PART I
Overview and Policy Recommendations

Prepared by Peter Austen, Tourism Manager
Interim Report – June 2000
# Contents

## PART I  OVERVIEW AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

*This document contains:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Analysis Summarised</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Recommended Policy Framework</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART II  ANALYSIS OF TOURISM

*(Separate Document)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bathurst and District Tourism Profile - Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visitor Profile</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Audit of Tourism Infrastructure</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Organisation of Tourism</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Consultation with Stakeholders</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Key Markets</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Approaches to Tourism by Regional Centres</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART III  REFERENCE MATERIAL

*(Separate Document)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART I
Overview and Policy Recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1 Background
Bathurst and the surrounding districts have actively pursued tourism as a means of generating economic and employment benefit for many years. The approach that has been used in the past has not involved a coordinated strategy with a planned agenda. The individuals and organisations that have been involved have typically been ‘enthusiastic amateurs’ and they have often fallen into the trap of pursuing single issues or have taken one-off approaches rather than strategies adopted as part of an overall plan.

1.2 Aims
This document is an attempt to remedy this ad hoc approach. It presents a tourism plan for Bathurst and the surrounding district. The plan is based on a study that aimed to:

- provide an overview of tourism in Bathurst and the surrounding district. This includes two key components:
  - an audit of key tourism attractions, assets and infrastructure;
  - a review of levels of, and trends in, tourism visitation patterns to the area (to the extent that this is permitted by available data);
- identify key consumer segments within the market for Bathurst District tourism product and assess the strengths and weaknesses of this product in relation to competing destinations;
- to identify, in light of the above, key tourism development needs for the Bathurst District and outline strategies for addressing these needs;
consider options for funding the promotion and development of local tourism, and recommend an approach that is most suited to Bathurst and district; and

evaluate alternative structures for the promotion, development and provision of visitor services at the local level, and recommend a structure considered most relevant to Bathurst and district.

Once the tourism plan has been adopted it is intended that it remain a ‘living’ document subject to ongoing reevaluation and revision. By placing the document on the Bathurst City website, it will be easily accessible to anyone interested in tourism in the area. The plan should be updated annually and be subject to a complete revision after five years (2005). The plan will be used as the basis for other plans such as Bathurst Visitor Information Centre’s business and marketing plans. The comprehensive nature of this report should enable subsequent documents to be succinct.

During the course of the study it became apparent that tourism in Bathurst is operating without core policies or underlying principles which are widely understood and agreed on by various sectors of the tourism industry. There are wide differences in the expectations of the various sectors. This leads to confusion as to what role Council, the Visitor Information Centre and other bodies, such as the Regional Tourism Organisation, should play. The major outcome of this report, therefore, became the development of a series of underlying policies for tourism in the Bathurst area.

The document presents a series of policies or underlying principles on which tourism strategies should be based. It then goes on to propose key strategies and actions that could be pursued if assuming agreement about the key principles.

1.3 Methodology

The study has involved extensive desk research, consultation with operators, and the integration of materials from a wide variety of sources including the authors observations based on extensive involvement in tourism in Bathurst.

The consultation phase involved a workshop program, as well as interviews with ‘key players’ from the local scene and appropriate staff from significant regional centres. The drafts of the interim report were also circulated to seven volunteer reviewers to provide an additional source of input and feedback.

This interim report was again reviewed and it is proposed that the ensuing version will
undergo public discussion and further workshops prior to final consideration.

1.4 Report Structure
The structure of this report is loosely based on the format suggested in ‘Tourism Planning Manual’ (Tonge et al 1999). This publication is a useful ‘how to’ guide with a host of checklists and practical suggestions regarding the development of Tourism Plans.

Part 1 introduces the report and provides a summary of the detailed analysis (which is contained in Part II), the conclusions of the research and a recommended policy approach to tourism.

The detailed analysis in Part II looks at tourism from a broad viewpoint before examining areas such as the characteristics of visitors, tourism infrastructure and the way in which tourism is organised in detail. Part II also includes input from operators and representatives from the district, examines a number of key markets that are significant to the Bathurst areas and considers where competitive advantage that exists for Bathurst and the surrounding district.

