, drive economic outcomes and build on our sense of place and destination appeal.

Our vision

Our community is connected and enriched through access to a diverse, culturally-rich and appealing range of events.

We want to grow our local events program, and by doing so fuel our community's pride, liveability, reputation and economy.

Our commitment

- Foster a transparent, accessible and responsive event support framework providing the time, tools and pathways to help events be safe, successful and sustainable.
- Support and secure event activity that delivers social, cultural and economic benefits to our community.
- Support the dispersal of event activity outside the city of Dubbo and into the town of Wellington and our villages.

The Dubbo Region profile

The Dubbo Region is home to a growing and diverse population. Our relaxed lifestyle coupled with opportunities for work/ life balance meld to create ideal opportunities for audience growth at home-grown fairs, festivals, celebrations and live performances.

Our central location, ease of access, breadth of accommodation, and our unique and memorable visitor experiences combine to create an attractive proposition as an ideal location for events.

Population

Over 55,000
Population Dubbo Region

16.6%
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Youth

English 82%
Nepali 1.4%
Punjabi 0.6%
Top languages spoken

32.8%
People younger than 25 years

18.5%
Residents born overseas

19.5%
Residents living with disability

17.7%
Residents speak a language other than English at home

36 Years
Median age of residents

41.8%
Completed year 12 or equivalent

27.8%
Completed year 10 or equivalent

7.1%
Completed year 9 or equivalent

0.29%
People living in marginal housing

Dubbo Regional LGA

Service area of 7,534.5 km^2 including one city, town and villages.

Gender Ratio

Female
50.6%

Male
49.4%

Gender ratio

Employment

Most residents are employed and work in health care, social assistance, construction, retail, education, public administration, or safety.

Employment Status

Full-time	62%	Away from work	6%
Part-time	28%	Unemployed	≤ 4%

Economic Impact Snapshot

200,000 people
Catchment population

8 Major events
$18.7M economic benefit

Beds > 5,000
Commercial properties

Daily flights
in and out of Sydney

$277
Visitor spend per person per night*

29 Local-led
Annual events
(500+ attendees)

National and state level facilities

*Tourism Research Australia based on two years average spending YE June (2023-2024)

How we developed this strategy

Dubbo Regional Council developed this plan through an analysis of the current events landscape, online research and community consultation.

A deep dive into the 2024 events program helped to uncover gaps and opportunities, whilst desktop research informed Council of opportunities and challenges faced by similarly sized regional centres. Industry workshops and one-on-one meetings with key external and internal stakeholders unveiled the needs and aspirations of our community.

01 Council Endorsed

May 2024

Council resolved that an events strategy and associated action plan would be developed.

02 Targeted Consultation and Community Engagement

Oct – Dec 2024

Workshops were held with event organisers, suppliers to the events industry, local creatives, members of hospitality industry, tourism operators, sporting groups, members of the Dubbo Youth Council and staff.

A survey was distributed via Council's YourSay page.

03 Industry Research and Benchmarking

Oct – Dec 2024

A review of strategies, plans and supporting documentation sourced from like councils from across the Eastern Seaboard.

Analysis of the local events landscape

Oct – Dec 2024

An analysis of the current, local events landscape was undertaken.

04 Plan Development

Dec 2024 – April 2025

Results of consultation with the community, findings from research, and outcomes of the analysis of the local events landscape were collated to create the draft Dubbo Region Events Strategy.

05 Council Endorsement

July 2025

A report will go to Council including the draft Dubbo Region Events Strategy seeking endorsement for the intent of public exhibition.

06 Public Exhibition

28 days

Once endorsed by Council, the draft Dubbo Region Events Strategy will be placed on exhibition for the community to provide feedback for a period of no less than 28 days.

07 Feedback Processing, Council Decision and Plan Adoption

A report providing feedback received during the public exhibition period will be submitted to Council for consideration prior to Council adopting the strategy.

Once adopted, the strategy and 5-year action plan will be placed on Council's website for reference by the community.

An annual report on the progress of the strategy's action plan will go to Council in July 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029 and 2030.

What our community told us

In 2024, we undertook a comprehensive engagement process to ensure the Dubbo Region Events Strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of those who bring our events to life.

As part of this process, we:

- Hosted 16 workshops with key stakeholders, providing a collaborative space to share ideas, challenges, and opportunities.
- Conducted one-on-one meetings with event organisers, creatives, suppliers, hospitality venues, performers, tourism operators, and sporting organisations to gain deeper insights into their experiences and needs.
- Collected valuable feedback from industry professionals and the broader community, helping to shape a strategic approach to event development, support, and innovation.

"I don't know what you do and how you can support my event."

"It's hard to find volunteers."

"Council needs to provide more support."

"We need help to promote our event."

"There are too many forms to fill out."

"Council's hire charges are too expensive."

"We want more live music events (Youth Council)."

"Council and the community lack the understanding and appreciation of the arts and culture."

"We don't know what's on."

"I find out about the event after it's been held."

"Lack of free events for families and access to public transport."

"The event calendar on dubboregion.com.au is difficult to navigate."

"Council needs to provide in-kind support."

"Council favours sporting events."

"Council needs to invest in local and externally organised cultural events."

Via our survey, in order of preference, our community told us they value experiences that ...

1. Celebrate different cultures
2. Include live performances
3. Offer entertainment for my family
4. Allow me to enjoy my favourite sport
5. Are cost free
6. Allow me to taste regional produce or provide a dining experience
7. Allow me to indulge in a special interest
8. Provide insights into our local history
9. Spark my creativity

Events generate enormous economic and social value. They bring our community together, support our arts and small business and contribute significantly to our community's well-being and our destination appeal.

Guiding principles

When developing strategic documents, three guiding principles ensure that Council remains connected to and representative of community needs and voices. The principles detailed below steer the Dubbo Region Events Strategy:

1

Integrated and Coordinated Proactive Approach

Federal, State and Local Government acts, regulations, policies and licensing as well as Council-led management policies.

2

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Continuous review and assessment of the current events landscape and consultation with the community will help inform future actions under the strategy.

3

Monitoring and Evaluation

The strategy sets out a five-year framework supported by an action plan that will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and adapt to community needs, ensuring that focus areas and priority actions are planned for and resourced.

Cultural events are gatherings that showcase aspects such as religion, cuisine, music, art, and other elements unique to a particular group or commonly shared.
These events provide an opportunity for people to come together, socialise, connect, create, share meals, and find inspiration.

What is an event?

It is a gathering open to members of the public to attend. It can be a small gathering or an event of significant scope and scale. It can be described as a festival, fair, show, market or sporting event. It can be staged indoors or outdoors, on privately owned land or on public land. This strategy does not cover private events, conferences, regular gatherings or locally organised sporting events.

Council context

Council's role is to maximise outcomes from events held in the Dubbo Region. Council's Events Unit takes carriage of event support, compliance and capacity building.

Our core roles are:

Event support: single point of contact for events, strategic advice, financial assistance, best practice event management, guidance and facilitation of capacity building and skill development. Council also supports the promotion of events via a number of online, digital, broadcast and out-of-home touchpoints.

Event permits: facilitation of compliance and regulatory requirements for public events held on public land.

