

# Shoalhaven Tourism Advisory Group

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday, 22 February, 2022

**Location:** Council Chambers, City Administrative Centre, Bridge Road, Nowra

## Attachments (Under Separate Cover)

### Index

#### 3. Presentations

TA22.1 The Role of Tourism - Presentation

Attachment 1 Role of Tourism .....2

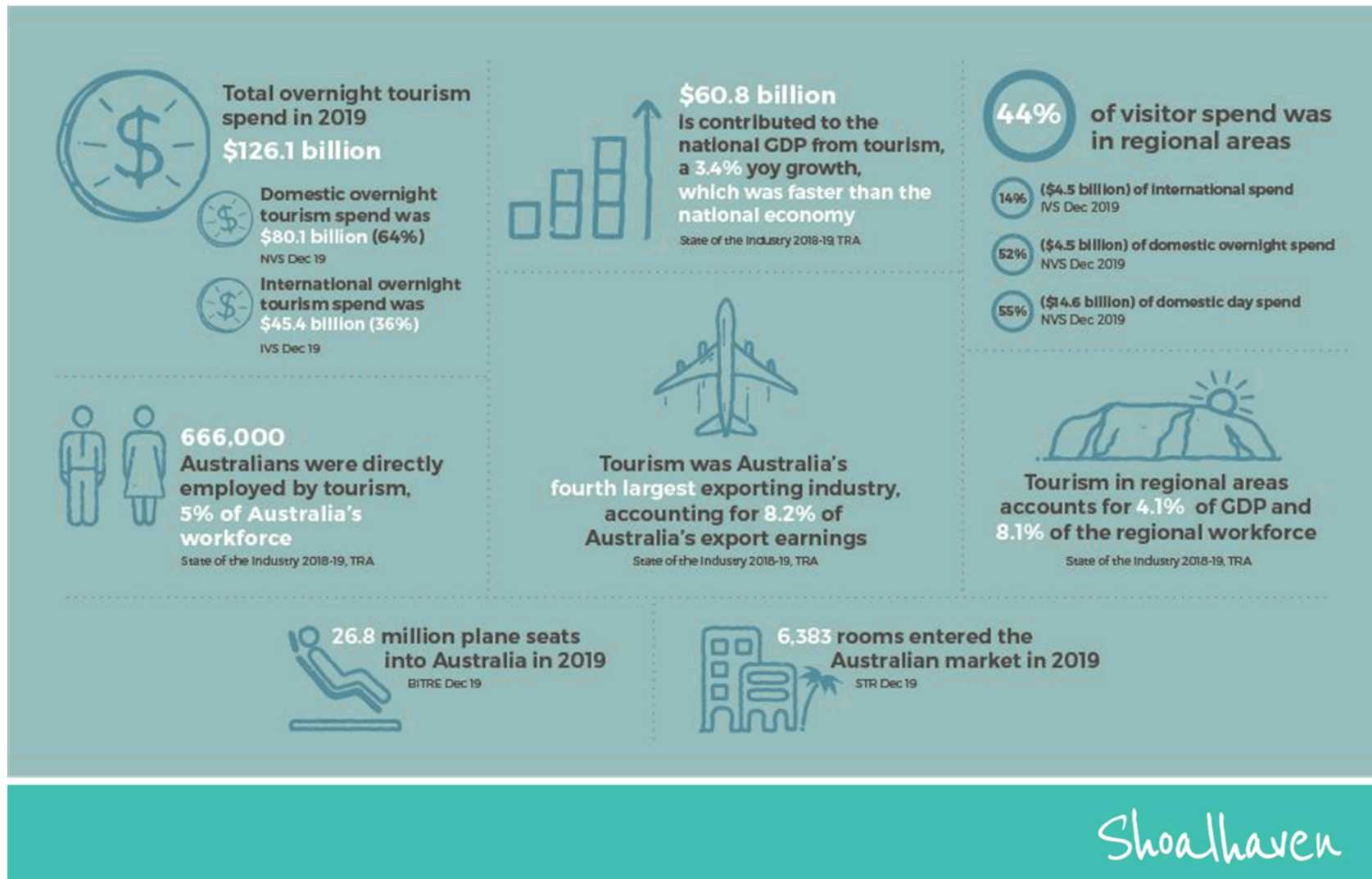


## Our Visitor Economy

MANY EXPERIENCES - ONE DESTINATION

Shoalhaven  
SOUTH COAST - NSW

# The National Role of Tourism



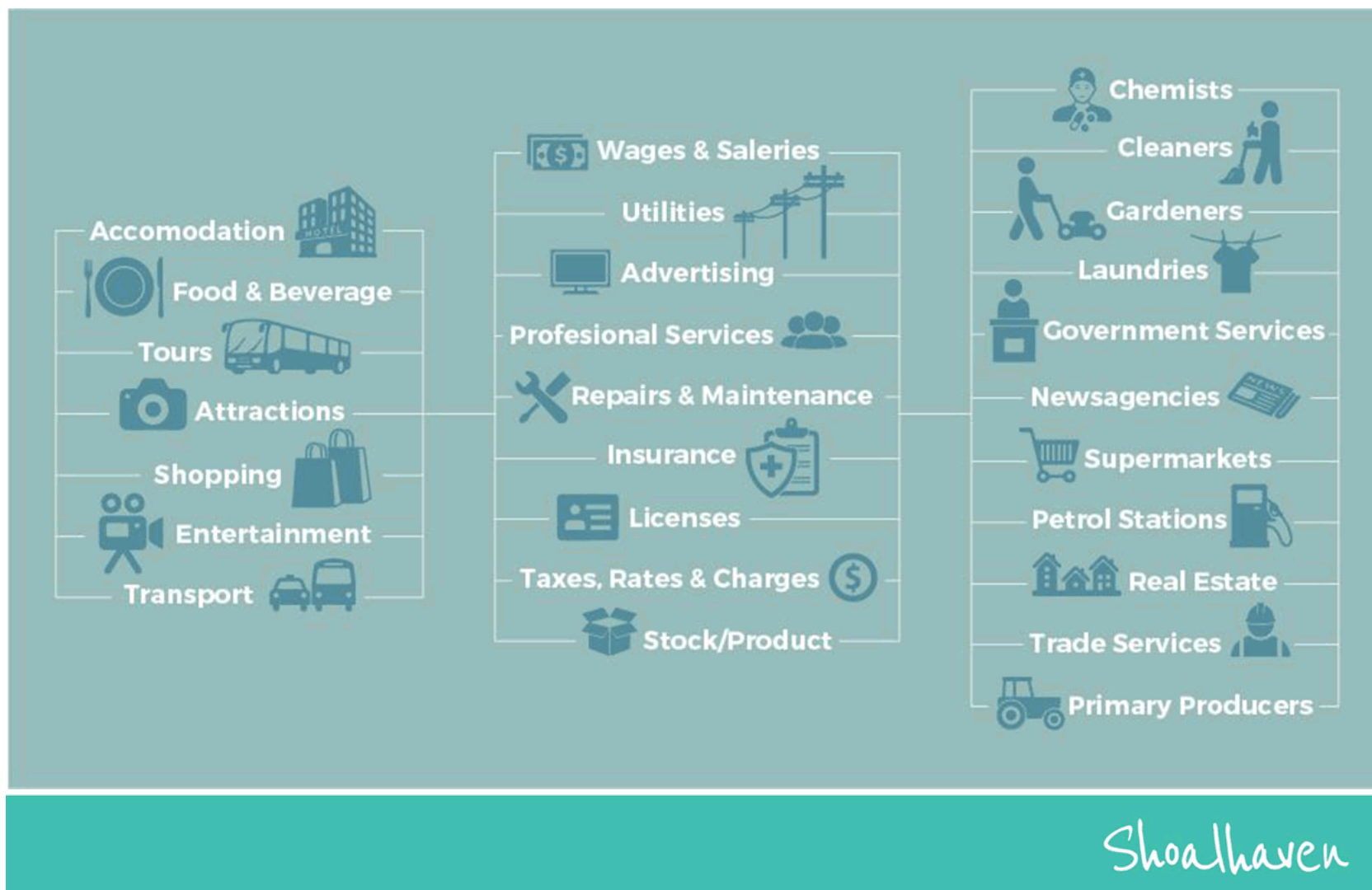
# Australia's Visitor Economy

The visitor economy is now recognised at all levels of government in Australia as an intrinsic, sustainable and driving part of economic development. It creates long term improvements in the liveability of cities, towns and rural life and significantly improves the prosperity of Australian communities.

