

# Tourism Marketing Plan 2016-17



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**“ Eurobodalla’s year-end December ’15 domestic overnight visitor volume and market share results extend a two year period of stable and consistent outcomes. Despite the importance of a scenario like this, surprisingly few destinations manage to achieve it.**

**After more than 20 years helping to shape and evaluate destination marketing, I can say with confidence that these results are simply not going to happen without a destination marketing strategy that is in tune with the marketplace – especially one that continues to grow in terms of both complexity and competition. ”**

*Independent tourism analyst Peter Valerio commenting on the Tourism Monitor data extracted from Tourism Research Australia's national and international visitor surveys, May 2015.*



## Executive Summary

This marketing plan guide the implementation of Council's tourism marketing initiatives. It aims to ensure consistent, on-going awareness of Eurobodalla and its destinations and experiences to attract both repeat, and new visitors, increase spend on paid experiences, and improve yield.

The 2011 -2020 Eurobodalla Destination Management Plan states that best practice regional destinations:

- develop a strategic tourism marketing approach to guide marketing efforts
- employ experienced marketing staff to coordinate destination marketing efforts
- seek a strong level of support from their STO to foster and lead cooperative marketing efforts across state/territory, regional and local levels
- encourage the support of leading commercial tourism and business operators to contribute and invest in destination marketing initiatives
- partner with neighbouring regions to develop stronger campaigns
- source adequate funding to ensure all levels of industry can participate in marketing campaigns.

The core of the marketing program is the marketing framework, which builds an integrated approach to activity and communications. Marketing activities in the context of this program include product development, promotion, and distribution channels.

The plan is developed by Council's tourism team with input from the Tourism Advisory Committee and it aligns with key marketing directions in the Eurobodalla Destination Management Plan 2011-2020.

Research informs the plan through ongoing analysis and tracking of tourism jobs, expenditure, visitation, visitor behaviour and preferences, market segments, source markets, and industry trends. Research and Tracking resources used to inform this plan are made available on Council's website.

Eurobodalla Shire Council incorporates and considers tourism across many of its services and divisions. Staff collaborate on projects that effect tourism and responsibility for actions that are resourced in the 2011-2020 Destination Management Plan are shared.

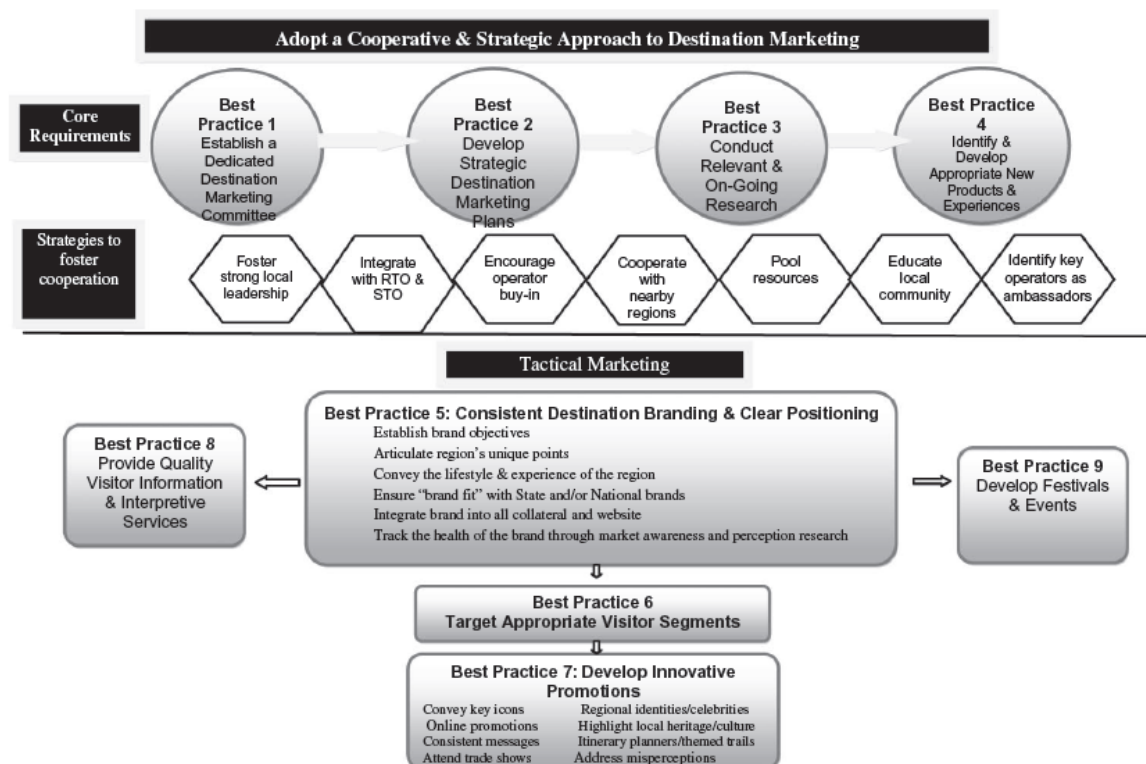
## The role of council in tourism

Council plays an important role as a Destination Management Organisation (DMO) responsible for delivering sustainable demand for tourism in Eurobodalla.

Many services Council provides for the community also drive outcomes for tourism, for example, the planning, construction and maintenance of paths, parks, boat ramps, streetscapes and so on. The infrastructure and services that make communities more liveable also make a destination more desirable and appealing to visitors.

As a DMO, Council takes responsibility for destination marketing, which is a specialised function. Marketing the destination is only one part of a portfolio of responsibilities in destination management. Council employs experienced professionals to carry out destination marketing and Council's tourism division includes marketing specialists with tertiary tourism and business qualifications.

Council follows a best practice framework, which is strategic and cooperative in its approach (Cox and Wray, 2011, p. 531).