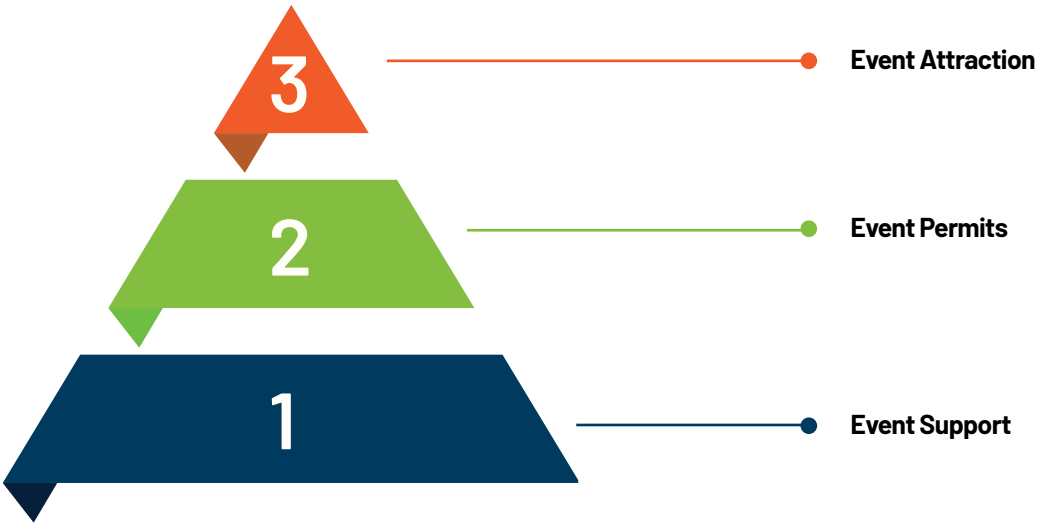
Event attraction: securing externally organised events that deliver economic, cultural and social benefits.

The Events Unit provides support to Council ceremonies and civic events, such as the Australia Day events as well as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day.

The Events Unit is not structured to curate or deliver community events.

Core roles of the Events Unit

The following pyramid graph indicates and provides a representation of where staff spend their time in relation to the key roles of the Events Unit.



Council's role is to champion community desires, advocate for event organisers and seek out opportunities to strengthen event activity and propel cultural, social and economic outcomes that can be delivered through building event capacity and capability.

Regional context

The Dubbo Regional Local Government Area (Dubbo Region) is situated 350 km north-west of Sydney and comprises of a major regional city, a township and 16 villages.

The Dubbo Region has a population of 56,600 (2023 REMPLAN) and is anticipated to grow by almost 10,000 people by 2041. Serving as a core regional city for neighbouring towns, the city of Dubbo services a population of 200,000 and a land area one-third the size of NSW.

Key industries across the region include construction, health care and social assistance and accommodation and food services. With both public and private investment, the Dubbo Region continues to experience sustainable long-term growth. Significant growth is attributed to projects including NSW's first Renewable Energy Zone (Central West Orana), the Dubbo Project (polymetallic resource of rare earth materials), New Dubbo Bridge, Old Dubbo Gaol Heritage Plaza, Taronga Western Plains Zoo Serengeti Plains Visitor Experience and Eco-Accommodation, Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri and the Mindyarra Maintenance Centre. The projects are expected to provide over 8,000 jobs in the region in the next five years with increased population to support the infrastructure projects.

With the events and tourism sectors closely intertwined, they play a vital role in supporting the growth of the region. Major events, such as festivals and sporting competitions, attract visitors from outside the area, boosting demand for local services including accommodation, dining, transportation and retail.

This influx of visitors and new residents not only generates direct economic benefits but also enhances the region's visibility and reputation as a vibrant destination. In turn, strong tourism infrastructure, supports the success of events by offering appealing amenities and experiences. Together these create a cycle of economic stimulation, job creation and community engagement that contributes to the sustainable development of our growing region.

Tourism context

Tourism is one of the key pillars in the Dubbo Region's economy, with visitors adding approximately $155 million annually through spending on accommodation, dining, attractions and retail. The influx of tourism supports regional businesses and sustains employment across various sections.

Led by Taronga Western Plains Zoo, which welcomes around 300,000 visitors annually, the Dubbo Region offers a solid mix of visitor experiences including the Old Dubbo Gaol, Wellington Caves and the Royal Flying Doctor Service Visitor Experience. Dubbo Regional Council has a key marketing focus on attracting families to the region, with family focused events and activities.

Economic contribution from the tourism sector into the Dubbo Region

By integrating tourism and events strategies, Dubbo Region leverages its attractions and a vibrant events calendar to draw visitors, thereby driving economic development and reinforcing its position as a leading destination in Central NSW.

Dubbo Regional Council provides funding for events that focus on boosting the local economy and bringing people from outside the area to the Dubbo Region.

Council's support for events, ranging from major festivals to cultural gatherings, directly feeds into the Region's tourism success by increasing visitor numbers and spend, while showcasing Dubbo as a dynamic and welcoming destination.

In 2024, Council's event attraction program secured eight major sporting events, generating an economic impact of $18.7 million. Six of these events involved junior competitors who travelled with their families, increasing the likelihood of visitors arriving early or extending their stay to visit local family-focussed attractions..

Visitors to the Dubbo Region	
	Two years average Year Ending June (2023-2024)*
Domestic - Day Trip	764,924
Domestic - Overnight	712,114
International	12,600
Total Visitors - Dubbo Region	1,489,637

Average Domestic and International Stay and Spend	
Two years average Spending Year Ending June (2023-2024)*	**Current Average**
Domestic - Day Trip Spend (no nights)	$185
Domestic - Average Stay (nights)	2.2 nights
Domestic - Average Spend per Night	$277
Domestic - Average Spend per Trip	$614
International - Average Spend per Night	$31
International - Average Spend per Trip	$1,264

*Source Tourism Research Australia

Events and festivals are intrinsically linked with the visitor economy. This strategy will align the support and attraction of events with Council's destination marketing activity.

Why events are important

Events are powerful drivers of social cohesion, cultural expression, economic growth and community pride and well-being.

Factors such as an events program, target market and scope and scale influence outcomes and largely determine what benefits can be delivered to the community.

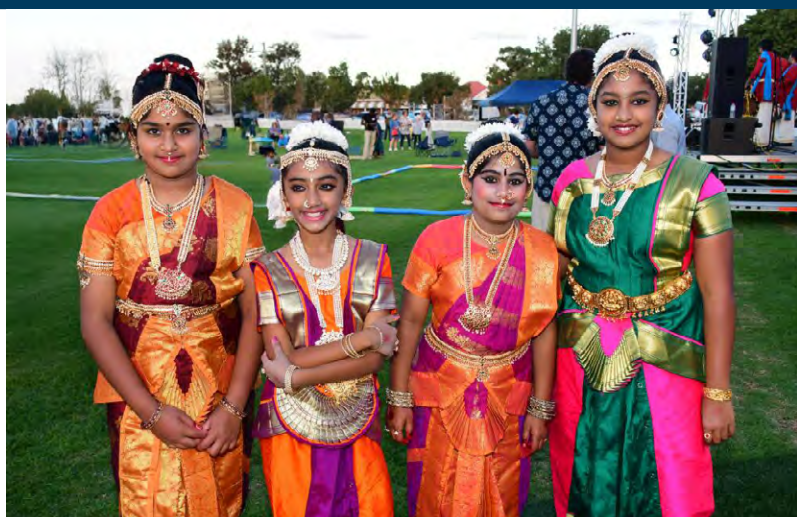
Events deliver **cultural** outcomes

Attributes

- Showcase our history and heritage
- Support the collaboration between local creatives
- Celebrate traditions and belief systems
- Boost creativity and innovation
- They are family focused

