



# RICHMOND VALLEY

Destination Management Plan 2021-2025

26 October 2020



Richmond  
Valley  
Council



Discover  
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VALLEY



## DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this Plan is intended only to inform and should not be relied upon for future business investment or other decisions. It is expected any specific recommended actions should be analysed and appropriate due diligence undertaken prior to making any investment decisions.

Recommended actions contained in the Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021 to 2025 have been made on the basis of assumptions, methodology and information provided from many sources. The authors, and Richmond Valley Council, accept no responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or resultant consequences including any loss or damage arising from reliance on the information contained in this Plan .





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## ACRONYMS

ATDW	Australian Data Warehouse
DMP	Destination Management Plan
DNC	Destination North Coast
DNSW	Destination New South Wales
FCNSW	Forestry Corporation of New South Wales
LGA	Local Government Area
LSPS	Local Strategic Tourism Planning Statement
MBT	Mountain Bike Tourism
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service
NSW	New South Wales
RDA	Regional Development Australia
RV	Recreation Vehicle
RVDMP	Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan
RVC	Richmond Valley Council
VFR	Visiting Friends and Relatives
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
YE	Year End

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021 to 2025 has been developed to create a roadmap to guide the collaborative work of Richmond Valley Council and local stakeholders to grow, develop and promote the Richmond Valley and its towns and villages as an appealing and competitive tourism region on the North Coast of NSW.

In developing this Plan careful consideration has been given to ensure the development and promotion of tourism celebrates and protects Richmond Valley's natural and built environments whilst providing benefits for the local community.

Importantly, the plan identifies key catalyst opportunities which have the potential for Richmond Valley destinations to gain competitive advantage in the North Coast tourism market place.

## CHALLENGES TO GROWING THE VISITOR ECONOMY

- Richmond Valley has relatively low visitation levels as compared to other North Coast destinations
- There is little tourism product creating a real point of difference for new and repeat visitors
- Improving visitor accommodation quality and capacity is necessary to attract new and high yield visitors to stay longer and explore the local area
- The area has abundant nature based assets, the challenge is how to activate these in a sustainable way to attract new nature-based visitors
- Although agriculture is a main industry for the Richmond Valley, agri-tourism experiences are still mainly under-developed
- It is important to continue to plan for risks which may impact the Richmond Valley visitor economy.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO STIMULATE VISITOR ECONOMY GROWTH

- The Pacific Highway upgrade has the potential to kick-start visitor economy growth for Evans Head and change the access and appeal of Woodburn, Coraki, New Italy and Broadwater
- The Casino to Bentley Rail section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail is a critical catalyst project which will help to enhance the visitor and investment appeal of Casino
- Developing and positioning the Richmond Valley as a distinct walking, cycling and mountain bike tourism destination on the North Coast
- Increasing awareness and further activating nature-based tourism experiences provided by national parks, State forests, reserves, rivers and waterways
- Encouraging and supporting private sector investors to enhance existing and develop new tourism products is essential to attract new and repeat visitors and to drive economic growth
- Attracting visitors year-round is important to achieve sustained growth and viable businesses
- Growing and procuring a vibrant calendar of authentic destinations events which showcase the area and attract visitors year-round
- Creating and promoting agri and cultural tourism experience trails to encourage visitor dispersal
- Sustainable tourism development is important to continue to protect the Richmond Valley and its towns and villages as good places to live and visit
- Establishing clear brand identity and positioning stories for Evans Head (coastal) and Casino (inland)
- Cooperation between Council and industry stakeholders is important to drive sustainable visitor economy growth and development.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>1</b> Destination Management	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>2</b> Destination Planning & Development	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>3</b> Destination Product & Experience Development	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>4</b> Destination Crisis & Risk Management	<b>PRIORITY</b> <b>5</b> Destination Marketing
Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for <b>tourism, events and business</b> development to drive a strategic and collaborative approach to grow and develop the Richmond Valley visitor economy	Adopt a strategic and whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop <b>infrastructure and facilities</b> to enhance the appeal and amenity of Richmond Valley destinations as places to live, visit and do business	Attract and support private sector investment to create and deliver a range of <b>contemporary and authentic tourism products and experiences</b> to encourage new and repeat visitors to stopover, stay and explore the area	Continue to assess and plan for potential environmental and economic risks which may impact the Richmond Valley visitor economy	Determine a strong brand identity and positioning story for the Richmond Valley and its main destinations ( <b>Evans Head and Casino</b> ) and review destination marketing and visitor information service strategies to ensure a coordinated approach to the promotion of the area

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan (RVDMP) 2021 to 2025 has been developed to create a roadmap to guide the collaborative work of Richmond Valley Council (RVC) and local stakeholders to stimulate the sustainable growth and development of the Richmond Valley visitor economy and its towns and villages as an appealing and competitive tourism region on the North Coast of NSW.

Funding has been received from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund (community stream) for the development of this Plan.

This Destination Management Plan builds on the outcomes of the previous Richmond Valley Tourism Development Plan (2017) and proposes innovative and realistic strategies to assist in developing, managing and marketing the Richmond Valley visitor economy over the next five years.

Richmond Valley comprises the main coastal destination of Evans Head and inland destination Casino as well as the villages of Broadwater, Coraki, New Italy, Rappville and Woodburn.

In line with other North Coast local government areas, the Richmond Valley visitor economy has been growing incrementally over the past five years. Tourism is estimated to contribute \$78 million direct visitor expenditure to the Richmond visitor economy per year<sup>1</sup>. Domestic daytrips account for 59% of visitors to the region and domestic overnight visitors account for 40% of visitors.

Increasing direct visitor expenditure and overnight visitation is, therefore, important to growing the area's visitor economy.

Council and local stakeholder organisations agree the time is right to kick start new ways to sustainably develop and grow the Richmond Valley visitor economy so it can be better positioned as an appealing tourism destination on the North Coast of NSW.

Two catalyst infrastructure projects will help to drive visitor economy growth to the area – the upgrade of the Pacific Highway which will make Evans Head and nearby villages more accessible, and the recent NSW Government approval for the development of the Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

The Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021 to 2025 is an important outcome of comprehensive research, analysis and stakeholder engagement processes, and has been prepared to integrate and leverage with other stakeholder strategic plans across local, regional and State levels.

The destination management planning process involved the following stages:

STAGE ONE	STAGE TWO	STAGE THREE
Background Research	Stakeholder Engagement	DMP Development
Review of research and relevant strategies, plans and policies across state, regional and local levels	Meeting with senior Council staff; destination workshops and survey with local businesses, Council and community representatives; interviews with relevant stakeholder organisations	Consideration of findings of Stages Two and Three