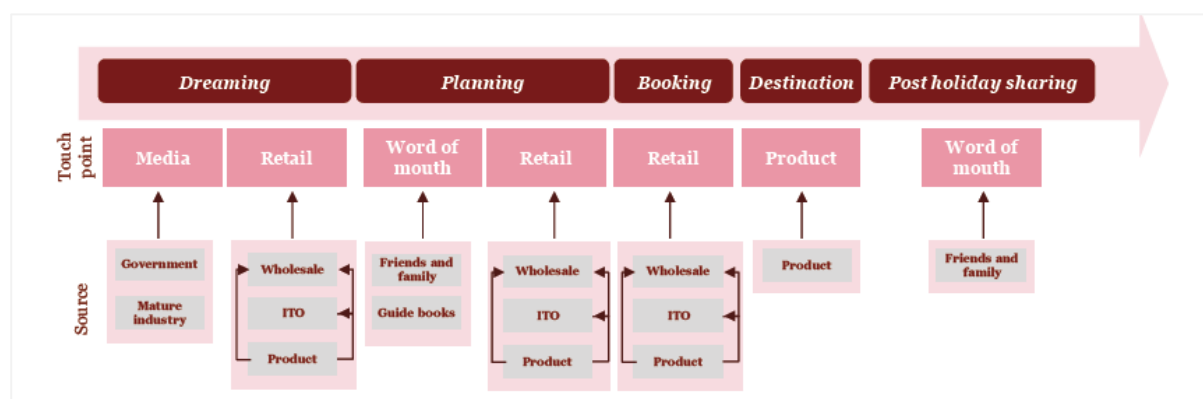


The development of strategic destination marketing plans is one of the four best practices of a DMO. This plan therefore contributes to best practice and is the core role of council's tourism division.

The impact of digital marketing and communication channels has created an environment that is less structured and offers less control over the traditional travel purchase cycle of dream, plan, book, stay. This has led to a blurring of the roles and responsibilities of government agencies like council in the purchase cycle (Price Waterhouse Coopers and Tourism Australia, 2013).

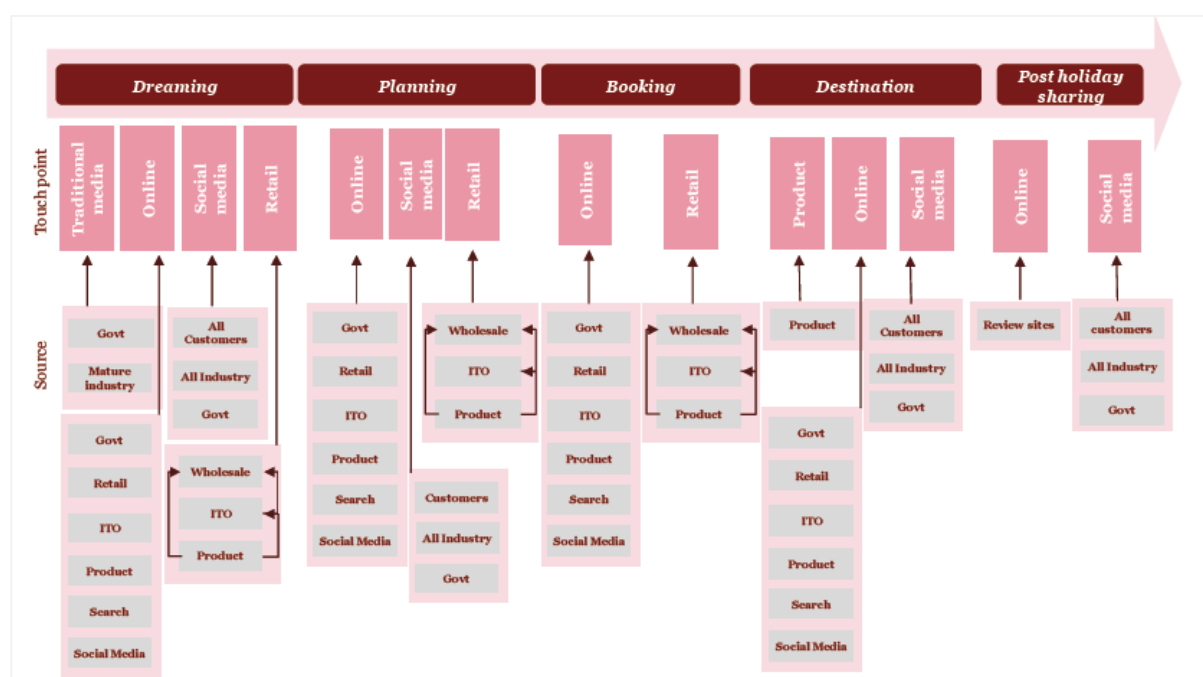
Traditionally Council has been mostly active in the dreaming and planning stages of the cycle, with a strong focus on destination awareness and destination branding strategies. Council has also been active in the destination phase with the delivery of visitor information services.

Image: The traditional purchase cycle



Over time, marketing activities of Council have followed the observed trends of other government agencies and become active throughout the purchase cycle with varying degrees of success.

Image: The new purchase cycle



It is important in this blurred environment that Council remains focused on a clear set of objectives where it can have the most impact and benefit. The marketing plan provides this focus and directs the specific marketing both in traditional and digital mediums.

## Strategic development

In 2016-17, Council will develop an Integrated Economic Growth and Development Strategy (Growth Strategy) with input from the tourism and business advisory committees, and consideration of the 2011-2020 Destination Management Plan that states that a lack of

adequate infrastructure and supporting facilities can limit the realisation of tourism potential at a destination.

For tourism, an evidence-based approach will identify and prioritise opportunities to grow sustainable tourism for the benefit of the community. In 2015, the Tourism Advisory Committee agreed that the Destination Management Plan will be reviewed in 2016-17. This review will follow on from work undertaken for the Growth Strategy with the aim of delivering an achievable and agreed set of actions and plans for Council, including investment, infrastructure, and planning matters that support private investment and tourism growth.

The first phase of work on the Growth Strategy will identify drivers of economic growth at the local level, what Council can influence and which drivers are in the realm of state and federal government and the private sector. Council is looking to develop a list of projects or actions that could stimulate economic growth. In the context of tourism, the work will look at how tourism contributes to economic growth and development and vice versa. This will include the current state of the tourism sector and impediments to economic growth, and development and potential actions, including those outside of the responsibility of local government that may assist overcoming such impediments. This first phase will be completed by the end of June 2016.