Outcomes

- Engage our creatives and live performance industry
- Support small business
- Enhance connectivity and community pride
- Provide a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and history



Events deliver **social** outcomes

Attributes

- Appeal to groups of locals and visitors
- Inclusive with broad community appeal
- Have an engaging program that promotes escapism

Outcomes

- Promote a sense of belonging and wellbeing
- Enhance the sense of place and liveability
- Support small to medium businesses

Events deliver **economic** outcomes

Attributes

- Attract mass participation or mass gatherings
- Are held over multiple days
- Are held outside school holiday and long weekend periods
- Has a marketing reach outside the LGA
- Engage a significant number of local suppliers, vendors and stallholders
- Can provide evidence-based visitor numbers

Outcomes

- Direct and indirect economic impacts
- Provide destination marketing opportunities
- Elevate the Dubbo Region's reputation as an events destination
- Support job creation and retention
- Stimulate asset or infrastructure development/ renewal
- Draw the attention of local and regional media
- Incentivise return visitation as a tourist

Our events landscape 2024

The Dubbo Region boasts a stable of home-grown community events and an expanding portfolio of externally organised major sporting events. Understanding our region's profile and identity is integral to the growth and prosperity of our annual events calendar.

The Dubbo Region boasts an evolving events landscape that reflects diverse interests, different cultures, and the deep-seeded passion of our event organisers. With a mix of annual festivals, cultural celebrations and recreation events our event calendar plays a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion, driving tourism, and stimulating the local economy.

Events in our region are spread throughout the year, creating opportunities for residents and visitors to engage in unique and memorable experiences. However, some months—particularly January, February, and November—remain underutilised, presenting potential gaps for new event development. Identifying and addressing these gaps will ensure a well-balanced event calendar that maximises participation and benefits for the entire community.

The annual NAIDOC celebrations honour and showcase Indigenous Australian culture, while multicultural events provide platforms for diverse groups to share their traditions, cuisine, and artistry. Strengthening the synergy between Indigenous and multicultural events through event curation, production and timing, will further enrich our cultural programming and create deeper connections between communities.

Large-scale sporting events are a significant pillar of our event landscape, with competitions and tournaments drawing participants and spectators from across the state and beyond. From grassroots sports to elite-level competitions, these events not only foster community spirit but also position our region as a hub for high-calibre sporting activity. Continued investment in the attraction of these events during low visitation periods will enhance Dubbo's reputation as a go-to destination for major sporting events ultimately fuelling our economy and supporting long-term economic growth.

Creative empowerment builds meaningful and successful events.

Event classifications

In the Dubbo Region, events can be segmented into four classes based on the individual event's programming, audience and outcomes.

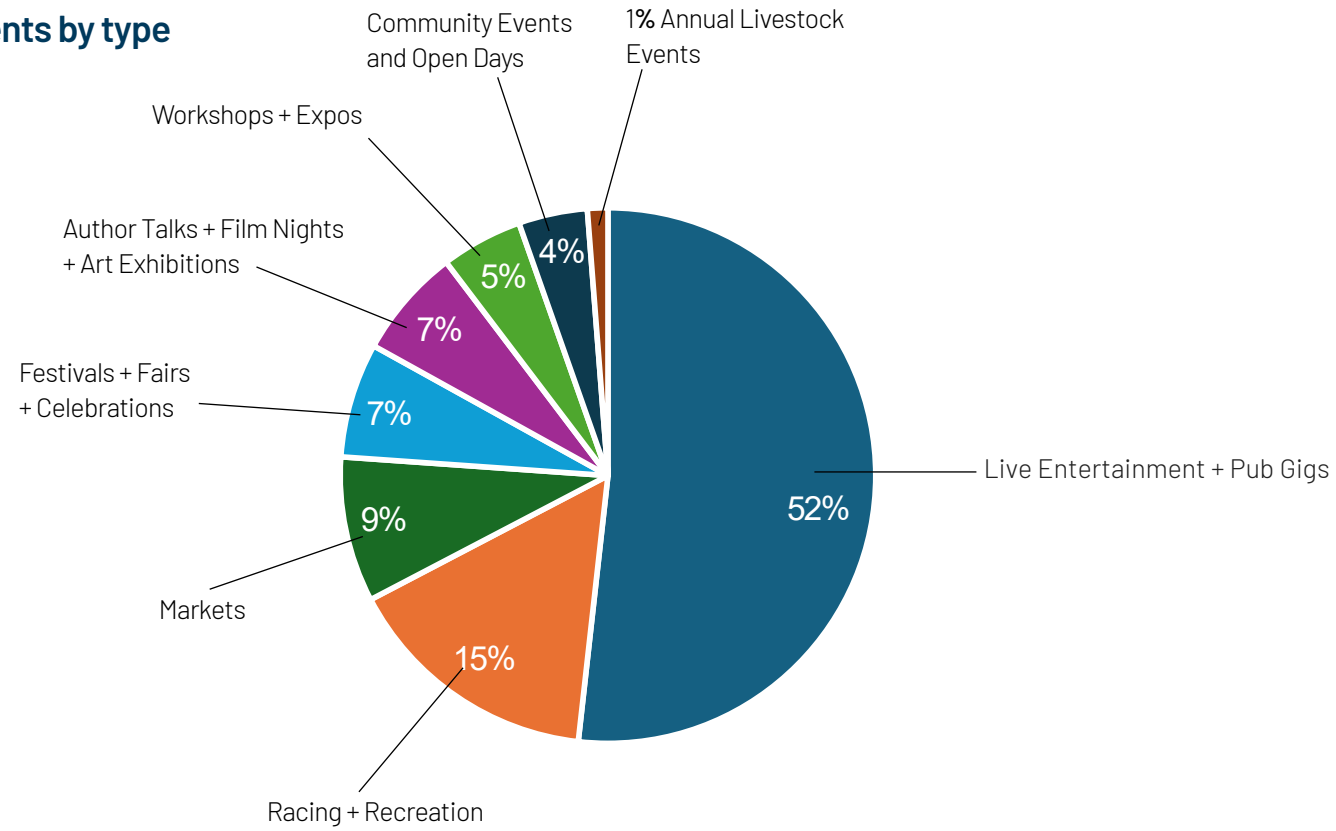
Community Events	Regional Events : 1,000 people or more	Major events : >20% attendance from outside LGA	Large Scale Events : >50% attendance from outside LGA
Events with a focus on community engagement and well-being. These events may promote our community's history and culture.	Events that celebrate our region, attract large numbers of locals and via programming create distinctive experiences with broad appeal.	Locally organised events that have broad community appeal, attract visitors and have the potential to showcase our Region.	Events arranged by external event organisers that include mass participation or attract mass gatherings.
Outcomes	**Outcomes**	**Outcomes**	**Outcomes**
Community well-being and connectivity, sharing of traditions and experiences, and support for creatives and performing artists.	Strong social and cultural benefits, adds diversity to the events calendar, engages suppliers and small business, and facilitates skill and volunteer development.	Delivers strong economic, social and cultural benefits, builds the region's reputation as a destination for events, has strong regional brand connections generating strong public relations and marketing opportunities.	Delivers strong economic, social and cultural benefits, builds the region's reputation as a destination for events, generates leads and provides significant media attraction and marketing opportunities.
Examples	**Examples**	**Examples**	**Examples**
• Fong Lees Lane • NAIDOC Celebrations • Michael Egan Book Fair	• Beers to the Bush • Cross Cultural Carnival • Man from Ironbark Festival	• Dubbo Stampede • Dubbo MotorFest	• NSW Rugby Junior State Championships • Little Athletics Region 3 Championships.