<sup>1</sup>TRA (2020) visitor regional expenditure data at LGA Profiles



## 2.0 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING APPROACH

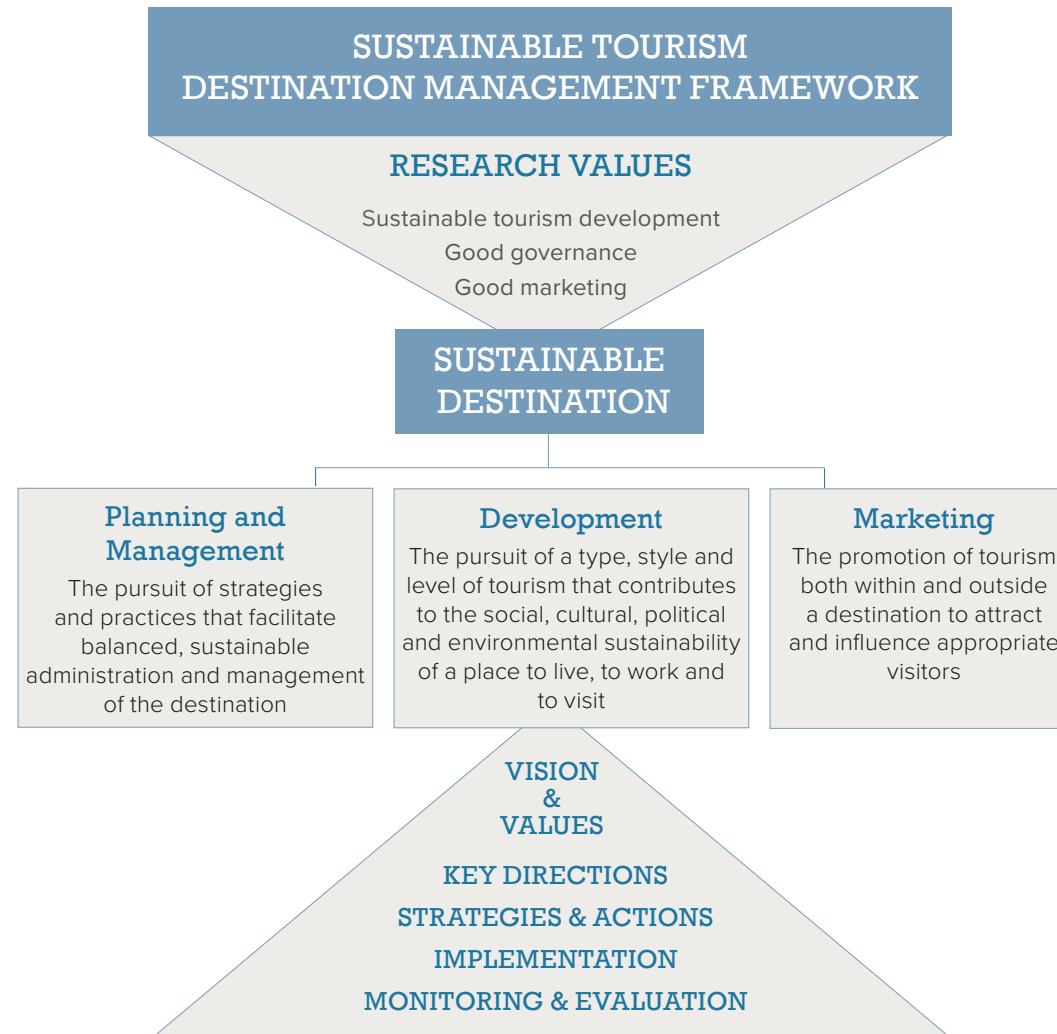
The Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan has been designed as a living document to:

- **Sustainably grow and further develop** the Richmond Valley visitor economy
- **Best position the Richmond Valley** within the North Coast region and broader east coast marketplace
- **Establish a shared vision** with government, business and community stakeholders for the future of visitor economy across the Richmond Valley
- **Identify realistic and catalysts opportunities to develop, grow and promote the range and quality of tourism product and experiences across the region that appeal** to key visitor markets
- **Encourage a productive, and integrated working relationship** between Council and industry stakeholders
- **Further activate local businesses and support them to flourish**
- **Adapt to changes in visitor travel patterns and behaviour** arising from upgrades to the Pacific Highway and the COVID-19 health pandemic
- **Ensure the diverse strategies and benefits of tourism growth are maximised** with a targeted approach for sustainable economic growth for residents and towns of the Richmond Valley
- **Provide planning and suggested implementation and assessment for a variety of tourism products and experiences and strategies tailored to** Broadwater, Casino, Coraki, Evans Head, New Italy, Rappville and Woodburn
- **Have a focus on renewed tourism planning as part of the rebuilding and renewal of bushfire-affected farmland and towns**
- **Adapt to changing conditions, issues and opportunities as they arise**
- **Recognise the role of Richmond Valley Council as** leading the sustainable tourism growth and development of the local visitor economy through the provision of financial and human resources, and as the custodian and manager of key assets, supporting facilities and amenities
- **Identify the roles and responsibilities of tourism stakeholders** in the implementation of the plan to 2025
- **Incorporate an annual monitoring and evaluation process.**



Figure 1: Sustainable Tourism Planning Approach\*

The strategic approach used to develop this Plan is depicted below:



\*Adapted from Dredge, D. 2008 Managing Local Tourism Master Class: Eastern Metropolitan Regional Council Workshop Materials. SCU.

## 3.0 GROWING THE RICHMOND VALLEY VISITOR ECONOMY

Enhancing Richmond Valley and its towns and villages as contemporary and appealing year-round destinations is important to increasing visitor expenditure, overnight stays and daytrips to the area.

Richmond Valley Council has an important role in leading and working with local stakeholders to guide the development, management and marketing of tourism and events to create greater awareness of the area and to encourage visitation year round to grow the Richmond Valley visitor economy.

Collaboration and engagement between Council and industry stakeholders is necessary to drive the Richmond Valley visitor economy forward. This includes consideration of how Council can support business development and engage with the various Chambers of Commerce and other key stakeholder groups, such as Destination North Coast, Forestry Commission of NSW and National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Visitation to the Richmond Valley has increased incrementally over the past five years at an average rate of 7% per year. Although this aligns with the average for regional NSW, direct expenditure from these visitors contributes an estimated \$78 million to the Richmond Valley economy per year.

The Richmond Valley visitor economy can also be considered relatively small compared to other North Coast destinations (Lismore \$153 million and Ballina \$318 million).

In terms of visitation, Richmond Valley attracts mainly daytrips visitors (59%) who spend on average \$97 per day, which is slightly lower than regional NSW average (\$110). Domestic overnight visitors account for 40% of all visitors who spend on average \$102 per night which is also lower than the NSW average (\$159).

The reason for the lower nightly expenditure may be attributed to the mix of accommodation used, with a large percentage of visitors using non-commercial accommodation such as Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) (36%) and caravan/camping (37%). This is much higher than other regional North Coast destinations, such as Greater Port Macquarie (VFR = 31%) and caravan/camping (16%).

Increasing direct visitor expenditure and overnight visitation is, therefore, imperative to growing the area's visitor economy.

There is a significant and immediate opportunity to grow and develop tourism in a sustainable way to help diversify the Richmond Valley economy given the upgrade of the Pacific Highway, and the associated reduction in travel time, to attract year-round new and repeat visitors from Queensland and regional areas to Evans Head and nearby villages.

The proposed development of the Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail also has significant potential to be a catalyst project for Casino and its surrounds to attract new visitor markets and stimulate new business investment to the area.

The background research and stakeholder engagement processes identified the following main opportunities and challenges to growing the Richmond Valley visitor economy.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- **The Pacific Highway upgrade has the potential to kick start visitor economy growth for Evans Head** and change the access and appeal of Woodburn, Coraki, New Italy and Broadwater
- **The Casino to Bentley Rail section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail is a critical catalyst project** which will help to enhance the visitor and investment appeal of Casino. The NSW Government approval for use of the railway lines between Casino and Bentley provides Casino with a distinct advantage over other LGAs to activate this project immediately
- **Developing and positioning the Richmond Valley as a distinct walking, cycling and mountain bike tourism destination on the North Coast**
- **Increasing awareness and further activating nature-based tourism experiences provided** by national parks, State forests, reserves, rivers and waterways
- **Encouraging and supporting private sector investors to enhance existing and develop new tourism products** is essential to attract visitors and to drive economic growth
- **Attracting visitors year round** is important to achieve sustained growth and viable businesses
- **Growing and procuring a vibrant calendar of authentic destinations events which showcase the area and attract visitors year round**
- **Creating and promoting agri and cultural tourism experience trails** to encourage visitor dispersal
- **Establishing clear brand identity and positioning stories for Evans Head (coastal) and Casino (inland)**
- **Sustainable tourism development** is important to continue to protect the Richmond Valley and its towns and villages as good places to live and visit
- **Cooperation between Council and industry stakeholders** is important to drive sustainable visitor economy growth and development.

## CHALLENGES

- **Richmond Valley shows relatively low visitation levels as compared to other North Coast destinations**, ranked ahead of Kempsey and Nambucca Valley and behind Lismore in terms of domestic overnight visitation
- **Tourism across the North Coast continues to be competitive** as destinations implement development and marketing strategies that are aimed at similar visitor markets to the Richmond Valley
- **There is currently little tourism product creating a real point of difference in the Richmond Valley**
- **Improving visitor accommodation quality and capacity is necessary to attract new and high yield visitors** to stay longer and explore the local area. There have been challenges in the past to attracting accommodation investors
- **The area has abundant nature-based assets**, the challenge is how to activate these in a sustainable way to attract new nature based visitors
- **Although agriculture is a main industry for the Richmond Valley**, agri-tourism experiences are still mainly under-developed
- **It is important to continue to plan for risks** that may impact the Richmond Valley visitor economy
- **Attracting visitors year round** is needed to achieve sustained growth and viable businesses.