The last section in Part II looks at the organisation and financing of tourism in a number of other significant inland regional centres.

Part III includes the attachments and bibliography.

1.5 Acknowledgements
It is appropriate to recognise that Bathurst City Council, through the General Manager and Director of Planning and Development, have had the foresight to embark on a project such as this and have provided an opportunity to focus on producing this paper.

Thanks also to the staff at Bathurst Visitor Information Centre who coped with expanded roles during the production of this report and have provided valuable input and feedback. A special tribute to Raquelle Ryan who has typed the document, assisted in compiling many of the attachments and ‘juggled’ the final output.

Appreciation also to the industry and community representatives who participated in the workshops and the members of the team who helped to review drafts.
2. Analysis Summarised

This section provides an overview and summary of the detailed analysis contained in Part II of this report. To reach a complete understanding of the background of these issues it may be necessary for the reader to refer to Part II – Analysis of Tourism.

Tourism is a significant industry for the City of Bathurst and for the surrounding district. A conservative estimate of its value would be $58 million, which would have a direct and indirect job creation effect of up to 1,035 positions in the economy.

Through the publicity generated by Mount Panorama, Bathurst receives exposure and has awareness levels far beyond comparable regional centres. The exposure that is generated does not necessarily translate into an awareness of the city and surrounding districts from a broader tourism viewpoint and, in fact, the strength of activity generated by Mount Panorama may contribute to a somewhat complacent attitude as far as tourism is concerned.

2.1 Visitor Profile

Based on data from ‘Domestic Tourism Trends in NSW’ (Tourism New South Wales 1998) visitors to the Bathurst area are most likely to be families or seniors from the Sydney area. They are highly likely to be travelling in their own car and stay from 2 to 3 nights. Visitation patterns are highly seasonal with Autumn and Spring being the peak seasons.

There is no specific perceptual research on how Bathurst is viewed by visitors. From broader studies, there is evidence of the strength of Mount Panorama putting Bathurst on the map, but that this did lead to some ‘yobbo’ perceptions. On a regional basis, heritage, country, outdoor experiences and a sense of discovery are considered important drivers for tourism. There is also a perception that the distance from Sydney is much greater than it actually is.

The lack of data on tourism that is useful to and beyond the regional level is a major constraint to research, planning and measurement of tourism impacts.

2.2 Audit of Tourism Infrastructure

Beyond Mount Panorama, Bathurst has a diverse range of tourism product in terms of the attractions, experiences, activities and events that are available. Major new developments in the form of accommodation and attractions will give Bathurst a boost
towards achieving a ‘critical mass’, which will significantly increase the potential for tourism.

Across most facets of the industry, there is a lack of coordination, little support for cooperative marketing, small marketing and promotional budgets, and a general ‘inward’ looking approach from operators.

Within the accommodation sector there are significant peaks and troughs and overall published occupancy rates are not high.

Compared to other areas, Bathurst has strong meeting and conference facilities and is well situated to take advantage of this important market which, therefore, should be viewed as a significant opportunity.

Quality facilities across a range of arenas, including sporting facilities and the collective experience of the City, also suggest that the Bathurst area is well placed to cater for events. On the negative side, the lack of willingness/ability to coordinate and cooperate with other bodies and the willingness/ability of some bodies to organise events for visitors is questionable.

Good transport links are a vital component of tourism success. Road transport is of particular significance because almost all visitors travel by private car. There is also a strongly held perception that there is a need to develop a local tour service.

Council has been to the forefront in establishing the momentum to secure significant new tourism developments including the 5 star hotel development, the Sommerville Collection and a number of smaller accommodation developments. As stated previously, “Bathurst and District is about to enter a phase where it has a greatly enhanced ‘critical mass’ of tourism product”. There is, however, an expectation and pressure for ‘Council’ to ensure the success and viability of the industry.

The City of Bathurst is capable of providing most of the support services required by today’s visitor, although it should be acknowledged that there is a need to improve the quality of service in some areas. One facility often mentioned by international visitors as lacking is the shortage of places to cash international currency/travellers cheques.

Key education and training needs are identified as:
• business skills training;
• customer service training; and
• local awareness training.

