



Sapphire Coast Tourism
Cultural Heritage Working Group Minutes
Bega Valley Shire Council Committee Room
24 June 2009 @ 9.30 AM

1. Welcome
2. In attendance
Penny Amberg, Megan Bottari, Judi Hearn, Rosemary Millard, Karen O’Cleary, Samantha Smith, Robyn Kesby, Gordon Beattie (chair)
3. Apologies
Sheena Boughen, Andrew Grey, Jenny Rob, Jodie White, Tim Shepherd, Lindy Hume, Olwen Morris
Sheena and Jodie made written comments on the material
4. Introductions
5. Background and research

Gordon very briefly outlined the back ground to the working group and the history of The Sapphire Coast Tourism Board emphasising that the Board had only been in place for just under a year.

Objectives of Business

The Board has enunciated SCT’s mission as:

To identify and promote the region’s compelling visitor experiences to maximize the social, cultural, environmental and economic well being of the community through sustainable tourism.

The Board’s objectives are set out in the SCT Constitution (Attachment 1):

- (a) to establish a strategic framework for tourism in the region;*
- (b) to plan and implement branding, marketing and promotion;*
- (c) to conduct research and provide information, advice and support to improve the range and quality of visitor experiences provided in the region;*
- (d) to provide advice to government, industry and potential investors on opportunities, servicing, facility and infrastructure requirements and sustainability;*
- (e) to develop partnerships and relationships with other bodies which will assist the Company to achieve its mission; and*
- (f) to earn revenue and seek other funding.*

Through a number of research bodies Cultural Heritage tourism has been identified as a major growth area especially at the local as well as the international level. It was appropriate that the Tourism Board play a role in the development of strategies that support existing cultural and heritage initiatives as well as encouraging communications, networking and new programs across the shire. The Working Group is to play a crucial role in this development.



6. The Sapphire Coast Tourism Business Plan.

http://www.sapphirecoast.com.au/contact_membership_information.php

The SCT business plan was considered and three areas generated a lot of discussion

- The web site: <http://www.sapphirecoast.com.au/> The Tourism Board web site was perceived to be an important vehicle for information for visitors, a calendar of events, information for and about the board and its working groups. The issue of regular updating information was raised as a matter of concern. A number of other web sites offered similar services eg Calendar of events. The problem was that no one site seemed to be covering all the events. ABC, SEAR, Bega Council and Bega Valley.com all had calendars or what's on information. A strategy needs to be developed for encouraging people to provide information to update so that the SCT site becomes the most credible, well known and reliable site in the valley. Research into who and why do people access certain sites needs to be done. The idea of self listing might be appropriate or a pay a fee to self list. It was felt that Sapphire Coast Tourism should be the leader in this area.
- Visitor Information Centres. All of the working group were aware of the siege mentality under which the VIC's operated in the past and acknowledged the uniform approach being promoted by the SCT as the way to go. They agreed that in what was described as a Creative Industry approach of collaboration and consultation would achieve much more than any individual approach and simple self promotion. While recognizing the fracturing of the industry was a relic from the past it was hoped that the VIC's and SCT would move on. The VIC had a significant potential role to play in any strategy developed for Cultural Heritage.
and

7. Cultural Heritage Tourism. This was a major focus for the meeting and the Boards TQUAL application was discussed in this context.

- TQUAL. noted that the amount of \$25,000 was being asked for and that the SCT had committed \$25,000 as matching funding for the grant, giving a total of \$50,000
- The Working Group agreed that there is a need to consolidate information about cultural/heritage services and experiences in the region. Four reasons
 - i. so that they can be categorised at international national and local interest and
 - ii. form the basis for information database web based (fee based self load ?)
 - iii. of these what needs to be developed and how to support and attract resources to do so
 - iv. identify what doesn't meet the benchmark and train to raise the bar
- These tasks and those in the TQUAL application provide a brief for developing a strategy. It was noted that if the grant was successful we would be well resourced to undertake the study, however if it was not successful we would still need to do this work. The Working Party recommends that should the TQUAL grant not be successful the SCT board re direct the \$ 25,000 it has allocated as matching funding to the working party for on going work on the strategy



- The group reviewed attachment 2 to the strategic document and
 - i. Gaps. (5.4)FESTIVAL AND EVENTS : Country Music Festival Merimbula (early November), Bermagui Dirt track bike festival, George Bass surf boat event, Mambo Wind surfing event, Montreal Goldfields Heritage Festival (developing),
 - ii. Opportunities. Regional food festival, Four Winds site for summer event theatre, Triangle Film festival
 - iii. Galleries and Museums; 5.4.1. Bermagui Historical Society Museum, Tathra Wharf Museum, Bega Heritage Centre, Davidson Whaling Station Museum has onsite open days and special tours
 - iv. The group felt that it was important to include cultural landscapes and drew attention to them as economic and tourism assets in the shire. For example the Bermagui/ Tathra road and with its historic wooded bridges. Mix between forests, bushland and agricultural landscapes, coastal/ocean scapes (Cutagee) is unique in the region and in the state including rural architecture such as the community halls, abandoned agricultural sheds and homes (Murrah) need to be promoted and supported as part of cultural tourism
 - v. Pamboola is 85 hectare wetlands area. This is a Community project designed to highlight the heritage of Pamboola with Walking and bike riding trails all in place.
 - vi. The group noted that rather than seeing Montreal Goldfields as isolated, it was in fact central to a coastal wilderness cultural heritage experience with the opportunities for a SCT/Eurobodalla partnership with the regional historic and Indigenous heritage precinct that encompasses Cobargo, the Tilba (including Gulaga) sites and Montreal Goldfield
- 8. Indigenous Culture noted the importance to the whole tourism strategy. We should provide an open invitation to the communities to participate in the process and noted that in the Wilderness Coast master plan there was a recommendation to establish a cultural round table, complete the Jigamy entrance way from the highway and develop the Bundian Way as a tourist attraction. These initiatives were strongly endorsed.
- 9. The Wilderness Coast Master Plan. The group had not read this master plan in depth however noted that, while the focus was creating ICONIC EXPERIENCES for overseas tourists, there were both immediate and long term infrastructure , economic and employment, community development and other local benefits in the implementation of the plan.