# 4.0 2025 VISITOR ECONOMY VISION & OBJECTIVES

The stakeholder engagement process undertaken with industry and community stakeholders to inform this Plan found that participants across all destinations were keen to see the Richmond Valley visitor economy to grow over the next five years.

The following vision statement was created from this engagement and will be used to guide the implementation of the Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021 to 2025:

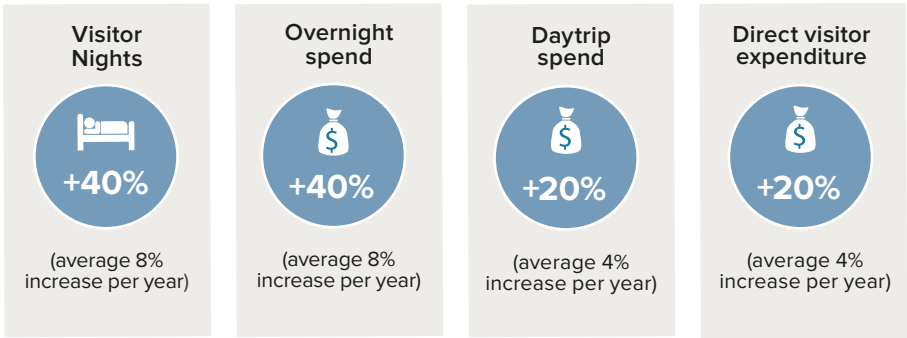


This vision aligns with community and economic visions.

Table 1: Richmond Valley Community visions and related visitor economy strategies

STRATEGY	VISION
Richmond Valley Made 2030 Community Strategic Plan <sup>2</sup>	A great community with a relaxed lifestyle, beautiful environment and vibrant economy
Richmond Valley Local Strategic Planning Statement: Beyond 20-20 Vision	A collaborative community working together to advance a resilient and robust economy which reflects a strong sense of community, successful businesses and a healthy environment
A Guide to Economic Development in the Richmond Valley 2019	Richmond Valley Council is committed to providing an environment which fosters economic growth whilst encouraging sustainable living and business practices

## 2025 VISITOR ECONOMY OBJECTIVES<sup>3</sup>



<sup>2</sup>A new Community Strategic Plan is to be prepared in 2021.

<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that the TRA data provides the only consistent measures of visitation and visitor expenditure data. Visitor economy objectives are based on analysis of this data at the time of preparation of this Plan. Achievement of benchmark goals may also be influenced by external factors such as changes to broader economic conditions and other unforeseen conditions/influences.



## 5.0 VISITATION OVERVIEW

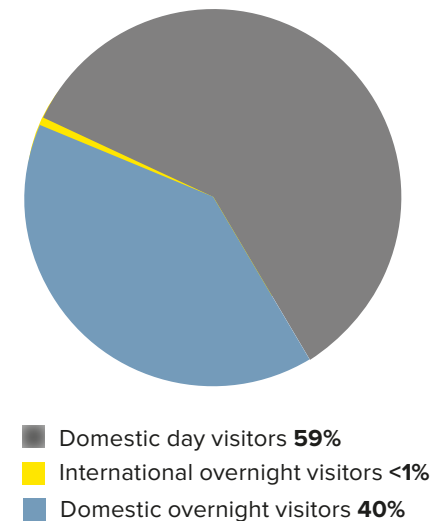
Analysis of the most current Tourism Research Australia (TRA) visitation data for Richmond Valley from 2016 to 2020 shows<sup>4</sup>:

- The area has attracted an average of 400,000 visitors per year (2016 to 2020)
- Total visitation has increased incrementally over the past 5 years at an average rate of 7% per year
- Domestic day visitors account for 59% of all visitors
- Domestic overnight visitors account for 40% of all visitors
- International visitors comprise less than 1% of total visitation
- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) accounts for 36% of visitors
- Expenditure from these visitors contributes an estimated \$78 million to the Richmond Valley economy per year
- *Approximately 466 people are directly employed in the tourism workforce*<sup>5</sup>
- Visitation is mainly focused in Evans Head (47%) and highly seasonal.

Analysis of visitor length of stay and expenditure shows:

- Domestic overnight visitors stay for an average of 3.8 nights – higher than the average for regional NSW of 3.2 nights. They spend an average of \$102 per night<sup>4</sup> – which is somewhat lower than regional NSW (\$159<sup>6</sup>)
- Daytrip visitors spend an average of \$76 per day – which is slightly lower than regional NSW (\$110)
- International visitors spend an average stay for an average of 16 nights – almost equal to the average for regional NSW of 17 nights. They spend an average of \$25 per night – which is somewhat lower than regional NSW (\$70)
- Low visitation levels compared to other North Coast destinations, ranked ahead of Kempsey and Nambucca Valley and behind Lismore for domestic overnight visitation.

Figure 2: Richmond Valley Main Visitor Markets



<sup>4</sup>5-year averages are used to allow for yearly variations often caused by weather or other events.

<sup>5</sup>TRA Online (2020) <https://www.tra.gov.au/services> -Year End March 2020 data (IVS and NVS).

<sup>6</sup>DNSW (2019) travel-to-regional-nsw-snapshot.

#### Analysis of geographic source markets shows:

- **80% of overnight visitors** come from regions north of the Richmond Valley
- **70% of day visitors** come from local areas north-east of the Richmond Valley
- **The Brisbane market provides 50% of the overnight visitors and 10% of day trip visitors.**

Table 2: Main Geographic Source Markets for the Richmond Valley<sup>4</sup>

Key Markets	5-year average (2016-2020)	Overnight	Day
Brisbane	Brisbane	50%	10%
Gold Coast	Gold Coast	14%	9%
	Southern QLD Regional	12%	1%
North Coast NSW	North Coast NSW	10%	80%
	Sydney	4%	
	Sunshine Coast	3%	
	VIC, ACT, SA	3%	
Regional NSW	New England North West	2%	
	Hunter	2%	

#### Analysis of the age and lifecycle highlights the following main visitor markets:



See Appendix 1 for further analysis of visitation and trends over the past 5 years.



## 6.0 KEY VISITOR MARKETS

Based on visitation research findings, and recommendations of the Tourism Research Australia 'The Beach, Bush and Beyond' report on the regional dispersal for Australian tourists<sup>7</sup>, the focus for Richmond Valley marketing initiatives should be concentrated on the following key visitor markets with the intention of attracting repeat and new visitors and encouraging them to stay and explore the region:

### PRIMARY



- Domestic overnight visitors  
from Queensland and regional NSW targeting road trippers - families and Australians 45+ years

### SECONDARY



- Domestic daytrip visitors  
from the Northern Rivers and South East Queensland targeting families and Australians 45+ years
- Visiting friends and relatives

As further explained in Strategic Priority 5, future brand and marketing should confirm which visitor markets (geographic, demographic and psychographic) are best targeted to achieve sustainable growth over the next five years.

See Appendix 2 for a description of personas most likely and least likely to visit Australia's region identified in the TRA report.



<sup>7</sup>Tourism Research Australia (2019) The Beach, Bush and Beyond: Understanding Regional Dispersal of Australian Tourists, October



## DOMESTIC TRAVEL POST-COVID-19

From March 2020, the Australian visitor economy was then severely impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic which stopped international and domestic travel. A survey undertaken with 1200 Australians at this time found that aspiration to travel remained strong among Australians with 43% of Australians looking to travel. Older (55+), more affluent, educated and socially engaged Australians are most likely to be open to travelling. Domestic travel was identified as the most likely to recover first - driven by this group with local being king<sup>8</sup>.

This was confirmed by research undertaken by the University of Queensland in April 2020 with 528 Australians which found participants were keen to travel close to home when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted with coastal destinations the most popular, followed by country and regional destinations. Cities were the least appealing destination for future travel, and half of the travellers stated they would prefer to drive to their destination<sup>9</sup>.

Recent research undertaken in Australia indicates the following trends:

- Restricted travel to overseas destinations in the next two years
- Desire to travel to 'safe' destinations that are less likely to have an outbreak
- Increased travel to visit friends and relatives
- Desire to get back to nature and spend time in nature-based destinations
- Record sales of caravans and motorhomes in the past 6 months<sup>10</sup>.