A considerable void in the area of hospitality and entertainment has been filled with the opening of the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre and the Metro 5 Cinema, however, there is still a need for attractions and activities that are suited to the needs of younger children. Areas in close proximity to Bathurst, including Cowra, Orange and Mudgee, are rapidly gaining prominence in regard to tourism associated with wine and food. Bathurst has the potential to emerge as a gateway for these areas. With the development of significant boutique wineries and by gaining a reputation for excellence in regional cuisine, could become part of the rapidly emerging Central Western food and wine district.

2.3 Organisation of Tourism

On a number of occasions Bathurst City Council has expressed concern about aspects of the Regional Promotion Committee (Explorer Country Tourism). These concerns have chiefly related to the size of the region and the lack of an overall community of interest for marketing purposes. It would, from Bathurst’s perspective, be more satisfactory to develop marketing relationships with centres such as Orange, Cowra and Mudgee, and even centres to the east such as Lithgow and Oberon.

In order to streamline its decision making process Bathurst City Council abolished all of its non-statutory committees including the Bathurst and District Tourism Committee. Council is developing a process that involves more direct and open communication with stakeholders. Comments received, over a number of years, about the Tourism Committee had identified a number of issues of concern. These included:

• the lack of clearly defined role;
• the lack of communication between Committee members and the industry;
• the perception of delegates pursuing sectional interests;
• delegates with no experience or links with the tourism industry;
• the size of the Committee making it unwieldy; and
• the tendency to focus on issues rather than overall strategic direction.

In the long term, however, success in tourism in regional areas will require Council a strong partnership with industry. An essential aspect of this will be the formation of
strategic alliances within the industry, however, Council has indicated that it does not wish to service an industry body but encourages the development of an industry driven tourism organisation.

Bathurst City Council funds a large portion of the administrative costs associated with the operation of the Visitor Information Centre. Bathurst Visitor Information Centre is unique in that it raises the majority of the promotional budget from entrepreneurial activities, however, the promotional budget is small with a large proportion being allocated to core activities such as brochure production. The heavy reliance on income generating activities at Bathurst Visitor Information Centre also means that staff are more heavily involved in the operational aspects of tourism. A relatively inconsequential amount of money is allocated to advertising promotion, regional initiatives, product development and the Autumn Heritage Festival. Further dilution occurs as these resources attempt to cover a range of markets. There is a strong case for increasing the budget for tourism as studies commissioned by Tourism New South Wales demonstrate that the total expenditure on a Visitor Information Centre budget generates additional visitor expenditure of four and one third the size of the budget.

Bathurst City Council has, within the resources available to it, been supportive of tourism but has approached issues on an ad hoc basis rather than pursuing clearly identified outcomes. The expectations of the community, industry and Council, as far as tourism is concerned, can be quite divergent. Three key issues appear to be paramount:

1. the role and function of the Visitor Information Centre needs to be clarified;

2. an appropriate level and method for resourcing tourism needs to be identified;

3. that trying to cover all the bases without adequate resources is a guaranteed formula for failure.

In general, the Bathurst community appears to be positive about the benefits of tourism, but it would appear that the local population are not good ‘tourists’ as far as their own area is concerned. Attractions indicated that visitation levels from locals is far below what are considered industry standards. Internal marketing will assist in the development of informed, enthusiastic residents who will visit attractions and events themselves, encourage visiting friends and relatives to do the same, and become ambassadors and promoters of the City and District.
2.4 Industry Consultation

Industry and community input was obtained via a series of workshops held in October 1999. Additional input was gathered via interviews with the mayors and general managers of Evans Councils and representatives from villages within the two council areas.

Consistent with the overall fragmented nature of the industry, it proved difficult to get consensus on the key issues. For example, ideas perceived as major opportunities by some were perceived as key threats by others.

In general terms, the industry felt that the key opportunities for Bathurst were:

- touring holidays especially for seniors/emergence of impulse short break and touring short breaks;
- World Wide Web;
- wine and food tourism – Bathurst as a gateway/hub; and
- proximity to Sydney;

In terms of threats:

- inertia of Sydney market;
- Blue Mountains blockage;
- Bathurst too close to Sydney for touring holidays; and
- Bathurst in limbo between activity generated in the Blue Mountains, and the Cowra, Orange, Mudgee alliance.