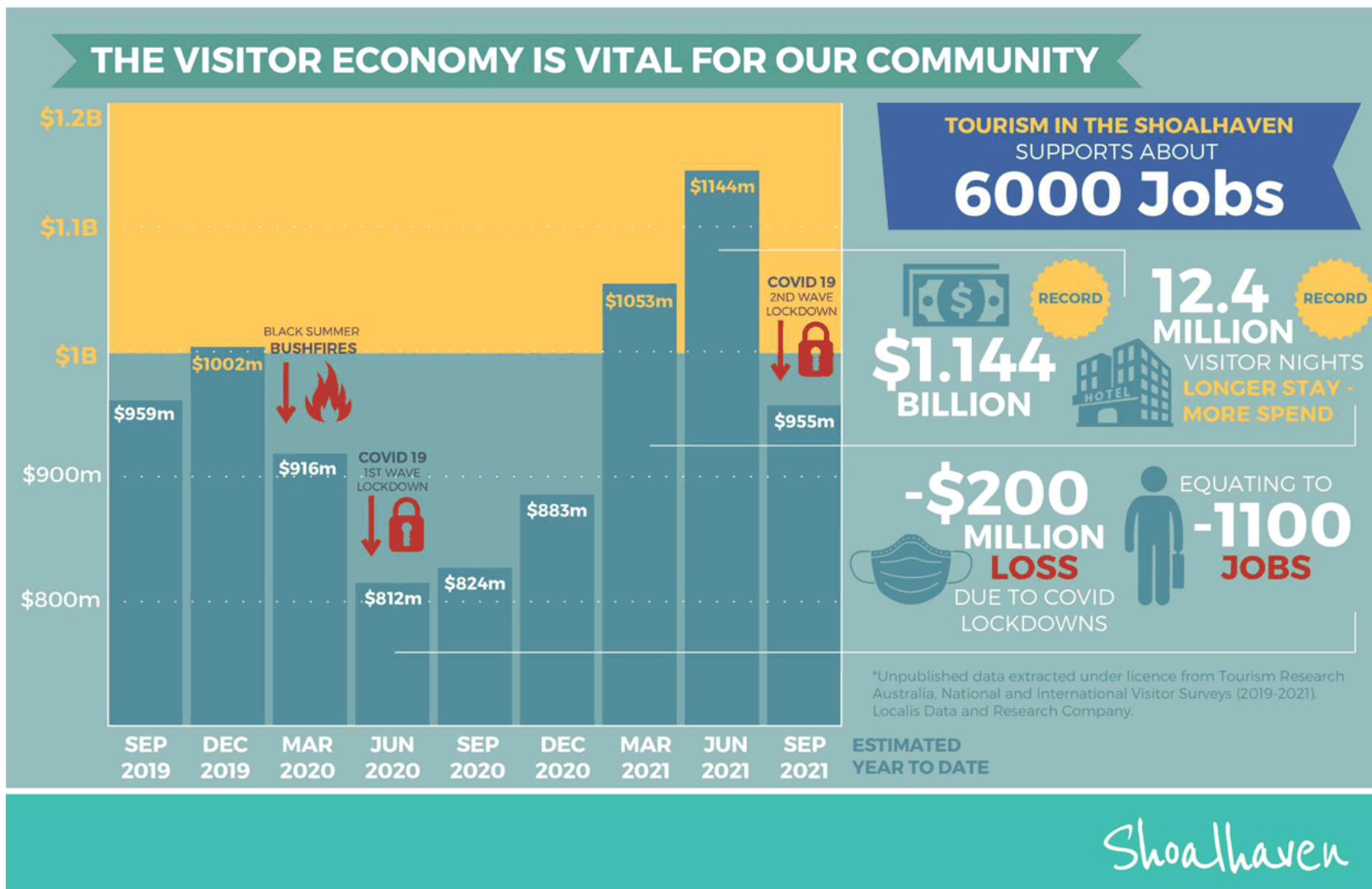


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# Visitor Economy Supply Chain



# Visitor Economy Shoalhaven



# Domestic Overnight Rankings

*Excludes Capital Cities and Gold Coast - Includes pre and en-route expenditure*

Number of  
overnight visitors:

**2nd in  
Australia**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunshine Coast

Number of  
visitor nights:

**3rd in  
Australia**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunshine Coast  
2<sup>nd</sup> Cairns

Gross Expenditure

**8th in  
Australia**

1<sup>st</sup> Cairns, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunshine  
Coast, 3<sup>rd</sup> Noosa,  
4<sup>th</sup> Byron, 5<sup>th</sup> Douglas,  
5<sup>th</sup> Townsville, 7<sup>th</sup>  
Launceston

This makes the Shoalhaven

**#1 the most visited LGA in regional NSW**

with domestic overnight travellers.