This may be an advantage for the Richmond Valley in the future with people seeking safe, risk-free, authentic and affordable breaks from their urban lifestyle.



<sup>8</sup>MyTravel Research.com (2020) Australian responses to bushfires and Covid-19, April.

<sup>9</sup><https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2020/04/sunny-outlook-domestic-tourism-post-covid-19-restrictions>

<sup>10</sup>[www.annaspenceley.wordpress.com/2020/04/02/covid-19-and-sustainable-tourism](http://www.annaspenceley.wordpress.com/2020/04/02/covid-19-and-sustainable-tourism)

# 7.0 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Five strategic priorities and associated actions have been established to guide work of Council and industry stakeholders to grow the Richmond Valley visitor economy over the next five years.

<div>PRIORITY</div> <div>1</div> <div>Destination Management</div>	<div>PRIORITY</div> <div>2</div> <div>Destination Planning &amp; Development</div>	<div>PRIORITY</div> <div>3</div> <div>Destination Product &amp; Experience Development</div>	<div>PRIORITY</div> <div>4</div> <div>Destination Crisis &amp; Risk Management</div>	<div>PRIORITY</div> <div>5</div> <div>Destination Marketing</div>
Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for tourism, events and business development to drive a strategic and collaborative approach to grow and develop the Richmond Valley visitor economy	Adopt a strategic and whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop infrastructure and facilities to enhance the appeal and amenity of Richmond Valley destinations as places to live, visit and do business	Attract and support private sector investment to create and deliver a range of contemporary and authentic tourism products and experiences to encourage new and repeat visitors to stopover, stay and explore the area	Continue to assess and plan for potential environmental and economic risks which may impact the Richmond Valley visitor economy	Determine a strong brand identity and positioning story for the Richmond Valley and its main destinations (Evans Head and Casino) and review destination marketing and visitor information service strategies to ensure a coordinated approach to the promotion of the area

The following Destination Action Plan provides detail against each priority and associated actions for Council, industry and community stakeholders to implement cooperatively over the next five years to 2025.

The actions in this Plan have been assigned a priority time frame:

HIGH = commencing Year One

MEDIUM = commencing Years Two-Three

LOW = commencing Years Four-Five







## PRIORITY 1

### Destination Management

**Strengthen Council destination management arrangements for tourism, events and business development to drive a strategic and collaborative approach to grow and develop the Richmond Valley visitor economy.**

Richmond Valley Council continues to have an important leadership role in strategic destination management across the Richmond Valley area. This includes funding support and coordination of destination marketing initiatives, events and visitor information services as well as strategic planning, and infrastructure development to support sustainable tourism development.

To drive further growth of the local visitor economy Council will need to adopt a proactive approach to support and encourage tourism business investment to the area.

Council and local industry leaders also have a significant role in motivating and inspiring local operators across Richmond Valley to work cooperatively and build a whole of destination approach to drive visitor economy growth and development.

With this in mind, it is recommended that a Tourism Advisory Group be established to facilitate better engagement between Council and leading local tourism stakeholders and relevant stakeholder organisations (NPWS, FCNSW). Representatives should be skills based and selected on a basis of their knowledge and expertise in tourism for a two-year tenure. Clear terms of reference for membership selection and tenure should be developed for the group.

The role of the group would be to:

- Provide strategic advice on the implementation of the Richmond Valley Destination Action Plan 2021 to 2025
- Advocate the benefits to local industry operators of working together to grow and develop the local visitor economy.

The success of this Plan also requires improved engagement with local business stakeholder organisations and groups representing the interests of its main destinations Evans Head and Casino, as well as villages seeking to grow and develop their visitor economies – Coraki, New Italy, Rappville and Woodburn. This includes working with these stakeholder organisations to align their strategic plans and initiatives with the recommendations of the Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan to achieve a whole of destination approach to grow and develop the visitor economy.

Encouraging and supporting operator participation in relevant industry development initiatives provided by other key tourism stakeholders is also important (Destination North Coast, and Destination New South Wales).

ACTIONS		PRIORITY
1.1	Integrate the RVDMP into Council delivery programs and annual operational plans.	High
1.2	Review Council budget and staffing arrangements for tourism, events and business development to provide strategic leadership to effectively implement the RVDMP.	High
1.3	Work cooperatively with relevant Council departments to ensure the priorities and actions of the RVDMP are communicated and the visitor economy is an important consideration of Council's strategies and plans.	High
1.4	Present the RVDMP to Richmond Valley chambers of commerce and other key stakeholder organisations and provide support to link their local plans and strategies to the priorities of the RVDMP.	High
1.5	Establish a Tourism Advisory Group to advise on the implementation of the RVDMP. Representatives should be skills based and selected on a basis of their knowledge and expertise in tourism for a two-year tenure.	High
1.6	Facilitate quarterly meetings with the Tourism Advisory Group to cooperatively advise on the implementation of the RVDMP.	On-going
1.7	Regularly participate in Destination North Coast tourism manager forums.	On-going
1.8	Continue to participate in Northern Rivers Tourism Managers Group meetings.	On-going
1.9	Present briefings on the implementation progress of the RVDMP to Council at least twice annually.	On-going
1.10	Work with the key visitor economy stakeholders to prepare an annual Richmond Valley Industry Engagement and Development Program to improve engagement with local tourism operators and businesses, identify industry development needs and opportunities, and encourage cooperation to grow the Richmond Valley visitor economy.	High
1.11	Encourage and support tourism operator participation in relevant industry development initiatives provided by Council and key tourism stakeholders (Destination North Coast, and Destination New South Wales).	On-going
1.12	Provide professional development opportunities for Council staff involved in tourism, events and business development to advance their strategic tourism knowledge and leadership capacity, such as tourism and strategic land-use planning, destination research, event planning and evaluation, strategic marketing, digital marketing, industry development, crisis management planning and recovery.	On-going
1.13	Evaluate annual implementation of RVDMP action across all Council divisions.	On-going





## PRIORITY 2

### Destination Planning & Development

Adopt a strategic and whole-of-destination approach to continue to plan and develop infrastructure and facilities to enhance the appeal and amenity of Richmond Valley destinations as places to live, visit and do business.

Council has planned and initiated major infrastructure development in recent years to establish the Richmond Valley and its towns and villages as attractive places to live and visit (Casino Drill Hall Precinct, Coraki riverfront precinct, Razorback Lookout upgrade, Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrade).

The recent upgrade of the Pacific Highway and the proposed development of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail are significant catalyst infrastructure development projects which will help to drive visitor economy growth.

To take advantage of these opportunities, there is a need to adopt a strategic and whole-of-destination approach to continue to enhance Evans Head as an appealing year-round coastal destination and to activate Casino as an appealing inland destination.

### Key considerations to inform future strategic planning and infrastructure development for these destinations are outlined below: Evans Head

- The upgrade of the Pacific Highway, and the associated reduction in travel time, presents an immediate opportunity for Evans Head to attract year-round new and repeat overnight and daytrip visitors from Queensland, North Coast and regional areas
- It is anticipated growth will progressively occur, however, it will be important to consider how much visitation growth and development Evans Head can sustain in the longer term
- The township is relatively land locked so it will be important to adopt a whole-of-destination approach to strategically plan and consider the type and scale of development which is appropriate for the area, and clearly identify sites for future sustainable tourism development
- Consideration of NSW Government short-term holiday letting policy outcomes (when finalised) to ensure Evans Head continues to enjoy the benefits of short-term holiday letting while managing potential adverse impacts as the destination becomes more popular.

### Casino

- The Northern Rivers Rail Trail from Casino to Bentley has been approved for construction. Casino will be the 'Rail Trail Head' of the trail. Consultants have developed a master plan to guide the development of the 13.5 km section of the rail trail from Casino to Bentley which has received \$7.5million funding for construction, and is due to start in 2021. \$430,000 has also been approved for the development of the Old Casino Railway Station.
- To take full advantage of this opportunity a whole-of-destination approach is required to strategically plan for the whole of Casino CBD as a significant start/end point of the rail trail, not just the upgrade of the Old Casino Railway Station and development of the rail trail. This will help to provide opportunities for visitors to spend locally rather than just using the rail trail
- There is a need for a coordinated approach to consider the supporting infrastructure and facilities needed to present Casino as a bike/walking-friendly town, to identify new tourism product opportunities, to attract and support interested investors, as well as working with industry to adopt an open-for-business attitude
- Advocate for the development of the project with other LGAs with an interest in the rail trail is also important to fast track its development.
- Integrate with other destination development initiatives – such as such as Recreation Vehicle (RV) friendly town and Drill Hall Precinct.