Bathurst’s key strengths are perceived to be:

- Mount Panorama;
- historic Buildings / CBD beautification; and
- country experiences.

The industry tended to focus on a number of issues that were perceived as weaknesses. In regard to facilities, the issues included:

- location of Visitor Information Centre;
- directional signage;
- Bathurst Website;
• standard of facilities such as picnic facilities, public toilets, BBQ ad trailers; and
• highway entrances.

The industry threw up a host of markets and potential markets. Even the list considered as having high priority was broad:

• Touring by Car
• Families
• Seniors
• Sport
• Car clubs
• Four wheel drive
• Coach groups:
  – Educational
  – Seniors
• Conferences

When asked about the issue of the best way of funding tourism, no new ideas were put forward. Participants suggested that Council should allocate a greater proportion of revenue to the promotion and development of tourism.

Industry representatives did not generally appear concerned about the abolition of the Bathurst and District Tourism Committee and supported the idea of more direct communication with Council, although there is reluctance to participate in the current format of Council forums. The idea of a special tourism forum scheduled 3 to 4 times a year, which incorporated a presentation of tourism issues and planned direction, an educational component, and the opportunity to network and workshop, appeared to have wide support.

Discussions with Councils revealed that both Evans and Blayney recognise the importance of tourism to the area but that because of their low rate base, priorities for the allocation of funds tended to be in the area of infrastructure provision. Bathurst is perceived as an important hub for tourism in the area and they are keen to work with Bathurst.

The heritage of the district is perceived as the major drawcard and that much could be done to develop this potential. Councils would like to have tourism issues placed on the agenda for regular meetings with Bathurst City Council. Rather than making a
general contribution for tourism, the Mayors and General Managers felt that their Councils would prefer to invest in a specific tourism initiative involving the promotion of their areas.

Within the villages it is felt that there is a need for better knowledge of villages by Visitor Information Centre staff and industry operators in Bathurst and that Bathurst was excessively focussed on Mount Panorama. It was suggested that given the long term likelihood of amalgamation that Bathurst should be ‘building bridges’ with the surrounding district and that an integrated approach to tourism would be one way of achieving this.

2.5 Key Markets

Whilst the tourism marketing purists would disagree with the need for destinational marketing, it is contended that destinational marketing helps boost awareness levels of an area across key markets, creates an impression that may assist in the attraction of new residents and the development of new industries, and assists in the delivery of more highly market orientated product promotion. Destinational marketing may also serve as an important vehicle for internal marketing which assists in the improvement of the ‘self image’ of the community. Limited resources do mean that there is a need to place the highest priority on destinational promotion initiatives which:

- focus on key broad market segments;
- key source geographic areas; and
- emphasise the types of holidays and experiences relevant to key market groups.

In terms of both anecdotal and statistical evidence, families are the largest market segment visiting the area. Unfortunately, despite the fact that a similar situation prevails in a number of regions it has not been possible to find any relevant studies of this broad group which could in reality be subdivided into a number of other groups.

The second key market for the area is the seniors market. Again this, the over 55’s group, is broad but unlike families this market has recently undergone an extensive research and the resultant report ‘Not Over the Hill, Just Enjoying the View’ (Golik 1999) provides extensive material on key aspects of this market. Unfortunately, some operators wrongly perceive this market as the ‘older group travel segment’ or tend to dismiss the segment as being overly cost conscience. Specific product needs to be developed to cater for this group.
Key holiday types of the Bathurst District include Touring By Car and Short Breaks. Bathurst is well situated to focus on the market for these types of holidays and both are to be the subject of increased promotion at the regional and State level.

During the course of the study a host of markets were identified as being of relevance to Bathurst. The paper does not attempt to discuss all of the market segments and in-depth study would be recommended as part of the adoption of specific strategies in relation to any market. Some of the markets considered to be of particular significance included:

- **Conferences and Conventions** – Bathurst has a great depth of product for this market and an important flagship in the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre. Further competitive advantage stems from Bathurst’s central location, proximity to Sydney and good transport links. This market is also particularly lucrative in terms of visitor expenditure.

- **Sports** - Bathurst has a range of good sporting facilities, some of which are national and international standard. Some sporting bodies, in particular, have the organisational capability of actively seeking out events for the district.