Types of events

In 2024, 649 event listings were processed by Council and promoted via a range of channels. (Refer page 22).

Live Entertainment and Pub Gigs are at the forefront of event activity with 52% of the annual events calendar offering live music and performances across a range of venues. Festivals, Fairs and Celebrations represented 7% of activity across the LGA presenting opportunities to build on this type of event activity.

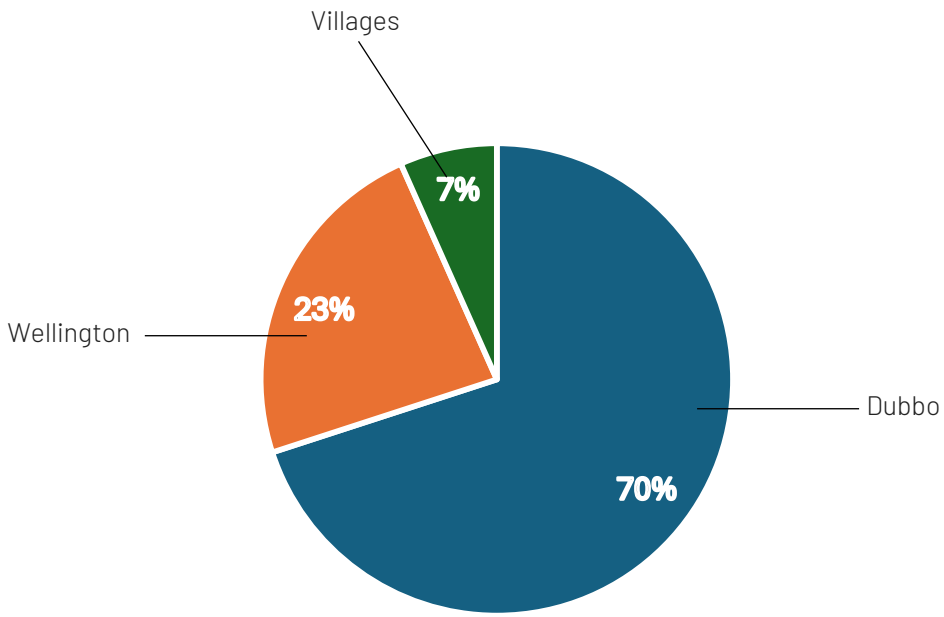
Events by type



Locations

Event and market activity takes place across the LGA. Not surprisingly, and due to its population base, access to accommodation and venues, the majority of event activity is staged in Dubbo.

Events and markets in our LGA



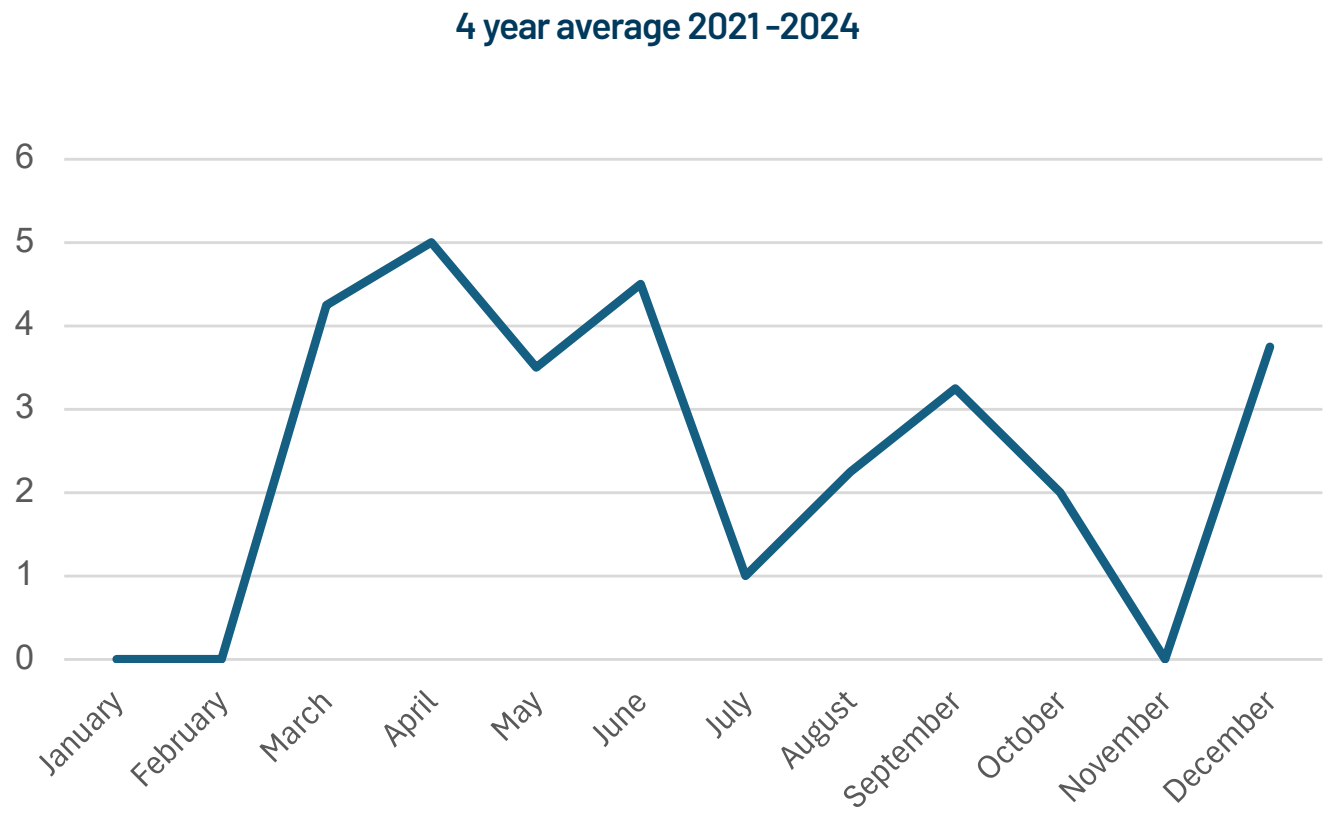
Annual community-led events

An analysis of annual event activity spanning four years, 2021-2024 shows that locally organised events recovered well following he pandemic in 2020/2021.

In 2024, the Dubbo Region hosted 29 annual events organised by the community, attracting 500 people or more.

As demonstrated by the graph below, no local events (audience >500) are held in January and February likely due to seasonal heat conditions. In March event activity is strong peaking in April with our region enjoying moderate temperatures during these months. In July, there is a trough in event activity with only the local NAIDOC celebrations held during this time. Event activity rises again in Autumn and peaking in December due to Christmas/New Year event activity.

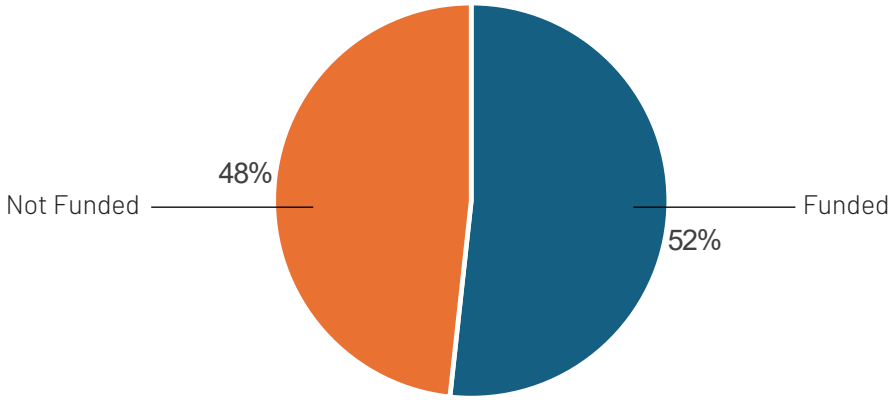
The months of January, February, July and November present opportunities to introduce new, home-grown events that would enrich the region's event calendar and ensure year-round activity.