7.0 Strategic Priorities cont.

The Pacific Highway upgrade will also change visitor travel patterns to Broadwater, Woodburn, New Italy and Coraki. Bushfire recovery grants are designed to fast track the recovery process and create new opportunities, which will alleviate pressure for New Italy and Rappville.

The following outline key considerations in future strategic planning and infrastructure development for these villages:

#### Woodburn, Coraki and Broadwater

- Although the Pacific Highway upgrade will impact businesses in Woodburn and Broadwater in the short term, it is expected that new businesses will emerge as these towns evolve as appealing places to live
- The Woodburn master plan and Council's recent work to upgrade the Woodburn Riverside Precinct will help to enhance the recreational and leisure appeal of Woodburn
- Woodburn is geographically well situated as a gateway to access national parks, State forests and reserves in the area
- The recent upgrade to the Coraki riverfront precinct will help to boost visitor and investor interest in Coraki
- It is anticipated that growth for Broadwater will come from new residents moving to the area.

#### New Italy

- It is expected that New Italy will experience a significant increase in stopover visitation from visitors travelling north as a result of the highway upgrade
- This will help to position New Italy as the southern gateway to the Richmond Valley
- The New Italy community was allocated \$100,000 through bushfire recovery grants to upgrade facilities which will significantly improve the visitor experience
- \$30,000 bushfire recovery funding has been allocated for the reinstatement of mountain bike trail infrastructure at New Italy and there is an opportunity to further develop mountain bike tourism (see more in Priority 3)
- The New Italy Museum Committee has prepared its own strategic plan (2019 to 2024) and has invested in the development of the museum, café, glass art gallery and facilities.

#### Rappville

- Council has been looking at ways to grow the tourism pie for some time now, and offering a range of camping options to attract visitors to Rappville has been a key focus, which will boost economic activity in the village
- \$1.4million has been allocated to rebuild the Rappville Hall. The new building and surrounds will provide a much-improved space for the community to use, as well as ensure the growth and prosperity of the village
- There may be opportunities to develop Rappville as a hub for mountain bike tourism in the Braemar Forest (see more in Priority 3).



The background research and stakeholder engagement processes undertaken to inform this Plan recognise Council's role in strategic place-based planning and the development of facilities to enhance Richmond Valley's towns and villages as good places to live and visit. Key projects identified include:

- Continuing to implement the Woodburn master plan to enhance the Woodburn main street
- Creating a distinct walking trail along the Evans River to the Razorback Lookout, including improving the amenity of the Fishing Co-op area on the Evans River, would help to enhance the appeal of Evans Head as a nature-based tourism destination
- Enhancing recreation facilities, including family-friendly walking and cycle tourism offerings, more boat ramps and supporting riverside infrastructure, to better activate the rivers and waterways to attract recreation visitors
- Fast tracking plans to make destinations within Richmond Valley RV friendly
- Improving the Woodburn to Casino Road to allow improved access for residents and visitors between the coast and inland.


## THE RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT: BEYOND 20-20 VISION (LSPS)

Sustainable tourism development is important to continue to protect the significant environmental, heritage and community values. The preparation of the Richmond Valley Council 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) is timely and has the potential to address opportunities and challenges to drive the growth and development of the sustainable development of tourism of the Richmond Valley. Proposed objectives are important to enhancing its towns and villages as appealing places to visit and to encourage private sector investment.

The LSPS outlines the Richmond Valley local government area's town planning priorities and strategic direction to address planning and development issues of importance to a vibrant and sustainable future. The following actions are specifically relevant to the growth and development of the visitor economy:

- Investigate opportunities to expand nature-based, adventure and cultural tourism places and enhanced visitor experiences (Action 8.4)
- Implement Council's Imagine-2020 and beyond-Supporting progress in the Mid Richmond Plan as a Pacific Highway bypass management strategy aimed at stimulating tourism and business interests in Mid Richmond localities (Action 8.6)
- Partner with key stakeholders to deliver new and diversified employment opportunities, and employment lands (Action 8.8)
- Ensure Council's planning provisions accommodate the changing needs for agriculture, manufacturing and emerging agribusiness and agri-tourism opportunities (Action 7.1).





ACTIONS	PRIORITY
2.1 Work with Council's Department of Planning and Environment to ensure the visitor economy is considered as part of Council strategic plans to drive a strategic and coordinated approach to the growth and development of the visitor economy (Local Strategic Planning Statements, Local Environment Plan, Development Control Plans, and Community Participation Plan).	On-going
2.2 Continue to advocate and support the enhancement and development of key infrastructure projects which will help drive visitor economy growth to the area, such as upgrade of the Woodburn to Casino Road, walking and cycle tracks, camping ground amenities.	On-going
2.3 Advocate the development of the Casino to Murwillumbah Rail Trail as a priority infrastructure development project to State and local government stakeholders.	On-going
2.4 Adopt a whole-of-destination approach to prepare a place-making plan for Casino which identifies supporting infrastructure and facilities needed to develop and activate Casino as a significant rail trail destination (walking and cycling routes, identification of sites for new tourism product opportunities to attract and support interested investors).	High
2.5 Work with local tourism and hospitality operators to create Casino as an appealing, visitor-friendly town in preparation for the completion of the Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail including adopting an open-for-business attitude.	High
2.6 Engage with the NSW Department of Industry to identify ways to improve the access (walking and cycling) and appeal of the riverside between the Evans Head township and Razorback Lookout.	Medium/low
2.7 Continue to improve the visual appeal, character and amenity of Richmond Valley towns and villages through the implementation of the Council plans, beautification and streetscape works, and enhancement of gateway entrances.	On-going
2.8 Identify suitable sites for free camping, develop RV parking facilities near towns and villages, and continue to work with the CMCA to gain accreditation for Casino and Woodburn as RV friendly destinations.	High
2.9 Consider NSW Government short-term holiday letting policy outcomes when they are finalised to ensure Evans Head continues to enjoy the benefits of STRA while managing potential adverse impacts as the destination becomes more popular.	Medium
2.10 Identify and leverage government grant funding for infrastructure and tourism product, experience and event development.	On-going