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# Why we need the Visitor Economy

- All levels of Government recognise the interconnectedness between the visitor experience and liveability; a great place to live is a great place to visit and improving visitor amenity improves liveability
- Council relies on visitor spend at galleries, entertainment centre, pools and caravan parks.
- Growing the visitor economy is one of the fastest and best ways for Local Governments to improve their own financial viability and capacity to deliver on community expectations into the long term.
- Growing jobs, bringing new dollars into the local economy, improving the profitability of local businesses as well as supporting new start-ups and attracting new major investment to the area, all act to improve the rate base.
- Businesses are important ratepayers and visitor spend helps strengthen the income Local Governments receive in rates.
- For many parts of rural and regional Australia, investment in the visitor economy is proving to be one of the most effective ways for local areas to be sustainable and flourish.
- Regionally, increased population growth can be a sustainable way to increase the capacity of the Council to deliver on community desires and expectations. Regional towns and centres have a significant opportunity to use their 'visitor appeal' as a means to attract new residents and grow their rate base.

# Role of Shoalhaven Tourism

Attract visitors in the shoulder and off season with marketing campaigns and event support.

**Stay longer, spend more**

Services to visitors who have travelled to the region.

**Visitor Services**

Represent the voice of the industry and the region throughout the community and beyond

**Advocacy**

Assisting operators to improve their services offering + offer leadership

**Help industry**

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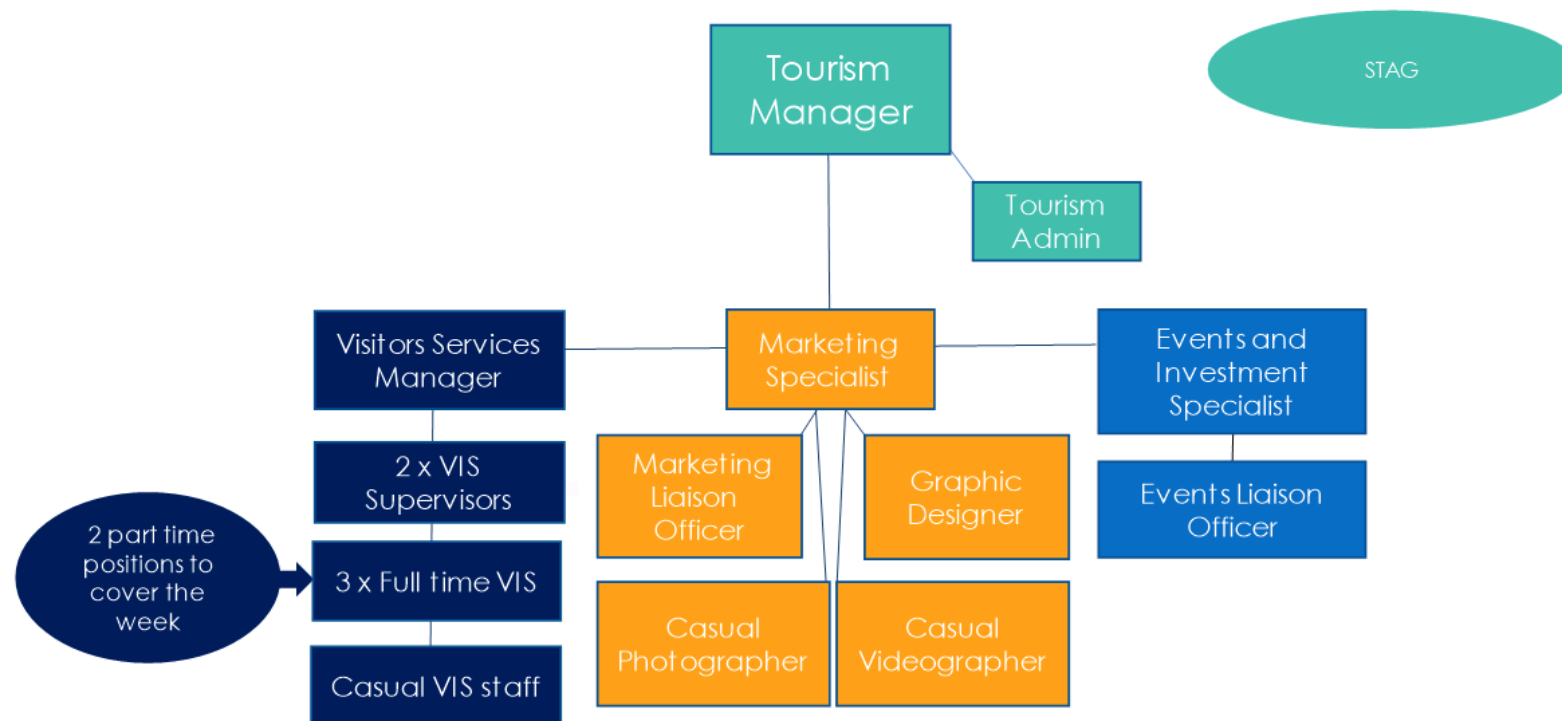
# Tourism Landscape



- Tourism can be funded a number of different ways – membership, levy, inside, outside council etc
- Shoalhaven Tourism sits within Council and all tourism businesses are supported by Council
- We have an Advisory Group Board – STAG
- And sit within a regional area Destination Sydney Surrounds South with Wollondilly, Shellharbour, Wollongong, Kiama, and Southern Highlands.
- We work closely with Destination NSW, Tourism Australia, Operators, our Advisory Group and Stakeholders and are answerable to our rate payers.

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# Organisational Overview



# Expectations of STAG

Represent the whole industry.

**Be the eyes, ears & voice**

Help us with key projects  
by actively participating.