*excludes racing and monthly-staged events

In 2024 Council provided funding assistance to 15 locally organised, annual events delivering a range of social, cultural and economic benefits.

Council fund 52% of local annual events



Events that were supported financially by Council in 2024.

✓ Great Australian Stone Festival	✓ ORISCON Harmony Week Gala Nite	✓ Dubbo MotorFest
✓ Holi Mela Festival of Colours	✓ Stock Route Country Music Festival	✓ NAIDOC Celebrations Dubbo and Wellington
✓ Wellington Rotary Vintage Fair and Swap Meet	✓ Wellington Show	✓ Under Western Skies Festival
✓ Burrendong Fishing Classic	✓ Dubbo Eisteddfod	✓ Cross Cultural Carnivale
✓ Man from Ironbark Festival	✓ Dubbo Winter Whiskey Festival	✓ Carols by Candlelight Dubbo and Geurie

The event ecosystem

The Event Ecosystem is an interconnected network of stakeholders that collectively connect, or benefit from, event activity. Events generate spend throughout multiple industry and business sectors across the Dubbo Region. Events boost tourism, support creatives, create jobs and stimulate direct and in-direct spend.

What we do: We support events

Council plays a vital role in supporting event organisers, providing guidance and resources to assist the delivery of events that are well-planned, safe, sustainable and align to Council's strategic objectives. The delivery and ownership of the event remains with the organiser. Council does not deliver events. Council is committed to strengthening the capacity of event organisers and fostering a thriving, diverse events calendar.

Support extends across various areas, including strategic advice, assistance to plan events based on best-practice event management, advice on how to market and promote an event through to post event analysis. By empowering event organisers with the tools and knowledge needed to deliver high-quality events, Council helps create a dynamic events landscape that benefits the local economy, tourism, and community well-being.

How we promote events

Council provides a range of free promotional opportunities across multiple channels. At the centre of this effort is the Dubbo Region Events Calendar, which serves as a key resource for residents, tourists, media and organisers to discover what's happening across the region.

In addition to a calendar listing, eligible events may also benefit from broader exposure through various promotional channels, including the weekly "What's On" eBlast, the digital sign at Elston Park, Dubbo Region social media platforms and screens at both the Dubbo and Wellington Visitor Information Centres and the Dubbo Regional Airport. Events may also be featured in the weekly "What's On" radio segment, broadcast every Friday across four local stations.

Through these initiatives, Council is committed to helping event organisers maximise their reach and impact, as part of our broader strategy to support and strengthen the region's diverse events landscape. This includes advice regarding the most effective ways that organisers can market and promote their events.

dubboregion.com.au

786,000 views

Digital Sign

20,000

Vehicles passing every day

Weekly eBlast

4,700 suscribers

Whats On eBlast every Thursday

Radio Interviews

574,000

4 radio stations combined audience

Social Media

11,825 followers

Airport Screen

8,163

Arrivals per month

Visitor Information Centres

4,456 Dubbo and Wellington

combined visitation monthly average

Access to the Events Calendar following this link: www.dubboregion.com.au/events

or scan the QR code

What we do: We permit events

Under Section 68 of the Local Government Act, any public event held on public land requires Council approval. This process ensures events meet safety, regulatory, and compliance requirements while minimising risks to attendees, the environment, and surrounding infrastructure.

Safety emergency and risk, environmental compliance and corporate governance staff are responsible for regulatory compliance. The Events Unit plays a crucial role in guiding and supporting event organisers through the permit application process. This includes helping organisers to understand their obligations under State and Local acts, regulations, policies, and standards and ensuring they have the necessary documentation and plans in place.

By working collaboratively with event organisers, Council aims to facilitate a smooth and efficient approval process supporting events and, at the same time, increasing the capacity of event organisers to deliver safe, well-managed, and successful events.

In 2024, the Events Unit processed 55 event permits across 24 locations within the LGA.

What we do: We attract events

Large-scale events are powerful drivers of liveability, economic growth, and destination branding. They bring communities together, enhance the region's cultural vibrancy, and reinforce a destination's reputation as an event-friendly hub.

Beyond their immediate appeal, these events generate long-term benefits, including job creation, business growth, and infrastructure investment. They stimulate local industries such as hospitality, tourism, retail, and transport, while fostering innovation and attracting further event opportunities.

Moreover, large-scale events instil community pride, encouraging residents to engage with and celebrate their region. By positioning the Dubbo Region as a premier host for large-scale events, we enhance our profile, foster economic resilience, and elevate desirability as a place to live, work, and visit.

Who we target and why

Mass participation (sporting events) with junior competitors

- ✓ Increase spend and visitor night stays outside school holiday periods.
- ✓ Support our local tourism industry
- ✓ Create opportunities for local sporting clubs to increase skills of junior players through exposure/ interaction with elite-level competitors
- ✓ Builds the experience and capacity of sporting officials and volunteers
- ✓ Return immediate tourism benefits and/or return visitation
- ✓ Have broad participation apppeal
- ✓ Can be secured over multiple years
- ✓ Return sustained growth and reputation capital

Mass gatherings (live entertainment events)

- ✓ Attract visitation from outside the Dubbo Regional Council LGA
- ✓ Deliver economic benefits through purchase of goods and services via our local event supply chain
- ✓ Create opportunities to engage local musicians, as well as suppliers to the live entertainment industry
- ✓ Heighten our liveability and generate civic pride
- ✓ Have broad spectator appeal
- ✓ Return social and cultural benefits

In 2024, Council secured eight events delivering a combined economic impact of $18.7 Million. The economic impact of each event is calculated based on the number of visitors x number of nights x domestic overnight spend.

ref: Tourism Research Australia's Quarterly Report

	Event	Month	Nights	Visitors	TRA Domestic Overnight Spend pp*	Economic Benefit
1	Cricket NSW State Challenge	Jan	4	950	$293	**$1,113,400**
2	Little Athletics NSW Region 3	Feb	2	1,600	$293	**$937,600**
3	NSW Touch Junior State Cup**	Feb	3	11,000	$293	**$9,669,000**
4	Bowls NSW Championships	Feb	4	1,700	$293	**$1,992,400**
5	NSW Junior Rugby Championships U14 Boys and Girls	June	3	3,000	$291	**$2,619,000**
6	Veterans Cricket NSW over 60s	Oct	5	300	$277	**$415,500**
7	Veterans Cricket NSW over 70s	Nov	7	300	$277	**$581,700**
8	Cricket NSW Youth Championships	Dec	4	1,200	$277	**$1,329,600**
						$18,658,200

**The NSW Touch Junior State Cup brought over 11,000 visitors to the region including surrounding towns such as Narromine and Gilgandra and estimated to have injected over $9 million into the wider region.

*Ref. Tourism Research Australia's Quarterly Report

Events should not be seen as a cost centre, rather as a driver of economic, social and cultural impacts for the region. The benefits and value of events should be measured and these event impacts should ideally be communicated both internally and externally to showcase the value of events. Events Research Paper 2021.