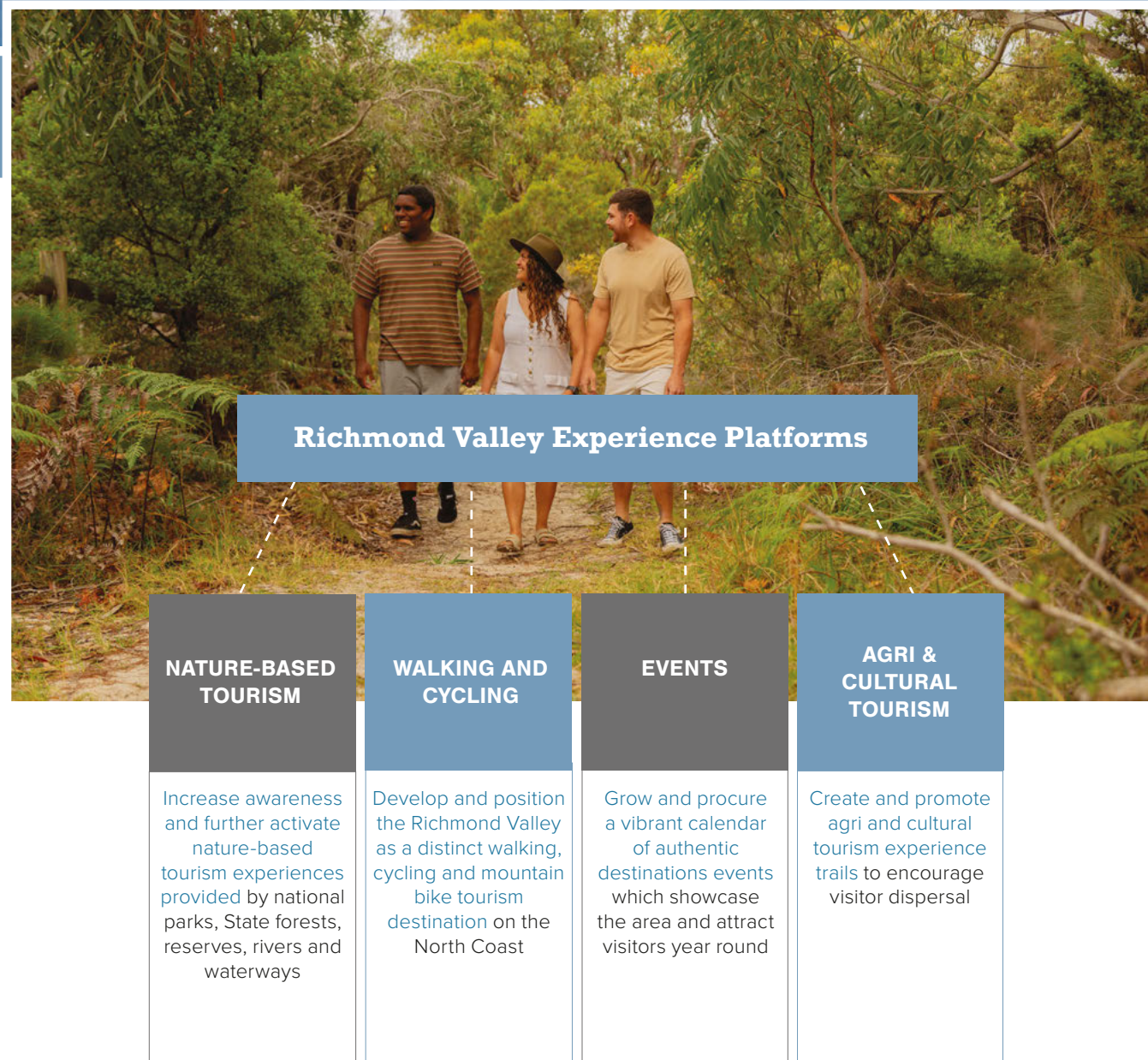
## PRIORITY 3

### Destination Product and Experience Development

Attract and support private sector investment to create and deliver a range of contemporary and authentic tourism products and experiences to encourage new and repeat visitors to stopover, stay and explore the area.

To attract visitors to stay longer and explore the area will require taking a strategic and proactive approach to support current businesses to grow, and to draw and support potential investors to the area to develop new products including: accommodation; nature-based tourism operations, agri-tourism experiences; coastal and country hospitality experiences - restaurants, cafes, and pubs.

Four experience platforms and associated actions are proposed to drive and coordinate tourism product and experience development across the Richmond Valley over the next five years<sup>11</sup>.



<sup>11</sup>These platforms align with the Destination North Coast Destination Management Plan 2018 to 2021– Nature; Caravan and Camping; Events; Food and Local Produce; Arts, Heritage and Aboriginal Tourism.

The background research and stakeholder engagement processes undertaken to inform this Plan identified:

- **The proposed development of the Casino to Murwillumbah Rail trail will create new opportunities for cycling and walking visitors** and may attract new tourism and hospitality investors/entrepreneurs to the Casino area.
- **There is an immediate opportunity to further develop mountain bike tourism at New Italy.** The Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club has identified four new trails, including a gravity-ride trail. Funding is required to activate the trails and NSW Forestry has highlighted the need for the Club to prepare a five-year strategic plan to guide future mountain bike activity and projects. There are also opportunities for Richmond Valley Council and Dirty Wheels Club to work with Ballina, Lismore and Kyogle LGAs to promote mountain bike experiences to attract overnight visitation to the region. Consideration of opportunities in the Braemar State Forest would help to support the Rappville economy.
- **Nature-based tourism is a strength of the area.** The challenge is how to further activate nature and outdoor experience drawcards for the Richmond Valley in a competitive North Coast marketplace, and attract operators to create more bookable products. Caravan and camping has also been a traditional accommodation/experience strength for the Richmond Valley with caravan parks and camping grounds located in key nature-based locations around the area. Given the Pacific Highway upgrade is complete in the RVC area, NPWS is interested in working with Council and other stakeholders to undertake research to inform future planning and decision making for sustainable tourism/recreational infrastructure in the RVC footprint, including how to best support the development of Aboriginal tourism product and experiences.
- **Improving the coordination of events, and having more destination events through the year,** was identified as a way to attract visitors and create greater awareness of what the Richmond Valley has to offer linking to its rivers, strong agricultural history and diverse range of produce. Events currently contribute an estimated \$8million (10%) to the Richmond Valley visitor economy. Casino's major events, Primex Field Days and the Casino Beef Week Festival are currently planning for the growth and further development of their events post COVID-19. There are, however, opportunities for these events to work more cooperatively. Creating another signature event for Evans Head was identified as important and currently being planned by the Evans Head Chamber of Commerce Marketing and Events Sub-Committee, but was affected by COVID-19 restrictions.
- **Although agriculture is a main industry for the Richmond Valley, agri-tourism experiences are still mainly under-developed.** There is an opportunity to position and develop the area as an agri-tourism destination, particularly for beef and sugar. Regional food or hospitality offerings are not currently a significant strength for the area as compared to other North Coast destinations (the Tweed). The previous Tourism Development Plan proposed the need for an agri-tourism strategy, but this work is still to be done. Council is currently working on developing a paddock-to-plate trail initiative to showcase local produce to visitors. In addition, Sunshine Sugar has identified an opportunity for a rum distillery at Broadwater, but does not have funding to develop this in the shorter term. It is, therefore, important that future work on an agri-tourism strategy considers agri-tourism product development as well as strategic land use planning initiatives to support the development of this sector into the future.
- **Heritage and cultural experiences have potential to be further developed and could be linked to agri-tourism.** The challenge for further cultural tourism development is how to further develop engaging, contemporary cultural tourism experiences. Local historical groups continue to struggle to offer consistent opportunities for visitors to engage with their offerings given they are reliant on volunteers. Participants representing historical and cultural groups agree that a coordinated project which identifies how cultural tourism could be best packaged, presented and promoted to visitors would be beneficial.
- **Accommodation development is important to growing overnight visitation and the visitor economy.** The need for more quality accommodation was identified as critical for the growth of the visitor economies across the Richmond Valley. Destination North Coast will soon be releasing findings of its Accommodation Reinvestment Project. It is anticipated this project will provide recommendations to inform future accommodation investment in the region. Holiday houses in Evans Head are increasingly available for booking on visitor accommodation rental platforms indicating a shift to a mix booking options for visitors – real estate agencies, properties which are self-managed and both. This may have implications for future short-term holiday letting regulations.



ACTIONS		PRIORITY
3.1	Provide support to the Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Club Incorporated to prepare a five-year strategic plan to guide the Club's development of mountain bike trails in Richmond Valley State forests.	High
3.2	Work cooperatively with the NSW Forestry Commission and Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Club and other interested stakeholders to develop a strategic approach to mountain bike tourism for the area, including auditing existing and proposed trails at New Italy Mountain Bike Forest, feasibility of trail development at Braemar Forest, creation of interpretive signage and supporting hub facilities.	High
3.3	Consider findings of the Destination North Coast Accommodation Reinvestment Project to inform Council support for new accommodation investors and the upgrade of existing accommodation facilities (motels, hotels, serviced apartments, caravan and camping parks) to provide quality facilities for visitors to stay and explore the area, including farm-stays, eco-accommodation, short-term holiday letting and accessible accommodation.	High
3.4	Create engaging material about business development opportunities in the Richmond Valley and include case studies of local private sector investors which have developed successful tourism enterprises and promote these as part of 'doing business with Council' website to help attract new tourism entrepreneurs to the area.	High
3.5	Provide business development support to local operators to grow and enhance their businesses and deliver high-level support to new investors seeking opportunities to establish tourism operations in the area, including support to create bookable product and ADTW listings.	On-going
3.6	Work cooperatively with National Parks and Wildlife Service and other key stakeholders, such as Southern Cross University, Forestry Commission of NSW, local Aboriginal tourism stakeholders, to undertake research and prepare a Richmond Valley Nature-Based Tourism Plan for the sustainable provision of tourism/recreational infrastructure, tourism product development opportunities, including the feasibility of positioning Woodburn as the gateway to nature-based tourism experiences.	High
3.7	Review the Richmond Valley draft Events Strategy to determine strategies to strengthen procurement and support for the growth of destination events which align with the four experience platforms. The strategy should aim to increase visitation expenditure across the year through development of current events and creation/attraction of new events, attract event funding support, to leverage public and private sector investment for new event infrastructure and facilities relevant to the local area.	High
3.8	Ensure the paddock-to-plate initiative includes research which could inform the development of a Richmond Valley Agri-tourism Strategy.	High
3.9	Based on findings and outcomes of Action 3.7, prepare a Richmond Valley Agri-tourism Strategy which includes consideration of Development Control Plans for rural lands to support development of agri-tourism, farm gates, farm stays, eco-development, on-farm experiences, and country weddings and events.	Medium
3.10	Prepare a Casino to Bentley Rail Trail Investment Prospectus to promote tourism product development opportunities associated with the Casino to Bentley Rail Trail development to potential investors and existing operators and promote this on Council's website and to other stakeholders (DNC, RDA) (see Action 2.3)	Medium
3.11	Work with historical associations, tourism operators and other interested cultural and heritage groups to create a bookable Richmond Valley Cultural Tourism Trail experience which provides opportunities for visitors to engage and experience the rich cultural heritage story of Richmond Valley in an appealing and contemporary way. The experience should be more than museum openings and self-guided walking tours ( a virtual reality trail experience).	Medium/low