- **Car Clubs** – Mount Panorama means that Bathurst is a drawcard for people with an interest in motor vehicles and this is not confined specifically to those with an interest in motor sport. Vintage and Veteran Clubs, as well as those with an interest in more contemporary vehicles, all form part of this market. A number of Bathurst organisations have particular expertise in this area and, as a result, Bathurst has a unique competitive advantage in this market place.

- **Four Wheel Drive** - the Bathurst area is already highly regarded by 4WD enthusiasts and there appears to be significant opportunity to improve aspects of infrastructure and develop promotional initiatives catering for this group.

- **Educational Tours** – Bathurst has a number of facilities which cater for the edutourism market. Efforts to promote this market are largely undertaken to an individual basis by the operators that are involved. There would appear to be various opportunities to develop cooperative initiatives between the organisations that are involved.

- **Film** – the rapid expansion of the Australian film industry creates opportunities in terms of the economic inflow that can result from a film or scenes in a film being made in the area, and from the long term promotional exposure. The
Bathurst area is well located to take advantage of this market and appears to have numerous areas that would provide suitable backdrops to a range of productions.

- **Fishing and Fossicking** – from an activities perspective, fishing and fossicking are already bringing substantial numbers of visitors to the area. Simple information sheets have been produced to help people undertake these activities and more extensive promotion has taken in regard to fishing. Industry, in the general sense, has been reluctant to support initiatives oriented at these markets because they are perceived as low yield, but given appropriate cooperative support, these are valid target groups.

### 2.6 Approaches to Tourism by Regional Centres

Different centres in inland New South Wales approach tourism in very different ways. Within each council different funding approaches are used which also makes any comparative analysis difficult. Against this background the approach to tourism in Bathurst has been compared to a number of other significant inland regional centres using an approach which attempts to be as objective as possible. A number of broad impressions are drawn as a result of this aspect of the study:

- Bathurst adopts a far more entrepreneurial approach than other areas and is more involved in the operational aspects of tourism. Income is derived from a wider range of sources than is the case elsewhere;

- Bathurst City Council contributes a lower proportion of overall tourism expenditure compared to the other centres studied;

- A number of centres have adopted an integrated approach to tourism promotion and economic development;

- It appears that Bathurst could do better in terms of occupancy/utilisation of the accommodation pool; and

- Higher promotional budget appears to be reflected in higher occupancy levels.
3. Conclusions

As a direct result of staging major events at Mt Panorama Bathurst receives huge exposure and high awareness levels compared to other regional centres in Australia. Unfortunately, this exposure does not necessarily translate into an awareness of the City and surrounding districts from a broader tourism viewpoint. The exposure and activity generated by Mount Panorama may also contribute to a somewhat complacent attitude as far as tourism is concerned.

Despite the fact that tourism is already an important part of the local economy it would appear that Bathurst has the potential to perform better in regard to tourism on a year round basis. Without the leadership and financial involvement of Bathurst City Council this situation is unlikely to change.

A review of the infrastructure reveals a breadth of potential in terms of product and potential markets. The situation in tourism is not unlike the Bathurst economy in a general sense. It is multifaceted and does not totally depend on one or two particular elements.

Industry consultation confirms the diverse nature of the industry and emphasises that the industry does not work together and is not likely to become cohesive without Council involvement. This extends beyond Bathurst City boundaries and the need to develop a formula for cooperation with the wider district.

The report concludes, however, that within the City of Bathurst the Council is the only body that is currently capable of taking a leading role of tourism. Council should pursue this role in a way that allows input from the industry and encourages the industry to develop its own body which may, in the long term, relieve Council of this function.

As a result of the diversity of products and markets and due to the limited resources that are available for promotion and development Bathurst has perhaps not performed as well as it could by attempting to pursue to many options with these limited resources.

There is a need to clearly define what Bathurst wants to achieve through tourism and how it is intended to pursue this vision. Consideration also needs to be given as to the resources that can be allocated to tourism and from where these resources will be
During the preparation of this report, it became evident that the key need in regard to the ongoing development of tourism in Bathurst is the provision of a funding base which provides for the administrative costs relating to tourism and for the associated tourism development and promotional costs. Without clear provision of how costs will be met and how the costs will be funded, there is little point in proceeding further.