Key strengths

Our competitive strengths in the event attraction market

- Strategically located in the centre of New South Wales
- Access to a catchment population of 200,000 people
- Strong transport links including road, rail and air
- Enviable air services including daily flights via two airlines Sydney/Dubbo/Sydney
- Availability of 5,000 beds in the Dubbo Region's commercial accommodation sector
- State-of-the-art and elite-level venues and sporting fields
- A strong tourism brand leveraging the iconic Taronga Western Plains Zoo
- Strategic linkages between destination marketing to attract visitors and destination marketing to attract large-scale sporting events
- A proven record for successfully hosting large-scale elite level sporting events
- Well-developed event supply industry
- The region is at the forefront of major advances in the green energy opening opportunities to attract trade/industry events, particularly to Wellington
- Wellington has natural attributes to support adventure sports and attract major event activity
- Gentle terrain are attributes attractive to car and bike rallies
- Distinct seasons

Key opportunities

Our natural attributes

Wellington is uniquely positioned to become a prime destination for adventure sports and outdoor events, thanks to its diverse natural landscapes and accessible terrain. Key natural assets include:

- Burrendong Dam – A premier location for water-based sports, including fishing competitions, skiing and paddle sports.
- Mount Arthur – Offering rugged terrain ideal for trail running, mountain biking, and adventure races.
- Macquarie and Bell Rivers – Providing a scenic setting for paddle sports, dragon boat races, and water-based recreational events.
- Cycle and Running Trails – A well-established network of trails suitable for marathons, cycling races, and multisport endurance events.

A key action of the Dubbo Region Events Strategy is to explore opportunities for Wellington to become a host destination for regional and state-level competitions.

By leveraging our natural attributes and investing in strategic locational positioning, the Dubbo Region can strengthen its reputation as a premier destination for outdoor adventure and competitive sports.

Our Indigenous community

Across Australia, events celebrating Indigenous culture, traditions, and deep connections to Country play a vital role in storytelling, education, and cultural preservation. With Indigenous residents making up 16.6% of the Dubbo Region's population, our community is uniquely positioned to initiate an event that not only honours Indigenous Australian heritage but also elevates young and emerging Indigenous talent and fosters Indigenous entrepreneurship.

From storytellers, artists, and musicians to dancers, filmmakers, and actors, we are home to a thriving cultural community that offers event organisers an abundance of talent and creative expertise. These practitioners bring depth and authenticity to events, ensuring that local and visiting audiences experience genuine and meaningful cultural engagement.

A key focus of the Dubbo Region Events Strategy is to foster stronger collaboration between event organisers, the creative community and our Indigenous People.

This strategy will align with actions under Council's Reflect Reconciliation Plan and support development of Indigenous sporting and cultural events.

*ABS 2021

Our passion for cars and bikes

Our community has an inherit passion for cars and bikes, a desire that is clearly reflected in the success of events such as the monthly meet of Dubbo Classic Cars and Coffee, and the large crowds attending the newly created Dubbo MotorFest. These events highlight our community's strong appetite for all things automotive, attracting car enthusiasts, collectors, and bike lovers from near and far. Further, owners of unique and iconic cars and bikes are often older, have greater expendable incomes and they prefer to travel outside school holiday periods.

With purpose-built venues like Morris Park Speedway and Lincoln County Speedway, Dubbo is well-equipped to host motorsport events. Additionally, the Wellington Aerodrome is perfectly suited to support drag racing and other high-octane activities.

A key goal of the Dubbo Region Events Strategy is to promote Dubbo as a premier destination for a variety of motorsport-related events, including rallies, ride-ins, and regional qualifiers. By capitalising on our existing infrastructure and the community's passion for cars and bikes, Dubbo can become a leading hub for motorsport in the wider region, drawing in enthusiasts and competitors from across the State.

Our sporting fields

Dubbo boasts a high standard of sporting infrastructure, with world-class playing fields that support a variety of sports, including football, cricket, and athletics. These facilities position Dubbo as a key player in attracting and hosting major sporting events that have a significant positive impact on both the community and the local economy.

Council strategically seeks to attract major sporting events that are staged outside school holiday periods and secured over multiple years. By doing so, we can ensure that Council-owned and managed facilities are utilised to their full potential, generating economic activity, tourism, and community engagement throughout the year.

Securing these events on a long-term basis not only brings economic benefits, including increased visitor numbers, accommodation bookings, and local business revenue but also helps to create a sense of pride within the community, foster skill development of players and volunteers, and provide an opportunity for residents to engage with high-quality sporting competitions on their home turf. Through this approach, Dubbo can build a reputation as a premier sporting destination, delivering ongoing benefits for both the local economy and the broader region.

This strategy will align with the Central Orana Regional Economic Development Strategy and its action to develop the region as a hub for regional sporting events.

Our gap in winter

The Dubbo Region enjoys strong visitation, especially during the spring and autumn school holiday periods, thanks to attractions like Taronga Western Plains Zoo, which draws families and leisure travellers to the area. These periods see high demand for accommodation, providing a boost to local businesses and the region's tourism sector.

However, July experiences soft visitation. Event activity is also minimal during the month of July. This presents a significant opportunity for the development of a new winter-themed event, particularly one that appeals to families and capitalises on the school holiday period.

By creating a unique, family-friendly winter event, the Dubbo Region can fill the seasonal gap, attracting visitors during a traditionally quieter time. This would not only help increase bed occupancy rates and support local businesses but also contribute to the region's destination marketing activities, offering an exciting new attraction to both residents and visitors alike. The winter event would provide an opportunity for the community to showcase its creativity and foster a new tradition that could grow in significance year after year.

Our support to events

Consultation with event organisers revealed limited awareness of the various types of support Council provides to events especially beyond formal funding programs. There is also some confusion around how and why different levels of support are offered to locally developed events versus those attracted to the region.

A key opportunity for Council is to promote its objective event support decision-making framework, helping organisers and the broader community understand the rationale behind support levels.

Whilst Council is not structured to deliver events, it can help steer the passion and creative flair of a new event committee by providing best-practice event management guidance.

Conversely, a longstanding event may seek funding from Council to help market the event to audiences outside the Dubbo Regional LGA.

Staff time and financial support can be equally important depending on what stage the event sits on its lifecycle.

With measured and strategic support, events such as previously held DREAM Festival, and the current Cross Cultural Carnivale, Dubbo Stampede and Dubbo MotorFest, have potential to develop into flagship or hallmark events.

The development of an Event Support Policy will articulate Council's strategic, meaningful and measurable support to events depending on the event's outcomes and its lifecycle position (startup, growth, maturity and decline) with each stage presenting opportunities and challenges and requiring different levels of assistance.

Definitions:

Flagship Event: Reflects the unique culture of a place, drives overnight visitation, and delivers long-term regional benefits.
(NSW Government Regional Event Fund)

Hallmark Event: A recurring event with such tradition, appeal, or publicity value that it defines the image or brand of the destination, the host venue, community or destination with a competitive advantage. Over time, the event and destination can become inseparable.
Ref: International Journal of Event Management Research

Our youth

The Council's Youth Action Plan, developed through months of comprehensive community and stakeholder consultation, identified several focus areas. One key area is to "*attract and support events, recreation, and social opportunities*." The Plan also emphasises Council's commitment to "*support and attract events, programs, and services that promote youth mental health, social engagement, and opportunities for skill development*." Further, under the Department of Regional NSW's Regional Youth Insights Report, a priority area for Central West and Orana included, *'Provide additional recreation activities and events'*.