Opportunities that may be investigated in the first or second phase could be:

- food tourism
- accessible tourism
- nature tourism - national park and marine experiences
- destination weddings
- Visiting friends and relatives markets – domestic and international
- Visitor services strategy (not urgent –after Batemans Bay is resolved)

Council's Community Strategic Plan, Shared Pathways Strategy and Recreation and Open Space Strategy, will all be reviewed in 2016-17 and how these contribute to economic growth and development in tourism will be incorporated.

## Tourism in Eurobodalla

Eurobodalla's tourism industry when described in terms of visitation and overnight stays and when referencing the Eurobodalla Tourism Monitor, has not changed significantly since 2008. The last three quarters of 2015 show some statistically significant percentage changes and positive share shifts and it will be encouraging if these continue through 2016. As an example, the estimates for overnight visitors recorded its highest volume on record in the December 2015 quarter at 727,000 and this is the 12<sup>th</sup> consecutive above average estimate. These are however very small changes and not indicative of a long growth pattern.

Tourism is highly competitive on a global scale. It is a 'buyers' market' with new products, experiences and offers being rolled out daily, and big brand name businesses such as hotel chains aggressively marketing. Being able to maintain a stable level of tourism activity in

Eurobodalla is an achievement when considered against the global competition, the few new products and experiences in the past decade and the lack of marketing investment from big brands. Council's destination marketing contributes to maintaining tourism activity along with the current and predicted growth in the caravan and camping sector and Australia's inbound market, and all these may contribute to incremental growth in the future, as Eurobodalla has an enviable aquatic, nature and food proposition which is attractive to these growth markets. The value of growing international is detailed later. There is however, unlikely to be any change from 'stable' to 'growing', or a noticeable improvement in yield without investment.

Anecdotally, it is likely that Eurobodalla has less available beds than it did ten years ago as motels have closed or been converted for other use. The standard of many of the remaining accommodation available may be on average lower than it was as there has been little reinvestment into new or refurbished accommodation, apart from cabins and villas in the holiday park sector which continues to be a strong contributor. Changes in the holiday house rental market and the impact of Stayz and Air BnB to the number of available beds is unknown.

Motel and other accommodation types which have refurbished to a 4 star or above level appear to have higher all year round occupancy and higher yield than the lower end of the market which often fails to meet current consumer expectations.

Quality experiences are essential for maintaining a destinations competitiveness and increasing yield through extended length of stay and spend. Eurobodalla's offering of experiences is primarily nature based and while quite broad within this theme, much of it is 'free' and the growth of quality new paid experiences is limited which in turn weakens the opportunity to improve yield. In a similar way to accommodation, it appears that the few experience businesses who have invested and responded to changing consumer needs are successfully growing their business and more importantly for the whole of Eurobodalla, generating interest and appeal for the destination.

The timing of product development and supporting infrastructure, services and promotion in tourism becomes disconnected as consumers rapidly drive demand. In Eurobodalla, this presents challenges in markets such as food tourism. One example is the Australia's Oyster Coast trail that has been successfully promoted and there is evidence that visitors are arriving to experience it. The products and experiences however (recognising that there are some developments in progress) are not hugely different to those that have been available for more than a decade and do not always meet current consumer expectations. These obstacles to growth and how they can be overcome will be addressed in the strategic work planned for 2016-17.

## The Tourism Advisory Committee

In November 2013, Council endorsed the formation of a new Tourism Advisory Committee that could represent the tourism industry and advise and make recommendations to Council on matters relating to tourism, the development of tourism and the future of tourism in Eurobodalla; undertake actions in partnership with Council to promote tourism and raise



awareness of the value and benefits of tourism. The committee meets a minimum of four times a year.

## Shared vision for tourism

Consultation with Eurobodalla's tourism industry during the development of Destination Management Plan in 2010 led to a shared vision for tourism in Eurobodalla. This shared vision, the values that underpin it, and the Eurobodalla Brand remain as constant anchor points for all marketing activity and communications.

Eurobodalla Destination Management Plan 2011 to 2020 states:

*Cooperate and support each other to achieve a sustainable and innovative tourism economic sector that: preserves our natural environment, fosters support from our community, celebrates and offers diverse and quality visitor experiences related to our natural environment, culture and heritage, and welcomes and cares for our visitors.*