The group felt that while the master plan touches on cultural/heritage tourism (Sydney to Melbourne Road, Food and Wine, European cultural activities, Regional events) there needs to be better recognition of the symbiotic relationship between the natural experience and the cultural experience. They asked that Samantha and Robyn as Members of the Coastal Wilderness steering Committee raise this as an issue.

They look forward to a considered look at the plan at its next meeting.



10. Possible directions and ideas building on what already exists:

Gordon indicated two clusters of events and organizations which occurred at particular times of the year as a starting point for discussion. He emphasised that these were not the only possibilities, just off the top of his head ideas for potential clusters.

- The Eden Whale Festival, The Whale Museum, The Sapphire Coast Marine Discovery Centre, Heritage sites in National Park.. Others
- Easter 1010, Four Winds Festival, Arts Trail, Folk Festival, Montreal Goldfields, Tilba .Others

The group discussed the ideas for marketing opportunities for events based, seasonal based clusters as an idea worth following up, perhaps taken up by the Board and/ or specific group meetings.

11. Into the future

The group emphasised the importance of research and supported the questions raised by Sheena in her email to the group. (Attached)

Some Questions.

What is Quality ?

Lasting positive memory – good service, educated/informed, good experience “product” not made to just to make money, but made with a purpose Integrity and promise of experience

Something with a lasting legacy/capacity

How do we increase people’s capacity to deliver quality ?

Training role of TAFE, Community College, special interest workshops etc.?

How long do we want people to come to stay ?

How do we add onto what people have already come for?

Do people come back again after a first experience?

Do they come back at different times of the year?

How can the SCT web site be promoted amongst its own members and the community ?

Should there be regular meetings to promote the SCT board and consultation?



12. Other Business

Gordon briefly outlined the blog <http://sapphirecoastculturalalliance.blogspot.com/>

and encouraged everyone to use it as an ongoing forum and a place for resources. It was agreed that the minutes of the working group be made available on the web.

13. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 25th September - 9.30am to 11.30am
Venue: Bermagui Community Centre

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Information submitted by Sheena in her absence:

Gordon

I have read the docs you have put on the site - particularly the SC Business plan and Cultural and Heritage research.

What great news in both - and what a chance we have now to create the world we want! Thanks to you and the board for setting up this group, and apologies I can't be there due to work commitments.

I can only say that I think we have to be clear on what we have already got, and the real advantage of you setting up this group

is that we finally get to be able to meet our tribe and see how we can add value.

So please pass on the enthusiasm from Four Winds, and our willingness to participate.

Some issues that arise from our perspective.

1) What do we have now and how can we collate what we do before we start to say how we can build on this?

This might be what you are already planning to do at the meeting, but apart from contributing to the whole strategy,

we'd be interested in a gathering of all the festival folk in our region, to

learn from each other and then start to put some data together of what we do and what we achieve.

We have no data in our region..and therefore limited knowledge that is useful.

Four Winds has data from our surveys which we have been doing & evolving over many years, and we would like to

present the findings (qualitative and quantitative data) from 2006 to see what's useful and where there are gaps.

We make use of the stats for grant applications and to present to potential sponsors.

2) I am excited by the focus put on cultural and heritage as the growth area, and think one of the questions for our group is

- **what does success mean for our region with this opportunity?** What role does quality play in this?

How do we define quality? (The research talks about this.)

It would be crude and simplistic just to say how do we tell everyone about what we are already doing and they will come.

And it's not enough to say we are going to go for growth - but what do we have now?

What's the cultural capital of our activities? i.e. What is said about them, by whom and so what?

What do we know and what do we need to find out? e.g. What is cultural map we create with all our activities - many people come from local areas to festivals, how many from outside, what is economic benefit?

How does that complement other attributes we have? e.g. status of wilderness coast, high value natural landscape, small population with limited income and resources that is highly dependent on voluntary labour?

What can we learn from global experiences in area of creative economy and creative clusters?



There are many examples of small regions up to cities who are using the creative descriptor to drive and shape change?

Who is doing what and which models might be useful for us?

Can we get a research student from a uni to help with this?

2) I met with David Throsby just the other day, and learned a lot about policy and strategy re culture and economics and so on.

He is an economist, and has worked with many state and federal govts on cultural policy, and is in great demand globally on this. He would be a fabulous person to talk with, and yes he is Margaret's brother.

Also has done some interesting research including a survey for a NSW council on people's support for a specific cultural building that showed that even if they didn't use it, they supported it and the idea of a levy to fund it.

http://www.currencyhouse.org.au/documents/pp_07_sneak.pdf

This is a 3 page extract from his Currency House paper on the need for Australia to have cultural policy. Not directly relevant for the meeting, but related and perhaps something we can take up separately.

3) Re next meeting.

I would love to be able to participate and am available in July.

Or if it's useful, I could meet with a smaller group to work when I am available.

We really appreciate the work you have done to get this group together.
warm wishes to all and look forward to catching up

Sheena Boughen
Chair
Four Winds Festival

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