

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS DMP PLANNING GROUP

The Bradman Museum, Bowral

Monday 2nd February 2015
10.00am to 12.00pm

PRESENT

- Rina Hore
- Steve Rosa
- Jenny Kena
- Bruce Nichols
- Philip Martin
- Graham Perry
- John Gray

APOLOGIES

- Steve Horton
- Matt Stoeckel (DNSW)
- Mark Viner

Meeting open – 10:08AM

Opening remarks

Steve advised he had raised and discussed some concerns and ideas for improving the DM Working group process with Graham. This included a review of the Working Group Structure, the way forward and the need to consider expanding sector representation on the working group. He also requested the working group be briefed on progress with the Inland Digital and VFR Program and the need to address Membership of Inland in 2015/16.

Graham raised concerns communicated to him by Claire Cooper about the process surrounding working group representation. Clr Ian Scandrett has been made aware of this and has asked to be kept informed of developments.

Steve advised that the group had provided the reasons previously as to why Claire should not be included on the peak DMP Committee in that the Food & Wine industry is represented by Philip Martin as the official delegate to the DMP committee. Also Claire does not support DSH nor SHFW. Steve suggested that she joins the 'DMP sub group' of Food & Wine when formed.

Minutes of the previous meeting

Steve had a number of comments and questions regarding the minutes of the meeting held November 2014, as he had been an apology.

Wine time –

Steve advised that 'Wine Time' will not be occurring in March as it coincides with the key harvest time and is the Wineries busiest period and unable to support with events similar to last year. DSH is working with SHFW Association to position October as a celebration of the regions Food & Wine industry and experiences. SHFW will hold their Festival on the Saturday & Sunday of the long weekend in October in Corbett Gardens Bowral.

Regional Calendar –

It was suggested that Southern Highlands is Sydney's Cellar – the region is the backyard/farmyard and on the doorstep of the Sydney region. We should push more promotion. However it is important to be careful regarding related brand positioning and only use as and when appropriate and by segment.

Sydney Surrounds –

Steve said consumers view Southern Highlands as part of Sydney Surrounds but there are no developments regarding an RTO for this region and therefore no related Quarantined funds. Sydney & Surrounds region is being promoted heavily by DNSW for International markets.

Graham explained the DNSW Zones and Zone Managers. He said that Inland is committed to supporting Southern Highlands through membership, destination management and related Inland Quarantined funds. Inland is not a consumer brand and instead champions regional brands through the DM process– such as Destination Southern Highlands. This removes any conflicts related to branding or geography.

Steve explained that Capital Country Tourism as an Association has now wound-up following their AGM in December. Remaining funds of approximately \$1K will be transferred to Inland NSW. Steve highlighted that DSH & Wingecarribee Shire Council is struggling to find \$18k (previously \$5k p.a. in view of CCT Inland membership subsidy) to contribute to Inland Membership for 2015/16 year. Awaiting budget bid review by Council. Graham committed to support Steve in any communication to Council plus agreed to the delivery of content on a \$ for \$ basis equal to the cost of membership i.e. \$18K of content for \$18K of membership.

Events strategy –

Steve said he could not present the proposed Events strategy to the working group before being presented to Council as had been requested by the working group. This is not a public document and was awaiting consideration by Council before it could be distributed to interested parties. A brief was prepared and presented to Councillors in November. Council is reviewing bids this week including in respect of the related \$100K proposal. Steve said it includes \$50K for the attraction of key signature events and \$50K for increasing resources (namely a new Events Coordinator).

RVEF Program –

Stage one of the campaign is complete. Steve Rosa submitted a variation to the program for the Short Breaks Destination Appeal campaign in light of conflicting events; Destination NSW has requested they receive a report on the milestones achieved for the various projects of the RVEF grant and an evaluation of the impact of the revised KPI's for the Short Breaks program. Steve highlighted the frustration at the length of time taken by DNSW to approve the variation which may have impact on the introduction of the Short Breaks campaign schedule for April.

Signage –

The working group has asked for signage matters to come through the working group. Steve said this depends on whether the matters related to: Capital Country signage, entry signage to Southern Highlands on the freeway or internal local Council signage etc. The big issue remains with TASAC. Committee members on TASAC include DNSW, Regional representatives and RMS. Stakeholders have to abide by the signage rules and regulations. This dictates that local signage has to include the council name rather than a consumer brand. Having said it is possible to include both. Currently a revised proposal is sitting with Council including proposals related to colours, fonts, positioning etc.

Rina said it is important to have Southern Highlands as part of the signage strategy. This should be promoted through the Economic Development & Tourism committee. Consumers recognise the region as Southern Highlands. Steve advised that there was 54 locality signs to go up throughout the region. Aboriginal considerations also need to be taken into account by Council. \$150K has been committed by Council through a grant to producing the sign which need to include recognition of local indigenous clan within local signage. This all demonstrates the challenges and complications related to signage.

Jenny said it was important for the group to get on with marketing the region to consumers rather than spending too much time fighting the bureaucracy.

Steve said signage was now back on the agenda for Council. Once decisions had been made it would then get back on the TASAC agenda to consider approved Council creative revisions.

Rina said the group should be lobbying to support the outcome.

ACTION: It was agreed to lobby Councillors regarding the groups position on signage and Events and to get the topics on the agenda ASAP. Rina agreed to take it to Councils Economic Development and Tourism Working Group meetings.

Action: Rina

Other matters –

Steve expressed his concerns that the DM Working group had started well with great inroads but was concerned about how momentum can be maintained.