*This vision is underpinned by the following values:*

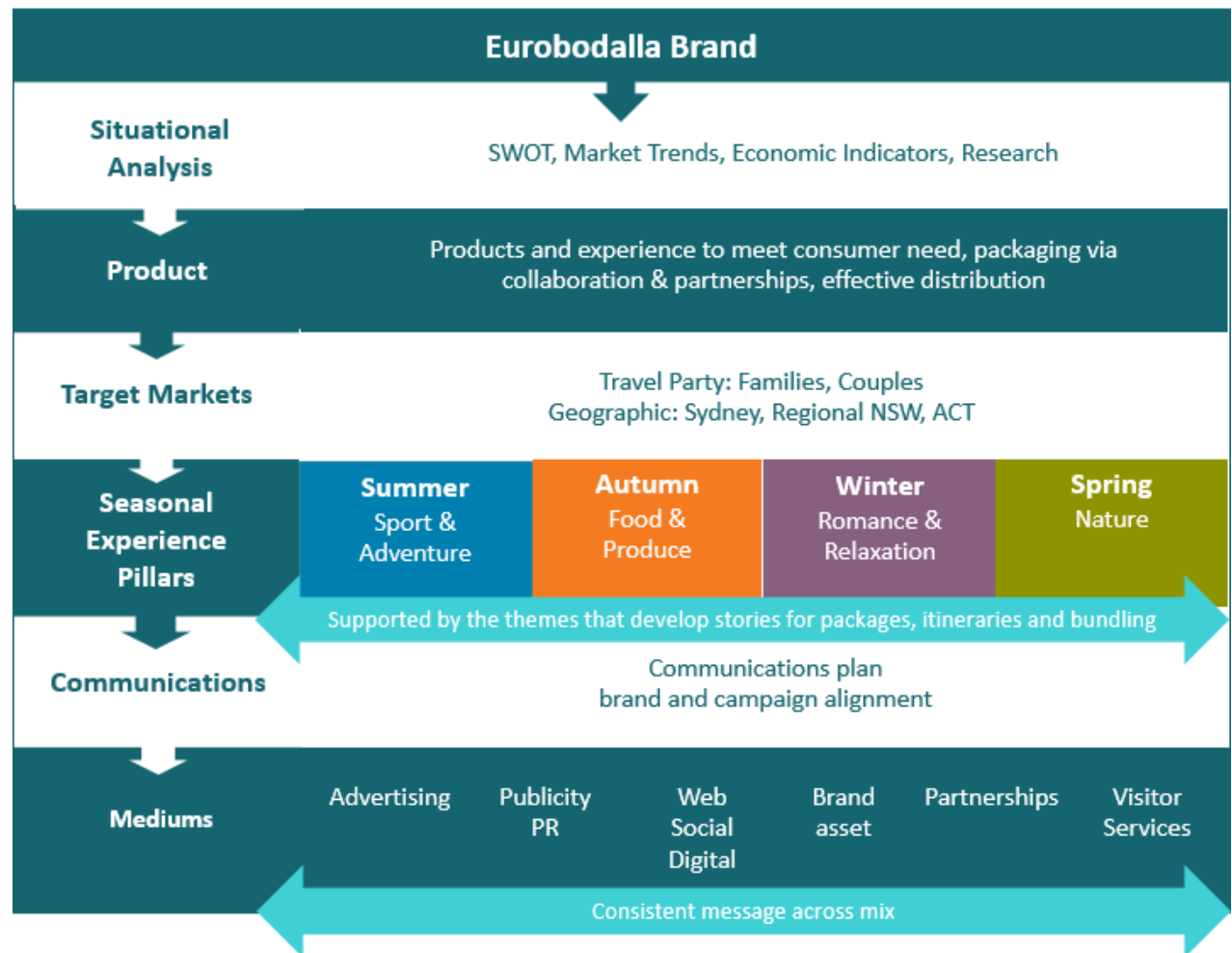
- *Achieve a sustainable, innovative tourism economic sector*
- *Preserve the natural environment*
- *Cooperate and support each other*
- *Communicate effectively with our community to foster acceptance and support for tourism*
- *Celebrate and offer a diversity of quality visitor experiences related to our natural environment, culture and heritage*
- *Welcome and care for our visitors*

# The marketing plan

## Marketing framework

The marketing framework is a planning tool that guides activity.

The framework links activities and integrates communication. The framework is a guide that supports a flexible and ready response for marketing opportunities.



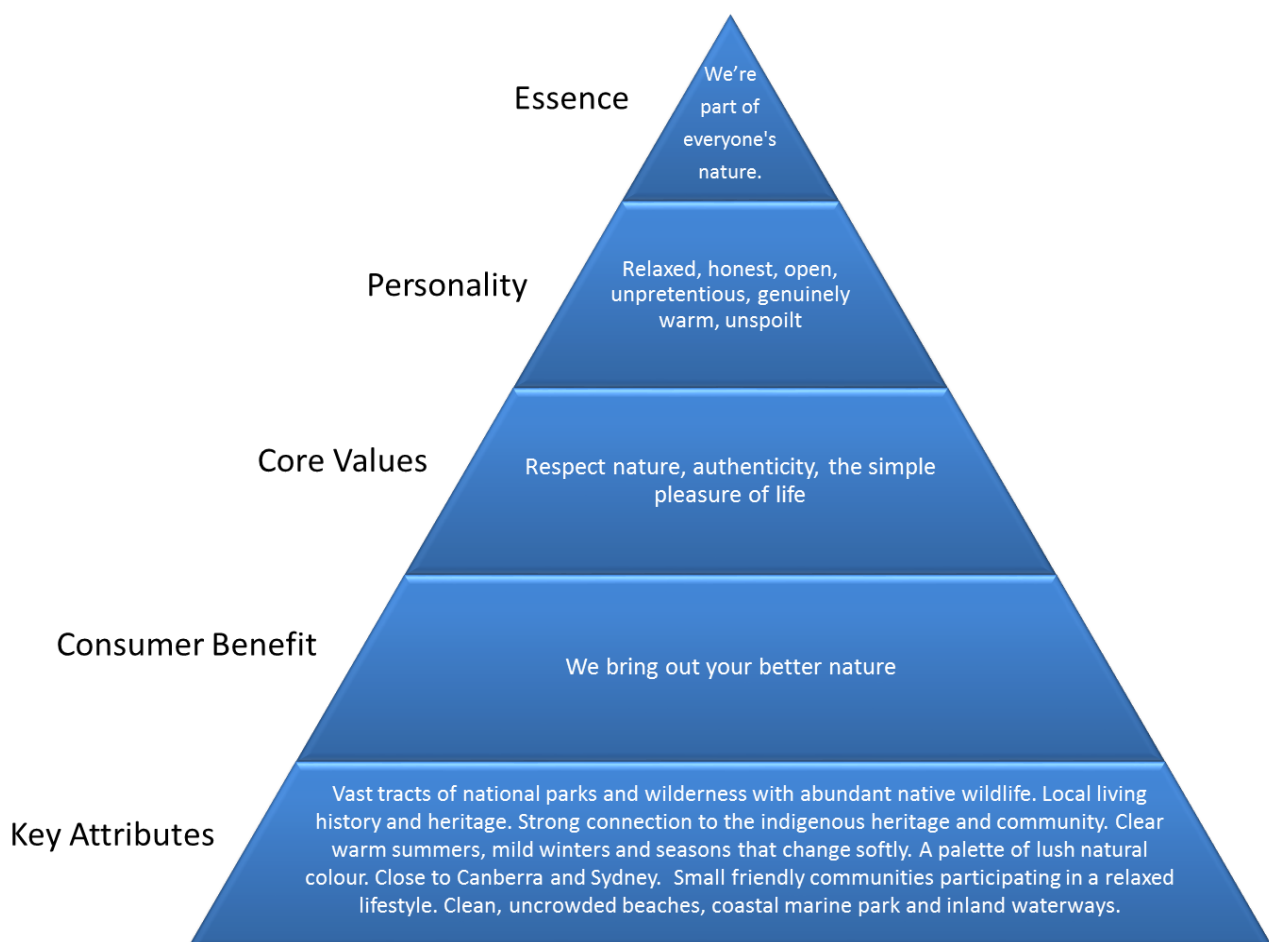
## The Eurobodalla brand

In 2008, Council developed a brand to be used for all tourism marketing. A Brand Pyramid was developed as a tool to establish a clear brand identity and to inform campaigns and communications.