The resources that are available will limit the goals that can realistically be pursued. It is therefore important that Bathurst focuses its limited resources on a few strategies with significant potential. Selecting appropriate strategies will involve some tough decisions. The pursuit of specific strategies may result in the perception that Bathurst will ‘miss out’ on some good opportunities. However, to achieve long term success it is essential to remain ‘on message’ or if there are compelling reasons to deviate the core priorities would need to be revised or additional resources provided.

It was concluded that in terms of the resources that are likely to be available Council should endeavour to:

- satisfy the information needs of the majority of visitors and attending visitors;
- allocate resources to the provision of basic collateral material;
- provide resources for the overall promotion of Bathurst, giving emphasis to initiatives oriented at the families and seniors markets;
- feature short break and travelling by car holidays in destinalional marketing.
- support industry driven initiatives oriented at appropriate target markets;
- focus its key strategic initiatives on attracting new events, conferences and meetings, giving particular emphasis to groups and organisations that have a motor vehicle orientation. From a community perspective, this is where Bathurst has significant competitive advantage and is an area that will bring measurable and observable results.

Achieving unity of direction in terms of the promotion of the area could be enhanced by the development of ‘Brand Bathurst’ and appropriate positioning statement. A branding initiative would also assist from the perspective of economic development,
used by local industry and serve as a banner for achieving and promoting community identity and pride.

The low visitation rates at attractions by locals and by deduction, a low referral rate for the significant visiting friends and relatives (VFR) market as well as a fragmented industry in which representatives feel isolated leads to a conclusion that significant resources need to be allocated to internal marketing. The need for internal marketing could also be extended to the immediate district in terms of the adjoining Councils. Outcomes from these initiatives would include increased attendance from locals and VFR’s at attractions and events and an active tourism ambassador element within the community. These initiatives would also heighten involvement and commitment of industry and adjoining Councils towards tourism.

In the course of this study a host of specific issues were identified. A view was developed that a basic cause of many issues is the lack of underlying principles or policies that guide how tourism is to be approached by Council and the community. The major thrust of this paper therefore became the development of an approach to tourism to provide an underlying philosophy and which would in turn provide resolution for many issues identified.

A series of policy objectives for tourism are suggested as a way of focusing the commitment of Council, the industry and the community. The approach amounts to a philosophical approach to tourism that would guide decision making and the development of a series of detailed action plans. With each policy there are recommended key strategies and the overall policy in regard to the Visitor Information Centre has been developed to stage of a business plan.

The adoption of broad policy objectives also allows the direction that is proposed to be communicated to stakeholders and discussed as suggestions for changes to policy direction are considered. An ad hoc approach almost appears to be an inevitable aspect of the way tourism is currently approached. By agreeing on a broad plan or underlying philosophy it should be possible to make decisions which are guided by long term direction.
4. Recommended Policy Framework

4.1 Vision for Tourism

Council’s vision for tourism as adopted as part of its fifty year plan remains a valid statement of what the community would hope to achieve through tourism.

Bathurst City Council’s vision for tourism is:

_The community of Bathurst recognises tourism as an important means of stimulating the local economy through the injection of funds into the economy and the creation of employment opportunities in Bathurst. Bathurst encourages tourism in a form which preserves and enhances the key attributes of Bathurst and District – the things which make the Bathurst area a great place to visit and live._

In pursuing this vision, in the light of information that is currently available, it is suggested that Council adopt the following policy goals in relation to tourism.

4.2 Ten Point Plan For Tourism

4.2.1. Financial

_Policy Goal_

- To provide adequate funding for tourism and ensure that funds are appropriately utilised in terms of established objectives.

_Key Strategies_

- Determine appropriate funding levels for tourism by reviewing the marketing and business plan in the light of other priorities;

- Determine and implement an ongoing revenue base for tourism;

- Monitor expenditure and income through acceptable accounting practices; and

- Develop and implement overall performance measures for tourism and ensure that promotional initiatives have in-built monitors.
Comment
If Bathurst wishes to pursue tourism in a serious manner and position itself to fully utilise the developments that are about to take place, Council needs to determine how it will fund tourism. In the current economic climate it is unlikely that industry will substantially increase its contribution. The alternatives open to Council appear to be:

- Increase the proportion of general revenue allocated to tourism to allow for greater promotion and development of tourism product;
- As per above, but tie part of Council contribution to matching industry contributions to stimulate the level of industry contribution; and
- Implement a special rate for promotional purposes to force industry and the community to contribute.