While our young people have opportunities to develop and nurture skills as musicians, singer/songwriters, and dancers through access to a conservatorium of music, four theatre companies, and six dance studios, there is a gap in our annual events calendar that meets the specific entertainment needs of our youth. Whilst Council stages a number of Youth Week events there remains an imbalance between family events and those specifically designed for young people (aged 12-24 years) which make up 32.8% of our residential population.

Council's support for the development of grass-roots live entertainment events appealing to young people, and/or its attraction of brand-led music festivals for youth will help bridge the current gap in our annual events calendar and help deliver outcomes for state and local plans.

'57% of youth noted that a 'more fun and interesting things' initiatives would make life in their town and surrounding areas better (most common answer), Priority areas for Central West and Orana, Regional Youth Insights Report

Key challenges

Streamlining Compliance Obligations

Section 68 of the *NSW Local Government Act 1993* outlines activities that generally require prior approval from the Council before being carried out. This includes a range of activities on public land, such as hosting events, engaging in trade or business, and using public address systems.

Council is responsible for issuing event permits and ensuring that activities are meeting local and state regulations. Our volunteer-run event organisers are sometimes reluctant to obtain these approvals due to several factors, including a perceived administrative burden, a lack of awareness of their obligations, concerns about potential delays or restrictions and fatigue.

Event organisers may not be aware of the importance of timelines, placing pressure on staff to review documentation within short lead times.

During the consultation phase, event organisers raised issues regarding the paperwork required by Council to permit events. A key action under the strategy is to investigate programs and systems that have the capacity to streamline event permits and reduce the burden placed on both the event organiser and Council, whilst maintaining legal obligations to protect the event organisers, members of the public and Council.

Event bidding and hosting fees

In the current competitive landscape hosting rights to stage a large-scale event is increasingly transactional. Third-party brokers, promoters and sporting organisations now often require Councils to pay for the rights to host their event. Regional centres such as Dubbo, Bathurst, Orange, Mudgee, Tamworth, and Wagga Wagga are all vying for the same high-profile events, making it a highly competitive market.

However, Council does not have an unlimited pool of funds or human resources to incentivise major events. Strategic decision-making is essential to ensure that each event opportunity is evaluated based on the potential outcomes it can generate. Council's return on investment is multifaceted and includes:

- Economic benefits, such as increased visitor numbers, tourism spending, and local business activity.
- Reputational outcomes from hosting state and national-level events, which enhance the region's status as a premier event destination.
- Social and cultural benefits, fostering community engagement and promoting diversity and inclusion.

To ensure the sustainable attraction and retention of these events, a key action in this strategy is to collaborate with local businesses through a partnership framework. This collaboration will provide tangible return benefits for businesses that invest in attracting large-scale events to the region. By pooling resources and building these strategic partnerships, Council can better support the long-term success of securing major events while sharing rewards with the local business community.

> *Well-managed events are an important part of the development of vibrant sustainable local communities, contributing to the community social fabric and the local economy. Increasingly, successful events have become an important strategy underpinning local economic development. It has also become increasingly clear that poorly managed events can result in significant environmental and personal harm.* Developing a Council Community Events Policy – A Toolkit for NSW Councils – NSW Government Premier & Cabinet.

Lack of purpose-built outdoor event spaces

While the Dubbo Region boasts several attractive indoor venues for events, the availability of purpose-built outdoor (non-sporting) event spaces remains limited. The Dubbo and Wellington Showgrounds are the only primary venues designed to support a wide range of multi-faceted events. The region's showgrounds are fenced, offer undercover options, provide amenities, ample parking and attributes to support large-scale events attracting large numbers of people. However, these spaces are in high demand, with limited availability for event organisers. In 2024, the Dubbo Showground hosted 143 events and was booked for 264 out of 365 days, including event activity every weekend of the year. This high occupancy leaves little room for additional or new events to be scheduled.

Furthermore, there is a perception among external event organisers that the showground spaces do not meet high standards, which has led to a reluctance to book them for events. However, these spaces are well-equipped and fully capable of accommodating large-scale events.

Ollie Robbins Oval, while capable of hosting major events, presents challenges due to the lack of shade, fencing and car parking spaces. Event activity held on this location also impacts community access to Tracker Riley Cycleway. This has led event organisers to seek alternative venues, such as Victoria Park. However, Victoria Park is not designed for events; it holds a Regional Park classification and requires a high level of maintenance to ensure it is presented at a standard that can be enjoyed by the community and visitors. Its use for high-impact, large-scale events presents several issues:

- High turf quality and maintenance standards: The turf is maintained to a high standard for passive recreation and community enjoyment. Large-scale events can cause significant wear and damage, resulting in costly restoration and temporary loss of access for the public.
- Underground services: The Park has a network of underground utilities, which pose hazards for event organisers. These services must be marked, adding costs and complexity to event planning.
- Wet weather concerns: Victoria Park is unsuitable for use during wet weather, leading to further potential costs for the event organiser and heightened risks based on a requirement of the event to relocate to an alternate location.

This means increased costs and logistical challenges for event organisers and highligts the need for Council to investigate additional purpose-built event space in Dubbo.

The proposed development of the Macquarie River Event Precinct is currently in abeyance and subject to availability of funding. A key action under this strategy is to investigate availability of open spaces in the City in line with community desires, needs of event organisers and land management expectations.

As identified in both the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan and the Public Art Strategy, the inclusion of event activity in public spaces can add life to public spaces and create welcoming and safe locations for the community to gather and socialise. This strategy will also include the investigation into the activation of public spaces to support small-scale event activity.

Fluctuation in event activity

In 2025, event organisers in the Dubbo Region are grappling with a number of challenges:

- Rising costs, which are putting pressure on event budgets and making it harder to maintain the scale and quality of events.
- Increased competition for the discretionary dollar, as people have fewer funds to spend on events amidst economic uncertainty.
- Difficulty attracting sponsors, as businesses face their own financial pressures and are more selective about where they invest their resources.

In addition, a significant concern is the reliance on volunteers. Like many cities and towns across Australia, the Dubbo Region is seeing a decline in the availability and capacity of volunteers to help organise and run events. This trend, driven by factors such as economic downturns and changing social dynamics, has led to the biannual scheduling or even cancellation of some events.

The number of home-grown annual events in the Dubbo Region is projected to decline from 29 to 22 in 2025, reflecting the growing strain on resources and volunteer capacity.

This trend underscores the need for a strategic response to ensure that event sustainability is supported, not only from the point of view of an individual event, but the entire local events landscape.

Council support is vital to help events explore alternative revenue sources, market to audiences outside the LGA and implement innovative volunteer engagement strategies.

An action under this strategy will be to provide a business case to Council on establishing a team of staff within the Organisation to deliver events that achieve strong cultural, social and economic outcomes.

Demand on accommodation

According to Destination Country and Outback NSW Ltd's draft Odin360 report, the Dubbo Region's accommodation sector faces several significant challenges:

1. The Central West Orana REZ and other major projects have increased demand for accommodation, driving up costs and making it difficult for leisure travellers to find affordable options.
2. Local accommodation property purchases to house workers has reduced the availability of accommodation for leisure travellers, impacting the leisure tourism sector
3. Insufficient investment in new accommodation developments and upgrades to existing facilities has worsened the shortage and constrained sector growth.

The Odin360 report also cites an expected and substantial influx of people from major construction projects, impacting accommodation, hospitality housing and other work opportunities.