The brand offers the consumer benefit; *bring out your better nature*. Its personality is relaxed and moving at a slower pace; friendly, wondrous and genuine and seeks to elicit a desired response in the consumer; “I really should do myself a favour and spend some time in Eurobodalla”.

Since 2013, Eurobodalla has also been a partner in the Unspoilt South Coast NSW campaign. The ‘unspoilt’ campaign message aligns well with the Eurobodalla Brand.

A Brand Pyramid is a useful way to visually demonstrate brand attributes. The goal is to build a pyramid that result in customer loyalty. A Brand Pyramid includes a foundation that builds upon itself. The personality of Eurobodalla’s Brand demonstrates how consumers respond on an emotional level.



## Situational analysis of tourism in Eurobodalla

### **Strengths:** positive controllable factors to build on

- Clear brand position
- Land of many waters - most waterways in NSW – rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, islands
- Water lovers playground
- Natural assets and wildlife
- Authentic towns and villages
- Ancient geological sites
- Established trails
- Climate
- Strong partnerships
- Major source markets (Canberra, Sydney, Riverina) within 2 to 4 hours' drive
- Strong partnerships
- Ongoing research to inform direction
- Infrastructure - boat ramps, pathway, playgrounds, parks
- Financial commitment from Council
- Destination Management Plan
- Potential for further funds in future years through change in VIC service delivery
- Emerging food tourism

### **Weaknesses:** negative factors to be constrained or minimised

- Heavily reliant on small business
- Tourism businesses with limited digital capability and investment - impacts online conversion and bookings from destination marketing activity
- Lack of quality, high-yield experiences
- Inconsistent opening hours of food, retail, activities and experiences
- customer service
- Ageing and diminishing tourism accommodation – motels, hotels, units, holiday houses
- Low investment across all tourism businesses
- Low capacity to meet the needs of international visitors
- Mixed community ambassadorship
- Slow internet in holiday periods
- Lack of free Wi Fi

### **Opportunities:** external factors to be explored

- Aboriginal tourism
- Accessible tourism
- Food tourism
- National Parks nature based tourism product
- Canberra International airport
- Growth in international inbound into Australia
- Converting and increasing expenditure of highway travellers and domestic day visitors
- Economic issues and consumer confidence - weakening Australian dollar: overseas holidays less affordable
- Tourism Australia's Aquatic and Coast Experiences campaign
- Weddings

### **Threats:** external factors to be aware of

- Trend for shorter holidays and breaks
- Growth in Australian's outbound travel
- Preference for home-based expenditure led by popular TV shows – renovating, cooking, gardening
- Growing expenditure of disposable income on home-based entertainment
- Canberra's new culture – food, entertainment, events and shopping
- ACT airport may impact Canberra as a major domestic source market through ready access to outbound travel
- Development of Merimbula airport
- MR92 – new road to Nowra diverts travellers at Braidwood
- Infrastructure investment into competing LGA's - Shoalhaven, Bega Valley, and Snowy Mountains
- Closure of major highways - no reasonable alternative access/exit options
- Natural disasters
- Economic issues and consumer confidence

## Target markets and travel groups

This plan identifies core domestic target markets as the Family and Couples travel groups. This aligns with markets identified for the cooperative South Coast Unspoilt campaign developed by South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation and Destination NSW.

The primary geographic source markets targeted include ACT, Sydney and Regional NSW, in particular the South Coast and Riverina.

Core international target markets are identified as Family, Couples and Groups in line with Tourism Australia research.

Understanding who our customers are and what they want helps develop marketing campaign that meet their needs and expectations.

Market research guides the planning of marketing activities. Information about target markets and travel groups is included in the Research and Tracking Appendix, which Council makes available to industry on its website. A comprehensive collection of data on the Caravan and Camping Sector has been added to the 2016-17 Research and Tracking Appendix.

Council will continue to subscribe to the Eurobodalla Tourism Monitor, which analyses available data as a ten-year time series referencing Tourism Research Australia's National Visitor Survey and the International Visitor Survey.



## Seasonal pillars

The framework includes four seasonal themes that support a consistent message and greater cut-through. The seasonal themes and their supporting ‘always on’ themes have been selected to meet target market interests and motivators, and Eurobodalla’s available product offerings. Eurobodalla’s destinations and its towns and villages form the base story in all themes.

<b>SPRING</b>	<b>Nature</b>
<b>Messages</b>	<p>National parks and wilderness with abundant wildlife</p> <p>Reconnect and recharge, rediscover the simple pleasure of life</p> <p>Relax together in natural surroundings</p> <p>There’s plenty to do and see close by</p> <p>Your holiday is full of shared memories</p> <p>You’ll find outdoor and nature activities that everyone can enjoy</p> <p>The whole family / the two of you - can be together</p> <p>Escape the crowds and connect with one another</p> <p>Experience new and different things</p>
<b>Example Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Montague Island</li> <li>• Mogo Zoo</li> <li>• Birdland Animal Park</li> <li>• Botanic Gardens</li> <li>• Bird-watching</li> <li>• Walks</li> <li>• National Parks</li> <li>• Marine Parks</li> </ul>
<b>Support themes</b>	Self-drive trails, attractions, events, weddings, arts, culture and heritage, pets on holidays, accessible holidays, shopping, local produce.