**Working Groups**

Represent the Advisory Group  
at events

**Advocacy**

Undertake prescribed  
induction process

**Training &  
Self Development**

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# STAG Members' Strategy

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In 2018 Industry Representatives created a STAG strategic plan

- STAG working groups:  
strategy; product development; industry development
- Event Support Program Assessment help

Future (proposed)

- Workshop with members in March 2022
- Review strategic goals and put together STAG Strategy

# Recovery Action Plan

**Identifies the priority actions to reactivate the Shoalhaven as a year-round destination, valued for its quality environment and visitor experiences in the changed context of living with covid and increasing environmental pressures.**

Two key priority areas were identified each with subsequent actions

Industry Development & Advocacy	Driving Demand
Support industry and Improve ST Return on Effort by centralising Industry Development content and assets so they are easily accessible.	Make simple adjustments to existing campaigns which target high yielding travellers, so that they also consider changes in consumer travel patterns post covid and drive consistent visitation once borders reopen.
Visitor Services activities to support industry in recovery	Greater cross and intra-regional promotion to expand dispersal across the LGA.
Work with STAG on the key barriers to recovery facing the industry that are beyond ST's control i.e. skill shortages, insurance challenges and additional government support for Tourism Businesses	Continued promotion of ST Events Calendar as a way to drive visitation, support community and unite people in the off-season.
	Leverage the growth of the Conscious Traveller as these customers are best aligned with the regions offering and create the strongest potential to retain social licence with residents.
Identify opportunity areas for product development through collaboration with industry	

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# City Futures

- In 2021 Tourism was brought into the City Futures directorate with Economic Development, Property, and Planning
- A restructure of City Futures is underway, this will leverage opportunities of improved collaboration between Economic Development and Tourism
- There is a new Director being recruited to lead the City Futures team into the future.



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## Events & Investment

MANY EXPERIENCES - ONE DESTINATION

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# Big Picture

Events are important drivers of regional tourism and are considered important to the Shoalhaven region because they:

1. Provide tourists with an impetus to visit
2. Promote and enhance the Shoalhaven's image
3. Result in year-round (and at times mid-week) visitation and therefore year-round jobs
4. Deliver direct economic benefit to the region
5. Deliver community benefit



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# Role Overview

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- Promote and facilitate Event Investment in the Shoalhaven through relationship management and action
- Supply financial support for Tourism Events through the Event Support Program
- Support delivery of community events that achieve engaged, activated and liveable communities
- Promote the Shoalhaven City Council Brand through Events
- Issue Event Permits for events on Council Land (outside of COVID there are 130+ approvals per year)
- Approve Film Permits on Council Land
- Advocate for improved tourism infrastructure and facilities, and identify growth opportunities and gaps that will drive sustainable tourism growth in the region
- Feed into Council Masterplans from an Event and Tourism perspective
- Support Industry through Letters of Support and grant opportunities

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# Event Industry Today

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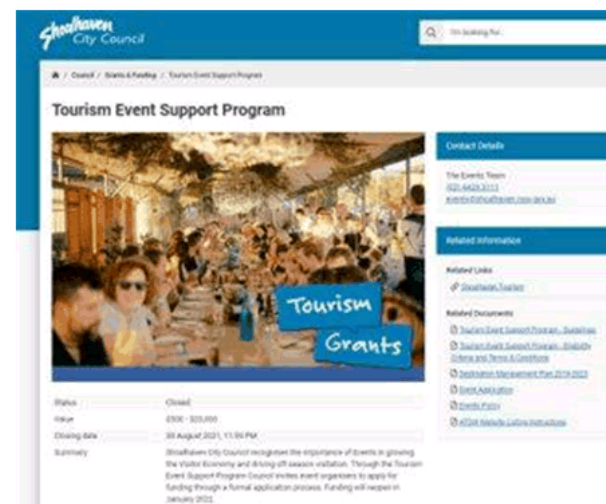
- The Events Industry has been decimated with COVID-19. This FY close to zero events occurred until November.
- Many Events Organisers have been forced to postpone 2-3 times.
- The NSW Government has invested over \$530 million to help the industry bounce back.
- Going forward, a big focus for us will be sustainably re-building and supporting industry as it recovers post COVID.

# Event Support Program

**Purpose:** Support events that drive off season visitation and align with ST objectives, markets and key offerings i.e. High yielding travellers with an interest in Food & Wine, Wellness, Art and Culture and Adventure.

## Highlights

- Currently 27 events are supported until year end 2022.
- COVID-19 wiped out our Event Calendar in 2020-2021.
- Up until Jan 2022, 3 supported events have gone ahead delivering an ROI surpassing \$5.5million.
- These events experienced increased ticket sales and ROI compared with years prior.
- 9 of the planned 27 events are NEW to the Shoalhaven Events Calendar in 2021/22 including:
  - Beta International Climbing Festival
  - The Viking Festival
  - Shoalhaven Celebration of Food
  - Mountain Bike Cross Country State Championships
  - NSW Masters Waterpolo Championships
  - Red Hot Summer Tour
  - NSW Beach Volleyball Tour – Junior Beach Champs
  - Shoalhaven UllaDulla Yoga, Health and Wellbeing Festival
  - Australian Beach Volleyball Tour



# Case Study – Fairgrounds Festival

## BACKGROUND

- Music Festival first secured in 2015
- Held in November each year
- Cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19

## OBJECTIVES

- Attract events that align with Shoalhaven's promotional pillars and brand identity
- Grow the Shoalhaven's portfolio of Music Events and Art & Cultural Events
- Drive visitation to the Shoalhaven throughout shoulder season
- Leverage marketing channels to promote Shoalhaven and increase spend of patrons whilst in region

## RESULTS

- Between 2015 and 2019 ROI has increased by \$1.86 million, going from \$1.1 to \$2.96 million
- In 2019 9,000 tickets were sold across two days
- 60% of visitors stayed overnight
- 2 x destination posts through Fairgrounds social channels reaching over 19,000 people
- Shoalhaven branding included on collateral, website, within EDMs and at the event
- Social media giveaway through Visit Shoalhaven channels
- Access to high-res event content
- Targeted media campaign