This strategy will include key actions for Council to help address the anticipated shortages in accommodation that will be available to our visitor market. Whilst supply and demand typically lead to higher overnight tariffs, Council can, through education and advocacy, raise awareness of the consequences of overly inflated room rates. Whilst this practice does not occur in isolation in the Dubbo Region, it is important to consider that our destination has to work much harder than our counterparts on the eastern seaboard to attract major sporting events and high-profile live entertainment events. Large-scale events drive visitation that not only benefits the accommodation industry, but also benefit our attractions, our hospitality industry and small business.

Understanding the opportunities that can be garnered and shared through event activity by businesses across various industries in our region is a key action under this strategy.

As DRC looks to consolidate its event strategy, relevant to this report is identifying the other elements of the event industry – from event attraction and acquisition capabilities to accommodation and supplier capacities – that provide the necessary comparative framework to understand how to position Dubbo at the top of the host destination consideration set in regional NSW and beyond.

Events Research Paper 2021

Focus areas

Through an analysis of the current events landscape, and extensive consultation with key stakeholders and the broader community, three distinct focus areas are identified to guide the future development of events in the Dubbo Region.

Each of these focus areas is supported by a series of strategic actions to be implemented over a five-year period. This framework provides a clear, structured path for Council to Provide, Lead, Collaborate and Advocate for events, as well as define the outcomes we aim to achieve for the community.

Focus Area 1: Our local events industry is diverse, culturally-rich and appealing

Through strategic advice, best-practice leadership and strong engagement we will help facilitate meaningful and impactful events that resonate broadly with the community.

Cultivate Local Events

Focus Area 2: Our community enjoys a strong and dynamic event ecosystem

We will forge robust connections and pathways for stakeholders to capitalise on and thrive from event activities. Through strategic marketing, we will amplify local and visiting audiences, driving sustained growth and engagement.

Drive Business through Events

Focus Area 3: The Dubbo Region is a premier destination for major and large-scale events

We will actively champion the strategic expansion of local events and attract major large-scale events, thereby cultivating a diverse and balanced portfolio that ensures event dispersal throughout the Local Government Area.

Grow and Attract Events

Activating the strategy

Dubbo Regional Council plays an active role as a Provider, Leader, Collaborator, and Advocate to support the growth and success of events across the Local Government Area.

Council as a Provider and Leader

- Offers resources and expertise to help event organisers implement best-practice management, ensuring events are safe, successful, and sustainable.
- Continuously reviews and improves management policies, making it easier for the community to initiate and develop events.
- Guides local businesses on how to maximise opportunities from event activity.

Council as a Collaborator

- Develops strategies that encourage event organisers to engage local artists, creatives, and small businesses.
- Provides financial support and tools to help local event organisers create meaningful, engaging events that address gaps in the event calendar.
- Invests in external large-scale events to secure long-term cultural, social, and economic benefits.

Council as an Advocate

- Promotes events to help boost local attendance and attract visitors from outside the LGA.
- Markets the LGA to targeted audiences to increase large-scale event activity and its distribution across the region.
- Supports the expansion of locally organised annual events by promoting them to wider geographical markets.

This structured approach ensures that Dubbo Regional Council fosters a vibrant and diverse event landscape, benefiting both the community and the local economy.

Priority Actions

During the community consultation phase, it became evident that many event organisers and key stakeholders weren't fully aware of the types of support Council offers events. Furthermore, there was limited understanding of the rationale behind the varying levels of support provided. For example, the difference in support provided to a new community event compared to a large-scale sporting event. Council's key roles to support and permit events will be operationalised through the development of two key strategies.

Dubbo Region Events Strategy

DRC Event Support Policy

This document will outline Council's strategic support to local and externally organised events

DRC Event Permit Policy

This document will outline safety and land-use compliance obligations for public events in public spaces

Actions table

Focus Area 1: Our local events industry is diverse, culturally-rich and appealing. *Through strategic advice, best-practice leadership and strong engagement we will help facilitate meaningful and impactful events that resonate broadly with the community.*

Key: CCP: Community Culture and Places SPE: Strategy Partnerships and Engagement

Action	Responsible Division	Role of Council	2025/ 2026	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030
1. Develop an Event Support Policy that outlines Council's strategic support to local and externally organised events.	CCP	**Provider**	●				
2. Develop an Event Permit Policy that outlines safety and compliance obligations for public events in public spaces.	CCP	**Provider**	●				
3. Investigate a program that will streamline event applications.	CCP	**Provider**	●				
4. Investigate ways in which Council can help facilitate the initiation of cultural events and support events that engage local creatives and our live music industry.	CCP	**Provider**	●				
5. Develop a training program to help build the capacity of local event organisers	CCP	**Provider**	●	●	●	●	●
6. Develop tactics and resources to help event organisers attract and retain volunteers.	CCP	**Provider**		●			
7. Develop a business case for Council's consideration based on staff delivering events that will achieve strategic outcomes.	CCP	**Provider**					●

Focus Area 2: Our region enjoys a strong and dynamic event ecosystem . *We will forge robust connections and pathways for stakeholders to capitalise on and thrive from event activities. Through strategic marketing, we will amplify local and visiting audiences, driving sustained growth and engagement.*

Action	Responsible Division	Role of Council	2025/ 2026	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030
1. Investigate and implement additional ways to promote events to the local community.	CCP	**Leader**	●				
2. Develop collaborative opportunities for events seeking to promote to audiences outside the LGA.	CCP	**Collaborator**		●			
3. Investigate the use of public and private space to support niche and major event activity.	CCP	**Leader**			●		
4. Investigate strategies to address projected accommodation shortages to help meet future needs of event visitors.	SPE	**Advocate**					●
5. Develop a communications plan to heighten awareness of the business sector of the value of major events to the overall local economy.	CCP	**Leader**			●		
6. As part of the master planning project for the Dubbo and Wellington Showgrounds, investigate ways in which space can be made more attractive to event organisers.	CCP	**Provider**	●				

Focus Area 3: The Dubbo Region is a premier destination for major and large-scale events . *We will actively champion the strategic expansion of local events and attract major large-scale events, thereby cultivating a diverse and balanced portfolio that ensures event dispersal throughout the Local Government Area.*

Key: CCP: Community Culture and Places SPE: Strategy Partnerships and Engagement

Action	Responsible Division	Role of Council	2025/ 2026	2026/ 2027	2027/ 2028	2028/ 2029	2029/ 2030
1. Investigate ways in which Council can support the dispersal and growth of locally organised events throughout the LGA.	CCP	**Leader**					●
2. Investigate and report on the scope of Wellington becoming an adventure sports hub.	CCP	**Leader**					●
3. Develop a Corporate Partnership Program to attract private investment in the attraction of large-scale sporting events.	CCP	**Collaborator**			●		
4. Seek to attract a live entertainment event appealing to youth.	CCP	**Advocate**				●	
5. Develop marketing materials to attract externally organised events delivering strong economic and social benefits.	CCP	**Advocate**		●			

Measuring progress

Measuring and reporting on the strategy helps everyone understand how the region is progressing in supporting local events to launch and grow, creating a year-round offering of culturally rich, diverse and meaningful events. It will also articulate Council's progress against key outcome areas such as event attraction and dispersal of event activity across the LGA. In addition to internal quarterly updates, an annual report will be developed and provided to community. These reports will track progress, inform future bodies of work and will support evidence-based decision making. The Community Insights biennial survey provides quantifiable community insights on Council's services and living within the Dubbo Region. These figures are analysed and assessed against Council's corporate measures in a broader regional and environmental context to inform our priorities and actions.

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