<b>SUMMER</b>	<b>Sport and adventure</b>
<b>Messages</b>	<p>It’s all about being outdoors and having fun together</p> <p>Everyone can have a go – lessons and tours</p> <p>This is the best place to try something new</p> <p>Try new things and connect with each other</p> <p>Bring out your adventurous spirit</p>
<b>Example Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquatic and Coastal Experiences aligned with Australia campaign</li> <li>• Fishing – in particular inland during 2015-16</li> <li>• Surf, kayak, SUP</li> <li>• Dive or snorkel</li> <li>• Skydive, seaplane - over water</li> <li>• Golf - Narooma Golf Course – aquatic experience</li> <li>• Cycling</li> </ul>
<b>Support Themes</b>	Self-drive trails, attractions, events, weddings, arts, culture and heritage, shopping, local produce.

<b>AUTUMN</b>	<b>Food and Produce</b>
<b>Messages</b>	<p>Food trails</p> <p>Authentic local food experiences and products</p> <p>Fresh, locally grown food to share for breakfast, lunch and dinner</p> <p>Reconnect through sharing, preparing, cooking local food</p> <p>Enjoy the simple pleasures of local food</p> <p>Get a taste of the food and produce of Eurobodalla</p> <p>Get to know who grows your food</p> <p>Good food makes you feel better</p> <p>Do yourself a favor and eat well</p> <p>Our food is grown in Unspoilt waterways and lush hinterland</p>
<b>Example Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farmers markets – SAGE, Tilba Growers market and others</li> <li>• Dairy products and cheese experiences</li> <li>• Seafood – restaurants and cafes</li> <li>• Australia’s Oyster Coast and oysters</li> <li>• River Cottage</li> <li>• Restaurants, cafes, bakeries</li> </ul>
<b>Support Themes</b>	Self-drive trails, through towns and villages: attractions, events, weddings, arts, culture and heritage, pets on holidays, accessible holidays, shopping.

<b>WINTER</b>	<b>Romance &amp; Relaxation</b>
<b>Messages</b>	<p>Relax, reconnect, recharge, unwind</p> <p>Take the time to reconnect</p> <p>Have a break from normal routines</p> <p>Create shared memories</p> <p>Try new things and connect with each other via shared experiences.</p> <p>Escape the crowds</p> <p>Share special moments</p> <p>Indulge and spoil each other</p> <p>Immerse yourself in another world, another time</p>
<b>Example Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunset picnics, secluded beaches - fresh local produce</li> <li>• Aboriginal cultural experiences</li> <li>• Ancient geological sites</li> <li>• Sightseeing and drives</li> <li>• Boutique accommodation and fireside stays</li> <li>• Walks</li> <li>• Eating out</li> <li>• Health and wellbeing, classes and treatments</li> </ul>
<b>Support Themes</b>	Self-drive trails, through towns and villages: attractions, events, weddings, arts, culture and heritage, pets on holidays, accessible holidays, shopping, restaurants.

## Marketing mediums and activities

This plan will be delivered through:

1. Brand assets - images, video, print brochures, display
2. Product development and bundling
3. Web, digital and social
4. Public relations and media
5. Advertising
6. Event marketing
7. Partnerships
8. Campaigns

### 1. Brand assets - images, video, print brochures, display

The marketing framework will guide the development and use of images and video assets with a specific focus on video content.

The Eurobodalla Holiday Guide continues as the primary print marketing asset with an 80,000 print run and broad distribution.

The suite of professionally produced special interest brochures is regularly updated, and targeted distribution identified. The suite includes kayaking, cycling, ancient geological sites, snorkelling, walks, scenic drives, caravan and camping, whale watching, fishing and 101 things to do.

In-house publications distributed from the visitor centres will be reviewed and updated and the cost of professional print and distribution investigated.

### 2. Product development and bundling

Eurobodalla's existing offering of products and experiences will be bundled to meet consumer needs and opportunities for greater yield and spend; and developed and extended through stories, itineraries, packages, trails and journeys. Development around food, aboriginal culture, earth history and aquatic and coastal experiences will be explored for the domestic and international markets.

Research and development on existing accessible tourism product will continue in 2016-17.

Industry will be encouraged to collaborate to develop holiday packages, special offers and deals, and these will be promoted across relevant marketing mediums and will contribute to the 'Unspoilt' campaign.

Special interest itineraries will continue to be developed and promoted.

### 3. Web, digital and social

The Digital Strategy directs Council's tourism activities in the digital space. It is regularly reviewed and priorities set to ensure strategy remains relevant. In 2016-17, the primary activity will be the ongoing development of [www.eurobodalla.com.au](http://www.eurobodalla.com.au) with the following priorities:

- ATDW industry participation
- Build new content and review existing content
- Integration of social media and user-generated content
- PR and news integration via blogs
- Improved tracking for business e.g. click to reveal business contacts
- Investigate control of ATDW content through a data control interface
- Conduct first annual independent review of the site

Other digital and social media activities for 2016-17 include:

- Adwords to direct traffic to strategically important pages
- Facebook focus on directing traffic to web and targeting special interest groups
- Build on Instagram engagement to create a premium gallery of user generated images to showcase Eurobodalla as a destination
- Flickr – continue to build the platform as an industry and media resource
- YouTube video content to populate the website and build a presence on the platform

### 4. Public relations and media

Public relations and media activities raise awareness in all markets and provide a source of authentic travel tips and inspiration. We will continue to build media relationships and host travel writers, film crews and journalists to secure video and editorial promotion across print, digital, social, TV, film and radio both in Australia and internationally. Industry will be encouraged to collaborate in public relations and media hosting opportunities.

To attract PR & media we will collaborate with industry for holiday packages, special offers and competition prizes.

### 5. Advertising

In addition to our major cooperative 'Unspoilt' campaign, year-round brand and tactical advertising in print and digital media publications target specific domestic markets and special interest groups.

Selection of media is assessed on distribution and readership profiles and value for money. Supporting free editorial is secured whenever possible. Examples of 2015-2016 advertising is included at the end of this document.

## 6. Events

Events are an important drive of visitation and address seasonality issues. All opportunities to promote Eurobodalla's events through relevant channels will be leveraged including the What's On section of [www.eurobodalla.com.au](http://www.eurobodalla.com.au), digital, social media, radio, the Eurobodalla Holiday Planner, Council's Living in Eurobodalla quarterly residents' newsletter, and other regional print publications and websites.