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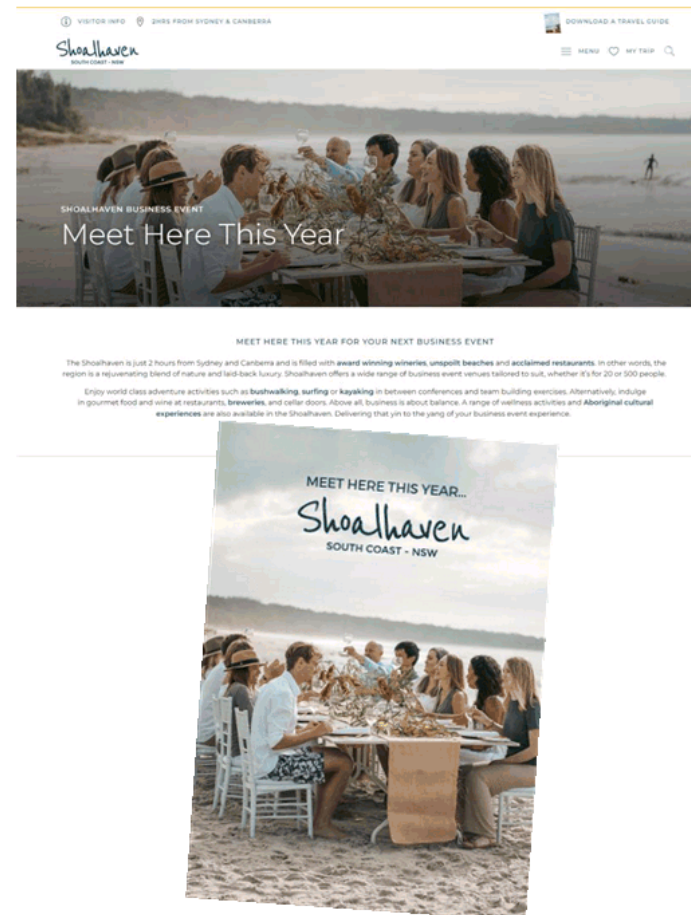
# Business Events

Capacity to drive mid-week visitation and attract high yielding and repeat travellers.

Shoalhaven has partnered with DSSS on a BE Product Development Program which includes one-on-one mentoring for operators, a BE Checklist and 2-day Workshop.

In 2021 we have:

- Launched a BE Brochure and landing page [www.shoalhaven.com/business](http://www.shoalhaven.com/business)
- Attended Get Local Business Event Exhibition to raise awareness of Shoalhaven as a BE Destination.
- Secured a Business Event Film Shoot in partnership with DNSW.
- Had 11 BE assets go live on the DNSW Content Library.



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# 2021/22 Achievements

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- Launch of revised Event Support Program
- Secured two community event grants through The Summer Night Fund and Small Business Month
- Facilitated a partnership between the CBD Committee and Shoalhaven Food Network which will see a monthly food event come to Nowra CBD as part of the planned placemaking activity
- Provided over 30 letters of support for industry
- Were the most successful LGA in NSW in terms of funding through the Regional Events Acceleration Fund Grant Program
- Partnership with DSSS and DNSW to grow mid-week visitation through Business Events
- Managed Council Event Approvals and Cancellations
- Approved 15 Filming permits on Council Land

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# What's Next?

- Rebuild the Events Calendar following COVID-19 and Bushfires
- Deliver Business Event Product Development Program in partnership with DSSS
- Promote grants to the community and develop a core competency in “winning” funds
- Streamline Councils Event Approval Process
- Work more collaboratively with Economic Development and Planning to ensure Tourism is adequately considered in Masterplans and Grant Opportunities
- Improve event reporting and content across the board
- Review of Councils current infrastructure plans to identify gaps and tourism opportunities. Fill gaps by linking opportunities, funding, and partners



what's on?  
**events**

Left: Fairgrounds Festival. Top to bottom: South Coast Food and Wine Festival, Husky Tri Festival, Bay Games, Burradak, Willinga Park, Big Country.

Learn more at [shoalhaven.com/events](https://shoalhaven.com/events)

Plan your next Shoalhaven trip around our exciting events calendar. Jump online for a full list of events, including world class music festivals, sporting events, local produce and artisan markets, or something special like cultural walks and arty workshops.

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## Marketing

MANY EXPERIENCES - ONE DESTINATION

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# Big Picture Marketing

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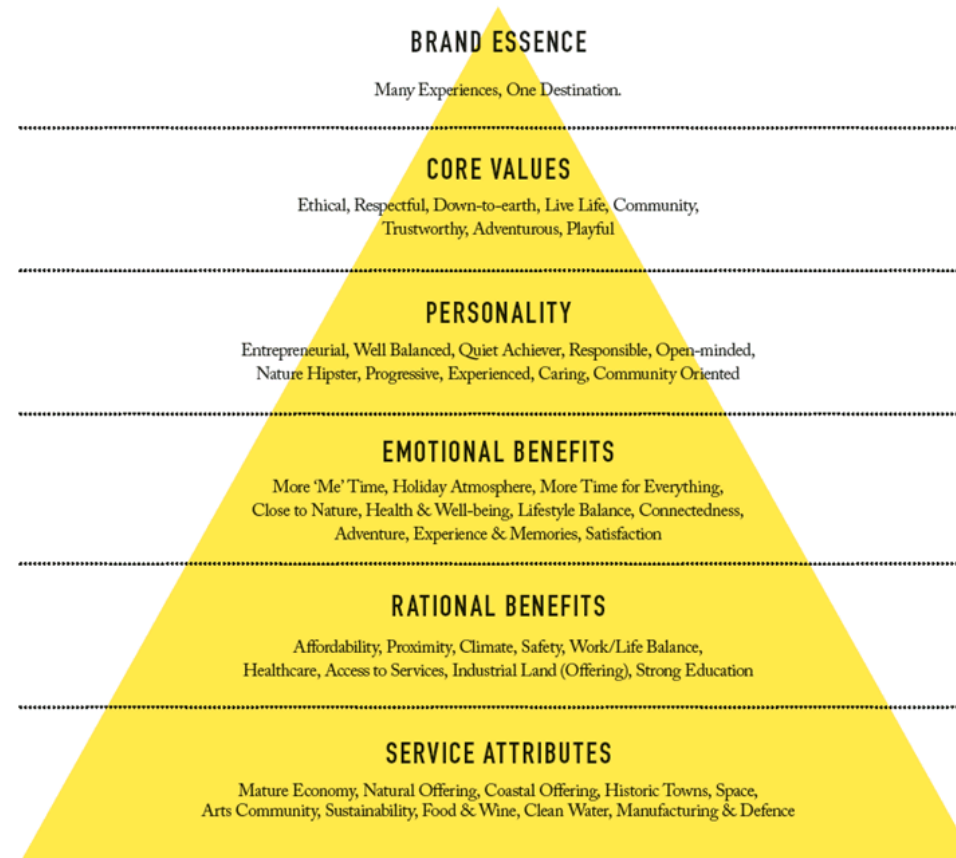
- Grow offseason visitation
- Manage and disperse peak season visitation
- Visitors to spend more & Stay longer
- To support local operators
- To sustain and grow core markets (younger families, over 50s, VFR)
- To ignite potential high yield industry market segments
- To leverage international market opportunities
- Support growth of Aboriginal Tourism businesses
- Continue to shine a light on inclusive tourism opportunities