## PRIORITY 4

### Destination Crisis & Risk Management

Continue to assess and plan for potential environmental and economic risks that may impact the Richmond Valley visitor economy.

Richmond Valley destinations are highly dependent on domestic visitation and any socio or macro-economic effect on the domestic tourism market may affect visitor economy growth potential. Regional tourism destinations in NSW and other Australian states were in drought and then suffered severe bushfires over the summer period 2019-2020, including areas of Richmond Valley.

From March 2020, the Australian visitor economy was then severely impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic which stopped international and domestic travel.

As a consequence, there is a need for Richmond Valley to continue to assess and plan for risks to the visitor economy and be prepared to implement recovery initiatives for any unexpected crises or risk which may affect business viability, community and visitor wellbeing, as well as the environment. This includes working with other government departments and agencies involved in crisis management planning and recovery. This will be particularly critical for recovery from the COVID-19 health pandemic.

At a local level, there is a need for consideration of strategies for shark mitigation and beach safety to ensure Richmond Valley's beaches are, and perceived to be, safe for residents and visitors. An immediate issue is limited beach patrols at Evans Head for the 2020-2021 summer period.

## 7.0 Strategic Priorities cont.

The Richmond Valley was severely impacted by bushfire events which started in August 2019 and resulted in 48.6% of the local government area and more than 350 homes and outbuildings. The Rebuilding the Richmond Valley: Community Revitalisation Plan was developed to analyse the impact of the bushfire disaster, understand which recovery actions have been initiated and identify the ways in which a well planned and coordinated approach can be used to help impacted communities recover, rebuild, grow and thrive.

The plan determined a number of actions to fast track the recovery process, create new opportunities which will alleviate pressure in the impacted areas and ensure communities are given the opportunity not only to restore, but to grow following such a devastating event for Rappville and New Italy.

ACTIONS		PRIORITY
4.1	Continue to provide support to the Evans Heads Surf Lifesaving Club to ensure Evans Heads beach is patrolled at peak times.	High
4.2	Continue to collaborate with relevant North Coast stakeholders to plan strategies for shark mitigation.	High
4.3	Continue to work with key stakeholders to consider and plan for potential risks that may impact the local visitor including recovery from the COVID-19 health pandemic, natural disasters, threats to natural and economic environments, and ensure visitor safety and security is assessed and integrated into current and future Council plans and policies.	On-going



## PRIORITY 5

### Destination Marketing

Determine a strong brand identity and positioning story for the Richmond Valley and its main destinations (Evans Head and Casino) and review destination marketing and visitor information services strategies to ensure a coordinated approach to the promotion of the area.

#### BRAND AND MARKETING

Richmond Valley Council has engaged a local agency, Wild Honey Creative, to create and implement the Richmond Valley Council tourism brand, Discover Richmond Valley. The scope of work involves development of:

- A logo and style guide which aligns both with Richmond Valley Council existing branding, and with the Richmond Valley Made place brand
- A marketing strategy, including a creative concept and marketing campaign that will keep the Richmond Valley in the front of mind and choice for travellers
- A social media strategy including visual storytelling through promotional videos
- Design of a new Richmond Valley Visitor Guide
- Professional review of the existing Discover Richmond Valley website so that it aligns with the new campaign.

The results of this work were finalised in October 2020 with a marketing campaign 'Explore Next Door' to be implemented from November 2020 to February 2021. The campaign is designed to reach overnight and day trip visitor markets within a three-hour radius of the Richmond Valley.

It is also important to recognise that visitors don't travel to local government areas. With this in mind, new destination marketing must dive deeper to consider the brand architecture for the area that clearly articulates the brand identities and positioning stories for the main destinations of Evans Head and Casino, as well as its villages – Coraki, Woodburn, New Italy and Rappville.



7.0 Strategic Priorities cont.

The background research and stakeholder engagement processes undertaken to inform the development of this Plan identified:

- The Richmond Valley is not widely recognised as a distinct tourism destination in its own right. For example, it is grouped with Lismore on the Visit NSW website.
- There is also more work to do increase Richmond Valley tourism product listings on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse to elevate the Richmond Valley profile.
- Evans Head stakeholders are keen to establish a clear brand identity and positioning of the destination within the coastal marketplace that considers:
  - Taking advantage of the new Pacific Highway to attract new and repeat visitors from Queensland
  - The natural and under-developed appeal of Evans Head offers nature-based tourism experiences which are different from more urbanised destinations, such as Ballina and Coffs Harbour
  - The authenticity and friendliness of Evans Head was also identified as being different to the experience in Byron Bay.
- Casino stakeholders highlighted:
  - The potential for Casino to better capitalise and really tell the story of its beef and agricultural heritage and status as 'Beef Capital'
  - The need to attract visitors from the coast to inland areas - the challenge is at the moment there is not much product to really 'pull' visitors to explore inland.





## VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

Council has traditionally coordinated delivery of visitor information services through centres at Casino, Evans Head and Woodburn. Information is also delivered through digital sources – Discover Richmond Valley website and social media platforms which deliver curated and non-curated visitor information and reviews, as well as printed collateral like maps, brochures and a Richmond Valley Visitors Guide.

Visitation to Richmond Valley visitor information centres has, however, been declining in line with trends across regional Australia. A new VIC at Woodburn opened in February 2020 and it is anticipated that New Italy will become more of a key hub for stopover visitors travelling north and an important source of local and regional information at a key gateway point to the area. It is, therefore, timely to review the delivery of visitor information services at Woodburn, New Italy and at highway stop over points, including highway service centres.

Visitor information collateral should also be reviewed as part of new brand and marketing initiatives to ensure a coordinated and contemporary approach to visitor information design and delivery.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation of marketing campaign performance is also required to inform future planning and decision making as well as regular monitoring of visitation, visitor profiles, competitive situation. Visitor satisfaction and perceptions research would also be helpful to understand consumer views about the appeal of Richmond Valley and what it has to offer.

ACTIONS		PRIORITY
5.1	Implement the Richmond Valley Explore Next Door campaign for 2020-2021.	High
5.2	Review the Discover Richmond Valley brand to establish a clear brand architecture which articulates brand identities and positioning stories for its main destinations, Evans Head and Casino, and its villages.	High
5.3	Review visitor information services delivery at Richmond Valley VICs to take advantage of changed travel patterns from Pacific Highway upgrade.	High
5.4	Based on recommendations of Action 5.2, prepare a three-year cooperative marketing campaign (commencing 2022) to reach key visitor markets and promote Richmond Valley destinations to relevant visitor markets.	Medium
5.5	Review visitor information collateral (print and digital) to align with the Richmond Valley brand identity and positioning (Action 5.2).	Medium
5.6	Create bookable experience clusters/trails to package accommodation, food, drink, produce, heritage attractions and nature and outdoor products and experiences to attract visitors to stay longer and explore the area.	Medium
5.7	Evaluate marketing campaign effectiveness annually.	On-going
5.8	Engage tourism research consultants to provide analysis of TRA visitation data on an annual basis to track growth, visitor profiles and trends.	On-going
5.9	Establish a visitor satisfaction survey to be administered in key Richmond Valley destinations to track visitor profiles and satisfaction of destination products and experiences.	Low



## 8.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Monitoring of the implementation of this Plan is important to ensure its vision and priorities are achieved and to provide new information which can be used to inform planning and decision making for the Richmond Valley visitor economy over the next five years.