## 7. Partnerships

Council will continue to leverage and support strategic partnerships with neighbouring regions, other levels of government and private sector stakeholders including:

- Eurobodalla tourism businesses
- South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation – Eurobodalla, Sapphire Coast, Shoalhaven, Kiama, Shellharbour
- Destination NSW
- Visit Canberra - domestic and international
- Canberra and Region Joint Organisation of Councils
- Australia's Oyster Coast
- Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc.
- Tourism Australia

## 8. Campaigns

Campaigns are designed to support the seasonal experience pillars identified in the marketing framework. Council will participate in and initiate the following campaigns in 2016-17, and be responsive to other opportunities. Domestic and international campaigns may be developed and offered to industry with the aim of driving traffic to industry websites such as holiday packages, deals, special offers, gift vouchers. These will be implemented if there is sufficient industry partnership.

### *Domestic marketing campaigns will include:*

- Unspoilt South Coast NSW - South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation and Destination NSW (see detail below)
- Destination Weddings - Eurobodalla tourism businesses (see note)
- Tourism is everyone's business – local residents
- South Coast Drive – possible campaign with South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation (see detail below)

### *International and other domestic campaigns*

- Canberra's Gourmet Trails and Canberra's Coast and Country Drive – Visit Canberra
- Australia's Coastal Wilderness - Sapphire Coast Tourism and East Gippsland
- Destination NSW - various
- Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc. (see detail below)



- Australia's Aquatic and Coastal Experiences— Tourism Australia
- Grand Pacific Drive
- Visit Canberra and Destination NSW trade missions, partnerships, showcases

#### *Unspoilt South Coast NSW cooperative campaign*

This collaborative campaign with South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation and Destination NSW continues to be a primary domestic marketing activity in 2016-17.

In 2013 the South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and Destination NSW collaborated on the development and implementation of an integrated destination appeal campaign. The campaign was created with a unique positioning for the South Coast region in the marketplace - a position which highlighted the South Coast's best asset; its unspoilt natural beauty.

To maximise the reach and potential of this campaign, the South Coast RTO's five local tourism organisations pooled their marketing budgets and applied for matched funding from the Regional Visitor Economy Fund. Eurobodalla Shire Council partners with Sapphire Coast Tourism, Shoalhaven City Council, Kiama Tourism, and Shellharbour Tourism.

South Coast RTO embarked on a unique working relationship with Destination NSW to deliver the 'Unspoilt' South Coast NSW campaign. In April 2016, Destination NSW stated that even with increases in international, domestic and intra-state competition, the South Coast's commitment and investment into the campaign platform has exceeded KPIs and targets and continues to set records in growth and out-perform other regions including the North Coast in terms of website traffic on VisitNSW.com. The most recent campaign update demonstrates that the 'Unspoilt' positioning resonates with the core target audience.

The campaign is kept fresh and relevant with new imagery, content and experiences to increase audience engagement and intention to visit. Campaign activity is underpinned by research and performance metrics and includes digital, social, print, outdoor advertisements, online travel agent partnership, and trade and media famils.

#### *South Coast Drive*

In 2016-17, the South Coast RTO may continue with its work to develop a South Coast Drive proposal with the aim of applying for contestable Regional Visitor Economy Funding. At the time of writing this report, the future structure of South Coast RTO is unknown from 1 July.

#### *Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc.*

Sydney-Melbourne Touring Inc. is a strategic partnership marketing alliance between Tourism Victoria and Destination New South Wales. The alliance is also supported by regional tourism organisations along each of the key touring routes. The Sydney-Melbourne Touring Strategic Marketing Program gives its members and product partners access to the increasing number of international visitors taking this option via a comprehensive marketing program.

Targeting the international travel trade, the program aims to increase global awareness of Sydney to Melbourne touring options, encourage additional international visitation and increase the level of partner product sold through international wholesalers. Itineraries are featured in over 50 key trade wholesale programs worldwide, with the UK, Europe, New Zealand, North America and South East Asia being the strongest self-drive markets.

## Initiatives

### International program

Growing international visitation makes good sense for Eurobodalla – it is a high yield market that travels at different holiday times to our domestic markets, and outside our peak seasons. Tourism Australia’s research on international markets is a great resource and shows us that the NSW south coast offers an appealing proposition and meets the needs of some significant international markets.

The commencement of international routes to Singapore and Wellington New Zealand at Canberra Airport in September 2016 is a ‘game-changer’ for Eurobodalla. Batemans Bay is less than 2 hours from an international airport. Council will proactively work with businesses on product development initiatives and collaborate with partners such as the ACT Government tourism agency Visit Canberra, Destination NSW, Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc., Sapphire Coast Tourism, Bega Valley Council and Snowy Mountains Tourism, to raise awareness of Eurobodalla and its destinations at sales and trade missions and display events.

A new web resource will be developed for trade enquiries to connect businesses who are ‘international ready’ to buyers. This resource will be a specific marketing tool used as a call to action at international trade events and showcases.

Council will work with Destination NSW on a specific plan to boost export-ready product in Eurobodalla with the aim of growing the number of international ready businesses by ten in 2016-17.

Wholesale activity in international markets will be supported by digital and social communication to reach free and independent travellers and collaboration with Sapphire Coast Tourism on some digital marketing will be investigated.

### Destination weddings

During 2015-16, Council participated in a South Coast Regional Tourism destination weddings project with the aim of investigating if there was sufficient interest and capacity to develop a destination weddings marketing campaign proposal to seek contestable funding support from Destination NSW. A workshop hosted by Council in Eurobodalla established a database of businesses. The RTO proposal was put on hold as the five LGAs and the businesses they represent did not agree on its potential and on investigation, it appeared unlikely to meet the contestable funding KPIs, which require quite robust outcomes.

Following this, a group of pro-active business people collaborated and there is now an established network committed to growing this market. The group have already represented the south coast at weddings expos in Sydney and more are planned. Council has provided some minor assistance with promotion and by 2016-17, a designated weddings section will be developed for eurobodalla.com.au. This new site will support the groups work and be promoted and used as a call to action for other marketing activity. In April 2016 the group through Mark Berry, was invited to submit a proposal to Council for other marketing support.