# Promotional Pillars



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# Brand identity



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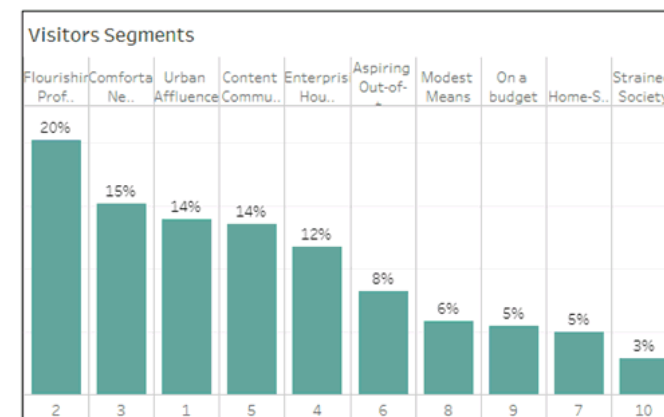
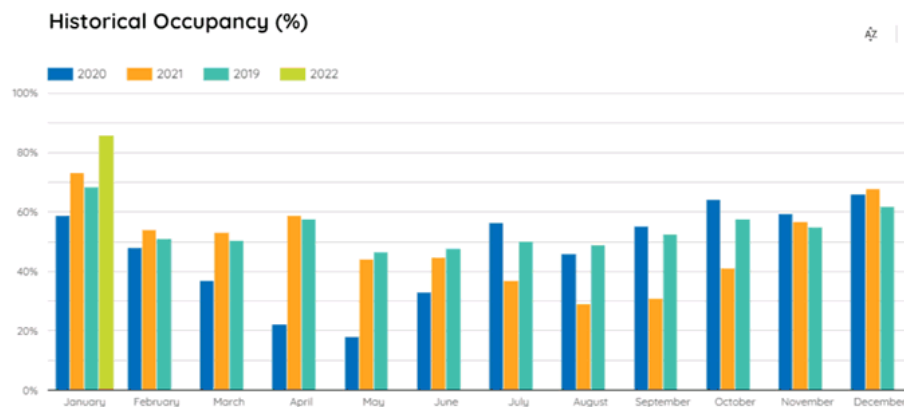
# Recent Achievements

- Grown total expenditure by visitors to \$1 billion
- 43% growth of off-season market 2015-18
- Gold at NSW and Silver at Australian Tourism Awards – 100 Beach Challenge
- \$50K grant for off-season campaign Wine & Whales
- Full refresh of shoalhaven.com - 500,000 annual page views
- Publicity reach to 724M in 2021
- Digital Marketing channels combined 90,450 followers (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Supporting Aboriginal business with mentorship
- Spend Here This Year Campaign and Rejuvenate Campaign
- Conscious Traveller consumer behaviour campaigns
- Sharable data & insights – Localis and leads to industry
- Free Content Support – photography & videography

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# Research

- Marketing decisions are based on research
- Tourism Research Australia quarterly surveys
- Big data from Localis - accommodation and mobility
- Share research with business chambers and operators



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# Collaboration

- Business Chambers, Tourism Bodies, Associations
- NATOC for Aboriginal Business Operators
- Birdlife Shoalhaven
- Slow Food South Coast
- It's Heaven Inclusive Tourism
- Discover Jervis Bay, international marketing
- South Coast Tourism Industry Association



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# Off-season strategies

Marketing focus is to grow off-season visitation from April to October and get visitors to spend more and stay longer, supporting year-round jobs.

Winter campaigns

- wine and whales
- art and culture
- adventure
- slow food movement

Mid-week target markets

- business events
- high yield International



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# Peak season strategies

## 100 Beach Challenge Campaign

- disperse visitors from hot spots during summer primarily

## Conscious Traveller

- behavioural change
- radio, social media, publicity

## Localhood

- visitors are just temporary locals
- visiting friends and relatives market makes up one third of all visitors
- local campaigns (seven wonders)
- connect community with value of tourism



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# Industry Development

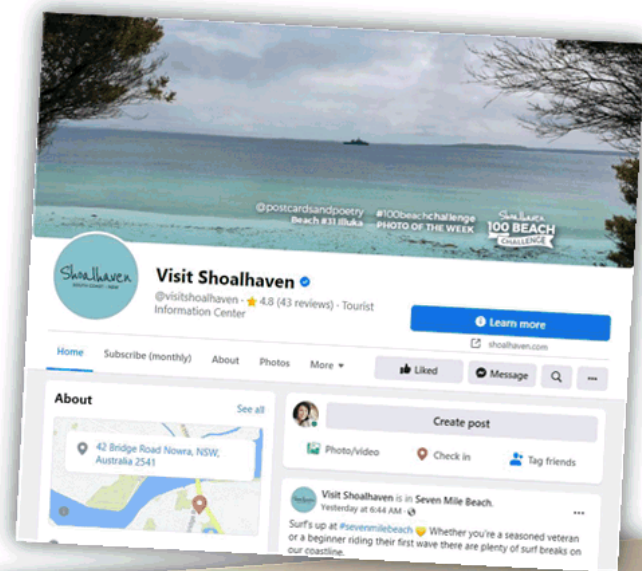
- Tourism Talk Newsletter, 1700 subscribers
- Networking nights a few times a year
- Precinct Marketing Grants, up to \$50K per year
- Business chamber support and engagement
- Connection to industry development and mentoring, NATOC, DSSS
- Free videography and photography