### Stakeholder Roles and Responsibilities – Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021 to 2025

To ensure the effective implementation of this Plan, it is important the roles and responsibilities of Richmond Valley Council and other key tourism stakeholder organisations are clearly understood and communicated.

It is recommended that:

- **Richmond Valley Council** is positioned as the umbrella authority to coordinate the implementation of this Plan, and provides support to implement the strategies and actions in the Richmond Valley Destination Development Plan over the next five years
- **A Richmond Valley Tourism Advisory Group is established** comprising industry leaders with considerable knowledge of tourism to provide regular strategic advice to assist Council to implement the strategies and actions in this Plan, and assists Council to encourage industry engagement to grow and develop the Richmond Valley visitor economy
- **Other key stakeholder organisations and agencies identified in this Plan** are encouraged to provide on-going support to the assist with the implementation of this Plan.

Monitoring of the implementation of the plan's strategies is important to ensure the vision and objectives are achieved and to provide valuable information which can be used to inform decision making over the next five years.

## 9.0 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

Table 3: Richmond Valley Visitation Analysis 2016 to 2020 (Year End March)

Year end March '000	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5 year average
Domestic overnight visitors	131	156	152	153	214	<b>161</b>
% Change		19%	-2%	1%	39%	<b>14%</b>
Domestic nights	617	591	585	495	729	<b>603</b>
% Change		-4%	-1%	-15%	47%	<b>7%</b>
Average night stay	4.7	3.8	3.8	3.2	3.4	<b>3.8</b>
Sample size	44	71	62	59	78	<b>63</b>
Domestic day visitors	269	220	188	221	292	<b>238</b>
% Change		-18%	-15%	18%	32%	<b>4%</b>
Sample size	27	18	26	25	30	<b>24</b>
International overnight visitors	3	3	5	2	3	<b>3</b>
% Change		0%	67%	-60%	50%	<b>14%</b>
International Nights	50	36	55	31	77	<b>50</b>
Average night stay	17	12	11	16	26	<b>16</b>
Sample size	19	16	21	17	16	<b>18</b>
<b>Total Visitors</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>402</b>
% Change		-6%	-9%	9%	35%	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Visitor nights</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>653</b>

Source: TRA domestic and International Visitor Surveys 2016 to 2020<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Visitation data are based on the relatively low sample sizes and therefore provide an indication of visitor trends rather than actual visitor numbers.





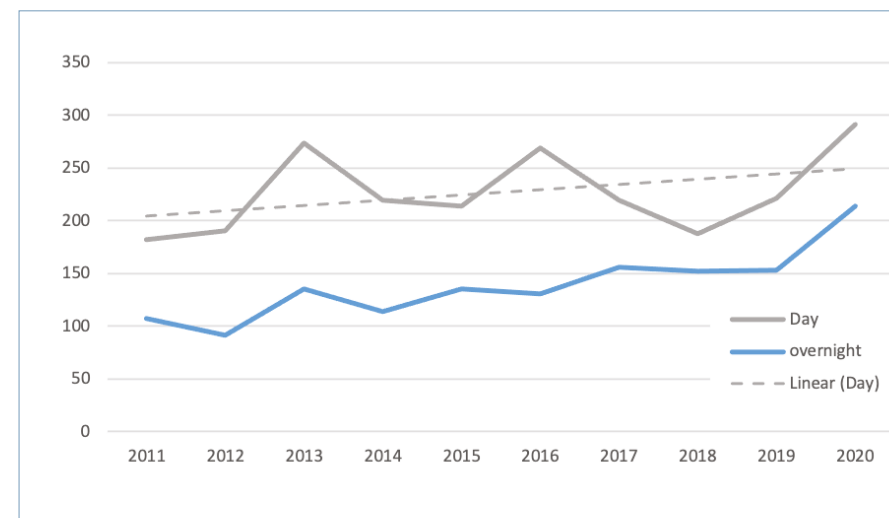
9.0 Appendices cont.

Table 4: North Coast NSW: Competitor Analysis

Y/E March 2020	Domestic '000			International '000		
LGA	Visitors	Visitor Nights	Day Trips	Visitors	Visitor Nights	Total visitors
Kempsey	201	700	161	6	18	368
Nambucca Valley	198	624	192	6	142	396
<b>Richmond Valley</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>509</b>
Ballina	382	1112	463	14	140	859
Lismore	234	782	666	10	108	910
Clarence Valley	658	2223	661	24	98	1343
Port Macquarie Hastings	858	2689	989	64	305	1911
Tweed Valley	803	2450	1268	23	273	2094
Coffs Coast	999	3465	1128	91	1086	2218
Byron Shire	905	3737	1225	198	1344	2328

Source: TRA domestic and international visitor surveys YE March 2020

Figure 3: Richmond Valley Overnight Visitation Trends 2011 to 2020



Source: TRA NVS Survey data 10-year average 2011-2020





APPENDIX 2 RA Persona Descriptions<sup>13</sup>

## THE PERSONAS MOST LIKELY AND LEAST LIKELY TO VISIT AUSTRALIA'S REGIONS

<p><b>1<sup>ST</sup> (MOST LIKELY)</b></p> <p><b>FAMILY ROAD TRIPPERS</b> (20% of domestic leisure visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>62% visited a regional area on their last trip</li> <li>repeat customers – 33% had been before</li> <li>28% use word-of-mouth as a key information source</li> </ul> <p><i>For this group, taking a holiday means spending quality time with the family – and regional Australia offers an affordable, easy to access option</i></p>	<p><b>1<sup>ST</sup> (LEAST LIKELY)</b></p> <p><b>ASIAN VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES (VFR) MARKET</b> (4% of international leisure visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>19% visited a regional area on their last trip</li> <li>gaining knowledge, natural attractions and iconic wildlife are important</li> <li>choose destinations with direct flights</li> </ul> <p><i>Among those who did not visit regional Australia, more than seven-in-ten agreed that regional Australia would be a good place to visit if time permitted. However, they require more information on what is on offer</i></p>
<p><b>2<sup>ND</sup></b></p> <p><b>TRADITIONAL MARKET GEN Y/Z</b> (4% of international leisure visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>59% visited a regional area on their last trip</li> <li>use the internet to decide where to travel and what to do when they get there</li> </ul> <p><i>Regional Australia is part of their 'bucket list' and a chance to learn something new, but they are more price-sensitive than other travellers</i></p>	<p><b>2<sup>ND</sup></b></p> <p><b>FESTIVAL AND EVENT GOERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>34% visited a regional area on their last trip</li> <li>those who did visit had a preference for regional areas, and are strongly motivated by the opportunity to explore</li> </ul> <p><i>Those preferring capital cities identified ease of travel and greater shopping and dining experiences as ways to influence them to travel to regional Australia</i></p>
<p><b>3<sup>RD</sup></b></p> <p><b>AFFLUENT 55+ AUSTRALIANS</b> (10% of domestic leisure visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>56% visited a regional destination on their last trip</li> <li>enjoy eating out at restaurants and shopping and stay longer at regional destinations (6.9 nights on average) than capital cities (5.8 nights)</li> <li>repeat customers – 44% had been before</li> </ul> <p><i>For these older Australians, travel offers the chance to escape day-to-day life and gain knowledge</i></p>	<p><b>3<sup>RD</sup></b></p> <p><b>ASIAN GEN Y AND Z MARKET</b> (7% of international leisure visitors)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>41% visited a regional area on their last trip</li> <li>Once there, they typically stay 9.6 nights – less than the 15 night average for international leisure visitors</li> <li>use social media for both inspiration and planning travel</li> </ul> <p><i>Drawn to natural wonders and food and wine experiences, those who have not travelled to regional Australia could be induced to visit with a better range of shopping, dining and experiences</i></p>

<sup>13</sup>Tourism Research Australia (2019) The Beach, Bush and Beyond: Understanding Regional Dispersal of Australian Tourists, October