Council recognises that growing a successful destination weddings market for Eurobodalla requires product development, a sympathetic planning framework and suitable infrastructure. During 2016-17, the tourism advisory committee will be invited to provide advice to Council to establish if a Destination Weddings Strategy is required. A strategy would identify if Eurobodalla has capacity to grow as a weddings destination and if it should be a priority market: through an audit, market assessment, and by identifying opportunities and obstacles to growth.

### Accessible tourism

Council is committed to promoting Eurobodalla as an accessible tourism destination that is welcoming and inclusive of people of all ages and abilities. In Australia, it is estimated that 4.2 million people (18.5% of the population) have one of more disabilities (ABS 2012). Of this group 88%, take a holiday each year. The number of people with a disability, who have access requirements, increases to 35% when you include people with temporary disabilities resulting from injury or illness. The number of people seeking accessible holidays is even larger when you add people affected by disability including family and friends, seniors with restricted mobility and parents with young children.

Early in 2016, Council developed an accessible holiday campaign with the aim of collaborating with tourism businesses to promote accessible holiday itineraries, accommodation, eating out, attractions and activities. The campaign was not picked up by industry and some feedback from businesses was that support was needed for them to make the right information available online, on their websites.

During 2016-17 and as part of the marketing and business assistance program we will identify businesses that genuinely want to develop this market and work with them individually. We will also seek external funding and programs that may assist.

### Marketing and business assistance program

Eurobodalla's tourism industry is primarily made up of small businesses and Council recognises how hard it can be to juggle the priorities of working 'in' the business with working 'on' your business. Council's tourism and business team assists with practical and hands-on marketing help in areas such as:

- Review of and advice on the promotional information on your website
- Writing new web content
- Using good imagery to sell your business – web and print

- Improving or setting up a new Get Connected ATDW listing
- Social media
- Using your database for e-marketing
- Preparing a simple and achievable marketing plan – setting a marketing budget
- Aligning marketing with our programs
- Review of, and advice on print brochures, signs etc.
- Advertising – why and where
- Product development – meeting consumer needs
- Developing packages and partnerships
- Identifying the target markets for your business
- Using your database for e-marketing
- How to work with travel media and journalists
- Using the Research Appendix and consumer insights

In addition, Council facilitates industry workshops, seminars, events and networking activities, and works with Destination NSW, South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation and other government and industry bodies to secure useful tourism training and development resources and events.

Council's monthly *Tourism News* subscriber email newsletter is used to provide invitations, update and news to Eurobodalla's tourism industry. In May 2016, the newsletter had around 350 subscribers.

### Food tourism

During 2015-16, food trails were created and added to the website and pushed out through digital and social activity and the PR and visiting journalist program. A print version will be produced in 2016-17. Food trails work will continue in 2016-17 and assistance will be offered to business interested in developing food products and experiences, and bundling and packaging.

Strategic work on food tourism may be undertaken as part of the DMP review.

### Event and conference tourism

Events and conference are important drivers of tourism. A strategic approach to attracting events and conferences that aligns with the tourism marketing direction can improve yield, attract investment, address seasonality issues, improve and establish destination awareness, attract repeat visitation, and encourage community pride and engagement in tourism. In Council, events and conferences are the responsibility of the business development and event team with tourism staff supporting through promoting events and providing visitor services.

In 2016-17 Council's business, development and events divisional manager Andrew Greenway will finalise an event and conference strategy with input from both the tourism and business advisory committees.

## Marketing resources 2016 –17

Council staff will deliver the activities in this program. In addition, the team manage strategic partnerships, industry relationships, internal and external advocacy, the Batemans Bay visitor centre and its staff, and the contract for the Narooma visitor centre.

- Cath Reilly - Executive Manager Corporate Communication and Tourism
- Kerrie- Anne Benton - Tourism Marketing and Visitor Services Manager (Narooma)
- Lysanne Cameron - Tourism Marketing and Visitor Services Manager (Batemans Bay)
- Sarah Cooper - Business Assistance Manager, Business Development
- Tina Young – part time administration

Budget: \$405,000 is allocated to marketing activities in Council's 2016-17 budget.

## Reference material and research

Research informs the plan through ongoing analysis and tracking of tourism jobs, expenditure, visitation, visitor behaviour and preferences, market segments, source markets, and industry trends. Research and tracking document are also available and updated on Council's website at <http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/living-in/about/tourism/marketing-campaigns-and-projects/research-and-tracking>

## Research

### EUROBODALLA SNAPSHOT – YEAR ENDING MARCH 2015

- 📄 Eurobodalla - end of Year - 30 June 2015 full report

### EUROBODALLA TOURISM– VISITATION TRENDS FROM THE YEAR ENDING SEPT 2015

- 📄 Tourism Monitor to YE Sept 2015 (PDF)
- 📄

### LGA VISITOR PROFILE – EUROBODALLA

- Year Ending September 2014:
  - 📄 <http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Eurobodalla-LGA-profile-1.pdf>
- Year Ending September 2013
  - 📄 Profile (PDF)
- COMPARATIVE VISITOR DATA
  - 📄 Comparative Visitor Data (PDF)

### INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

- Singapore
  - 📄 Understanding the Singapore Market (PDF)
  - Visitor Arrivals Data







- [http://www.tourism.australia.com/documents/TASI9055 Coastal Factsheet De  
stAusCon-V6.pdf](http://www.tourism.australia.com/documents/TASI9055_Coastal_Factsheet_De<br/>stAusCon-V6.pdf)
- Aquatic and Coastal Campaign
  - [http://www.tourism.australia.com./documents/FACTSHEETCampaignOverview\(1  
\)pdf](http://www.tourism.australia.com./documents/FACTSHEETCampaignOverview(1<br/>)pdf)
- Aquatic and Coastal – Industry Opportunities
  - [http://www.tourism.australia.com/documents/TNLA/TACA10045-TNLA-Aquatic-  
Coastal-Campaign-flyer.pdf](http://www.tourism.australia.com/documents/TNLA/TACA10045-TNLA-Aquatic-<br/>Coastal-Campaign-flyer.pdf)

## Other References

- Price Waterhouse Coopers and Tourism Australia, 2013 (Lysanne)
- Cox Wray 2011 (Lysanne)