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# Digital Overview

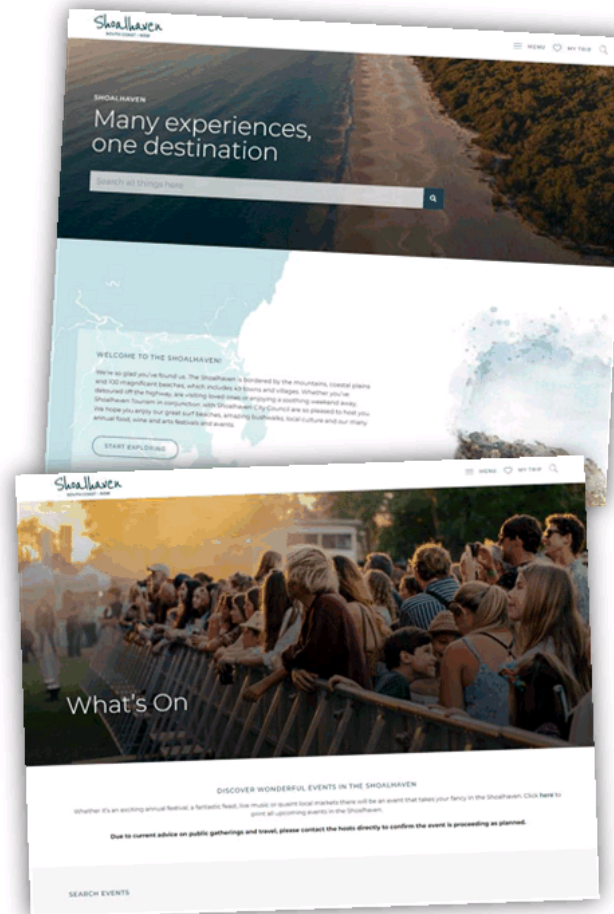
- Growing field of marketing and is essential element for success in engaging with customers
- Organic digital marketing includes Shoalhaven.com, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Vimeo
- Paid digital marketing includes google search, remarketing, YouTube ads and social media ads for campaign assets
- Monthly email newsletters to visitors for inspirational content goes to around 9000 people
- Monthly 'Tourism Talk' trade newsletter goes to around 1700 local businesses and industry
- Always testing, changing, experimenting and partnering to keep channels fresh and cutting edge



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# Website

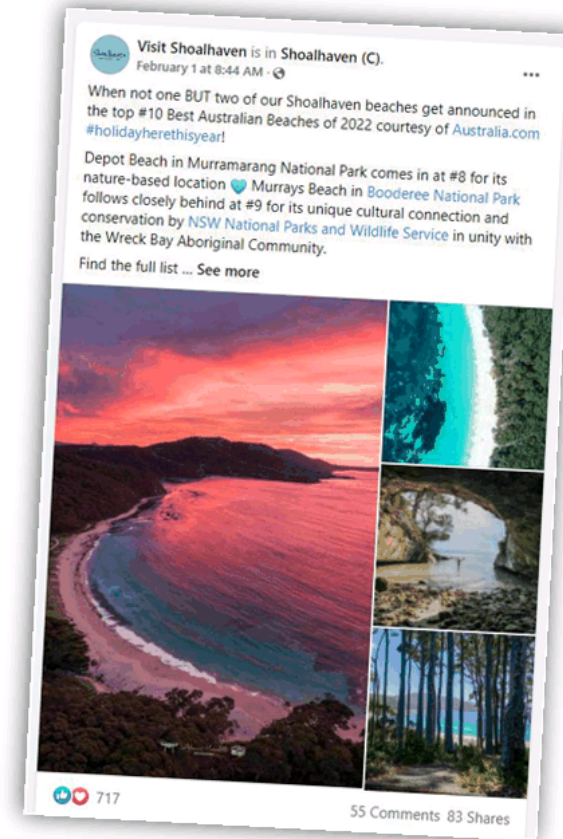
- Shoalhaven.com has around 500K users a year and 1million pageviews
- Destination website linking customers to over 2000 products
- Itinerary builder to assist customers in creating multiday trips
- Provides direct leads to industry as well as an accommodation booking service
- Comprehensive events page for the Shoalhaven that has around 1000 views per week
- Blogs and Shoalhaven Stories provide inspiration for travellers
- Visitor Guide and experience guide downloads with a mail out services are the main calls to action
- Drive traffic to shoalhaven.com and out to operators' channels from all our channels such as Google search, social media and outdoor advertising



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# Social Media

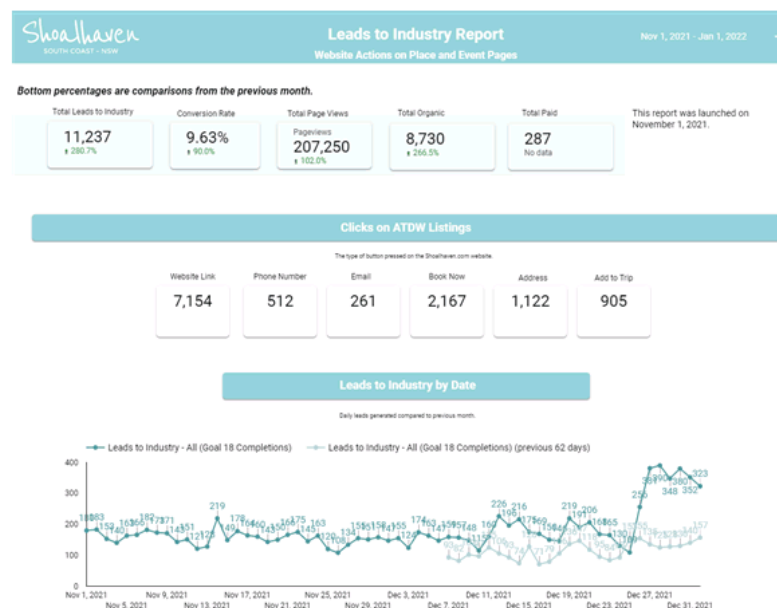
- Main channels are Facebook and Instagram with 54K and 34K followers respectively
- All content relates to promotional pillars modelled from Destination New South Wales strategies
- Weekly Shoalhaven Stories that are 'boosted' with marketing spend each week profile local business operators and why they love the Shoalhaven
- 100 Beach Challenge fan photo album is posted every Thursday to help provide alternate lesser-known beach ideas from users
- Partnerships with photographers and influencers assist in creating great content to share and provide content for own businesses channels
- Reach of around 200K and engagement of around 14K per month just on Facebook
- Instagram is growing faster reaching a younger audience and a focus on rich content via use of Reels and Stories



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# Leads to Industry

- NEW leads to industry tracking report, which helps us to follow website users' traffic from our site to operators' sites via ATDW
- A similar tracking system is used by Destination New South Wales
- This allows us to see the effectiveness of our campaigns generating leads directly to operators' sites to book as well as helps demonstrate the value of our destination marketing
- We generated this new data into a Google Data Studio report to allow for a clear representation of the leads
- Reports can be compiled and delivered monthly per town to business chambers and/or individual operators



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# Case Study – 100BC

## About

- Developed to assist with dispersal of visitors from hot spots
- Aimed at sharing the economic benefit around the region
- Includes a web app that allows visitors and locals to check-off the beaches as they visit them and race the leader board
- Campaign consists of weekly user engagement albums, summer/peak holiday periods social and radio advertising, 100 beach flyer in yearly Visitor Guide, downloadable 100 beach flyer on shoalhaven.com, content famils, and web app development