There is opportunity to broaden representation to promote better outcomes & engagement. Communication is key and the group doesn't know what is going on in the group between meetings. There is a need for more transparency regarding the activity of the representatives back to the working group. Perhaps there is a need for sub groups who can drive the related and relevant tasks between meetings.

Council is not engaging with the DM process because it isn't seen as a council process. But to succeed we need Council & key industry groups to champion the issues. The process needs to be locked in to the processes of both council and industry. Currently the DM process is a little detached.

ACTION: It was agreed that Cllr Ian Scandrett and Holly be invited to attend DM working groups.

Action: Steve Rosa and Rina.

The group then discussed sector and related representation on the group. The group covers commerce and industry, arts, events, emerging markets (arts and craft, sport, agri – tourism), accommodation.

The topic of sub groups was raised and discussions were had about the potential for sub groups namely food and wine, arts, events, accommodation, attractions, sport and transport to determine what are the key issues and how to action the DMP outcomes for these sectors. There is a need to formalise representation. Who is representing these sectors?

Rina asked whether the group was focused on growing visitation or just overnight visitation. We need to better understand increases in visitation. What are the triggers to drive overnight visitation? If we can do this we can identify priorities. Saturday visitation has quadrupled because of weddings. Food and Wine is still emerging and has not been fully discovered. Do we need to do surveys? How do we collect data i.e. accommodation surveys? We need to be able to discover the facts and measure at the sector level ie through sub groups.

Steve said the reasons for growth are often matters outside of our control or measurement i.e. media generated (DNSW), new products & experiences, new events, trade famils, fuel price reduction, cost of the dollar. Steve advised that he contracts well known statistician Peter Valario to do some data mining and quarterly NVS & IVS reports. Currently trends are showing day visitation growing & overnight visitation stagnant.

By way of example the inaugural Wedding expo in January at Bradman Oval attracted 900 people. The sector accounts for in excess of \$30M pa of the overall over \$220M regional expenditure pa with an average 2 to 3 nights stay by wedding guests. This means the FIT market often can't secure rooms at the weekend in lieu of the high yielding wedding market. This demonstrates how we need to better understand the levers for growth. This would enable us to prioritise markets and by illustration only focus on sports market Monday through Thursday and weddings weekends. Steve Rosa highlighted that Survey Monkey could be used as a means of collecting data. Can we obtain goggle search data ie metadata to profile the segments?

ACTION: It was agreed to set up a group to establish measurement.

Action: Working group

ACTION: It was agreed to identify the sub groups.

ACTION: Rina and Steve to discuss proposed sub group categories in conjunction with Graham

It was decided to progress a community workshop with all individuals previously attending DM Workshops invited plus other interested parties. It would be an 1 ½ hour session facilitated by Steve Rosa and Graham Perry. 17th March was proposed as the potential/preferred date at The Bradman Centre with proposed timing of arrival 6:00PM for a 6:30PM start and finish 8:00PM – including a 1 hour for break out groups (1 for each industry sector) followed by group feedback.

Graham Perry said the community workshop could also include a launch of the Digital Program that is being launched by the premier and deputy Premier in Dubbo on Saturday the 14th March.

ACTION: It was agreed that the launch and Community workshop would be held at the Bradman Museum.

The minutes of the previous meeting held 3rd November were approved as an accurate record.

Other Business

Variation to Destination NSW approved RVEF Program -

Steve asked Destination NSW for a variation to the approved RVEF Program on 22nd October with the purpose of amending the media campaign to include an Autumn Campaign. Destination NSW initially rejected the application and asked Destination Southern Highlands to cease activity and funding pending a full report. Destination NSW provided approval to proceed in February. The autumn campaign will now recommence in April 2015. The agency has been briefed and approval will be given in the next 2 to 3 weeks after which a prospectus will be distributed to industry. It comprises a \$190K campaign. It will be predominately an online promotion as this is better-targeted and represents better value. It also comprises a third stage of the VFR Program (i.e. reunite with a loved one). It will utilise social media and provide an incentive for locals to reunite with a loved one from intra/interstate or international. An additional \$40K is committed to the development of a digital platform to include a new Destination Southern Highlands website which goes live in mid February. It will replace the old site and is easier to update.

India market –

Rina advised the Bradman Foundation is actively participating in a 'Focus on India' trade famil (Sydney) on the 9th February with a visit to the Bradman Museum. Following this Rina will represent

the Bradman Centre & region at the DNSW 'Focus on India' workshop in Sydney on 11 February. This will help the region to be 'export ready' and involves inbound tourism operators.

Wedding Expo –

Steve Rosa said that Wedding Time & the inaugural wedding expo attracted close to 1000 visitors with 94 exhibitors. Good levels of business were transacted on the day & in the weeks following. Next year's Wedding Time festival promised to be even bigger and better positioning the region as NSW's premier Wedding destination.

Inland membership –

Steve explained that Capital Country Tourism was now being wound up. This meant they were no longer able to subsidise LGA membership of Inland, which costs 50 cents per head of population. This means that Wingecarribee Shire Council would be required to pay \$23K p.a. compared to \$5K previously. Steve has added this to his budget submission but is awaiting outcomes. Graham said he would be happy to join Steve in a meeting with Council to show the value and ROI as per previous years.

ACTION: Rina asked to hear from Steve and Graham about the value of membership including a scorecard at the next meeting.

Action: Graham

Meeting Close –

The meeting closed at 12:09 pm.

Next meeting –

10AM 2nd March followed by a community workshop on 17th March.