## Achievements over campaigns lifetime (since 2018)

- Won Gold at NSW Tourism Awards and Silver at Australian Tourism Awards
- 13,591 uses of the hashtag on Instagram
- 56,958 page views to [shoalhaven.com/100-beach-challenge](https://shoalhaven.com/100-beach-challenge)
- 6,091 total signs up to [100beachchallenge.com/login](https://100beachchallenge.com/login)

## What's New in 2022

- We developed and rolled out an offline beach check-in feature to allow users to still check-in when at remote beach locations following feedback from users
- Our 2021 – 2022 summer campaign has achieved:
  - 97,152 reach
  - 5,641 link clicks
  - 481 new account sign ups
  - 100 Beach Challenge had its biggest month for the year in December with users on the site
  - Total users for the quarter were up 249% year on year



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# Case Study – Conscious Traveller

## About

- Developed to assist with behaviour of visitors whilst in region
- Created in collaboration with Exec Comms, Rangers, DPI, NWPS and other departments to align with their priorities
- Campaign consists of summer/peak holiday periods social and radio advertising and printable assets for operators to display in their window and included as a page in the yearly Visitor Guide
- Content is updated each year to align with current environment and stay relevant

## What's New in 2022

- We updated the Conscious Traveller graphic to align with fluctuating COVID-19 environment
- Downloadable PDF available on [shoalhaven.com/blog/tread-lightly/](https://shoalhaven.com/blog/tread-lightly/)
- Our 2021 – 2022 summer campaign has achieved:
  - 28,195 reach
  - 38,341 impressions



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# What's next

- Art and Culture Campaign in Autumn in line with collaboration with Bundanon re-opening
- Wine and Whales campaign April to Sept
- Product Development for Aboriginal operators and international industry partnership
- Sharing insights, data and research for operators Localis, leads to industry etc
- DNSW FeelNSW grants pending (February decision) for winter promotion wineries and breweries & whole of South Coast Campaign
- Production of Visitor Guide for December 2022
- Improvements to 100beachchallenge.com web app



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# Visitor Information Services

MANY EXPERIENCES - ONE DESTINATION

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# Shoalhaven Visitor Information Services (VIS) Overview

- Operating since 1975
- 3 full-time, 2 part-time, 13 casual staff members and 40 volunteers
- 2 Accredited centres located within cohabitation spaces; Nowra VIC at Shoalhaven Entertainment Centre and Ulladulla VIC at the Ulladulla Civic Centre and Library
- 10 supplementary centres across the Shoalhaven
- A mobile VIS van providing pop up information and guide distribution
- Shoalhaven Volunteer Ambassador program, allowing locals to impart knowledge to visitors

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# Shoalhaven Visitor Information Services (VIS)



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# Shoalhaven Visitor Information Services (VIS) Who do we interact with?

## Interactions

- Phone
- Email
- Counter/Face to face
- Live Chat
- Out in region
- Operator assistance

## Resources

- Local passionate and knowledgeable staff
- In house customised guides, maps and brochures
- Website and itinerary creator
- Merchandise and souvenirs
- Discount vouchers
- Accommodation booking platform
- Families

## Target Markets



Grey Nomads



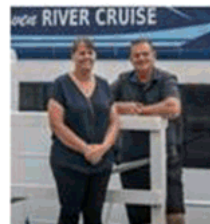
International FIT



Free & Low Cost Campers



Families



Local Tourism Businesses



VFR & Seachangers



Locals

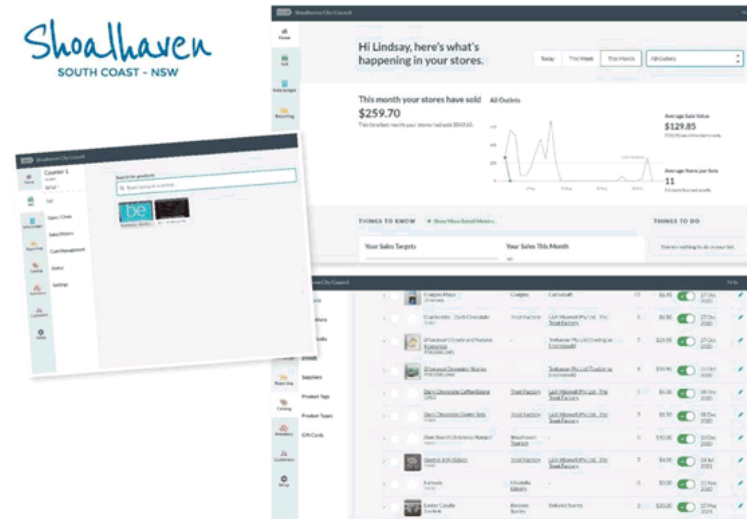
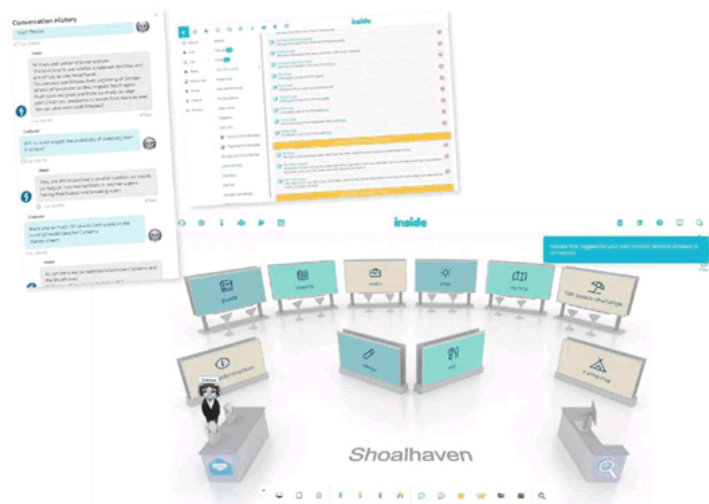


Solo Travellers

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# Recent Achievements

- Enhanced online customer service via new Live Chat interactions and revamped website
- New point of sale system VEND, which allows seamless connectivity between both VIS centres. Updated software allows integration offering future expansion into online sales as well as more efficient stock management
- Silver in the NSW Tourism Awards Visitor Service category 2019



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# What's Next?

- Focus on Shoalhaven based merchandise and souvenirs to showcase local products
- With the implementation of VEND point of sale system, continue to work towards the goal of online sales for merchandise and souvenirs
- Continue supporting local businesses with information, guides and assisting them with ATDW, Shoalhaven.com listings
- Review of accommodation booking systems
- Out in region assisting visitors and operators on the ground
- New Visitor Services Manager starting in 2022



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# Thank you!



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