In the current political climate it appears unlikely that the third option would gain approval. However, a promotional rate is considered to be the most equitable means of funding promotional initiatives. The second option would be the preferred suggestion as a formula could be developed to encourage industry contribution.

4.2.2. Visitor Information Centre

Policy Goal
- Provide an accredited Visitor Information Centre which contributes to tourism by providing information services which enhance visitor satisfaction levels and serves as a focal point for the management for tourism promotion and development for the City and surrounding district.

Key Strategy
- The development and approval of a business and marketing plan which, once approved, will provide guiding principles for the operation of the Visitor Information Centre.

Comment
A key aspect of the approach to tourism that is being proposed is that tourism and promotion of Bathurst in a general sense be pursued from a whole of community, industry and Council perspective. It is important that one area manage the pursuit of these policy goals. It is proposed that this fall to the Visitor Information Centre under
the economic development mantle of the Planning and Development Department.
The implementation of these policies will require the Visitor Information Centre to
close in a different way than is currently the case. A simple but comprehensive
business plan has been developed to guide operations.
The business plan continues to recognise the key areas of operation as:

- Information Services;
- Tourism Development;
- Promotion; and
- Entrepreneurial Activities.

It is anticipated that given the proposal to expand levels of promotional activity,
development of a more meaningful relationship with the industry and enhance the profile of
tourism within the community some fundamental changes will need to be made. This
will allow the implementation of these policies without the need to increase staff
resources.

Key changes would include the out-sourcing of many tasks currently completed ‘in
house’ including the sale of advertising in publications and enlistment of tourism
supporters. Staff and/or consultant time would need to be factored into promotional
and development activities. Senior Council staff, staff from other Council
Departments and Visitor Information Centre staff would need to work on project
teams assigned to specific projects.

4.2.3. The Residents

Policy Goal
- Create an environment in which the residents of Bathurst and the surrounding
areas become ‘tourism ambassadors’ and regular visitors to attractions and
events.

Key Strategies
- Devise an active public relations campaign to inform residents about the benefits
  of tourism and about developments in tourism;
- Distribute tourist information to residents;
- Create a tourism ambassador program which encourages residents to be
proactive in attracting people to the area and to assist in identifying promotional opportunities;

- Encourage residents to visit local attractions including the district villages; and

- Assist event organisers to encourage attendance from local residents.

Comments
A major change from the current approach is the allocation of resources towards motivating residents to be part of the tourism scene. Local residents should become good ambassadors for Bathurst and become more involved by visiting attractions and attending events. This activity should also spill over into the surrounding region (via use of media) to stimulate increased visitation from within the region.

4.2.4. Industry Partnerships

Policy Goal
- Council will facilitate the development of partnerships with the tourism industry resulting in the initiation of cooperative target marketing and will encourage education and training activities for the industry.

Key Strategies
- Implement quarterly industry forums for the industry which would involve:
  - presentations on initiatives/issues/programs in relation to tourism;
  - an education/training element;
  - the opportunity for networking and workshops for various industry groups;

- Provide a cooperative marketing fund to match industry contributions for approved projects on a dollar for dollar basis;

- Conduct regular front line staff days to inform front line staff about tourism in Bathurst and District;

- Facilitate appropriate industry education programs;

- Build a strong relationship with Evans and Blayney Councils in relation to tourism and ensure that tourism is a agenda item for regular discussions between Councils; and
• Work with the District villages to initiate programs to assist the promotion of the District.

Comment
The lack of real involvement from the industry, the adjoining Councils and village residents appears to be an underlying issue within tourism in the Bathurst District. This policy goal recognises this and proposes the development of strategies that will bring the industry together as a whole. It will encourage the formation of strategic alliances within the industry resulting in industry initiated packages and product development. It will stimulate tourism in the villages and enhance cooperation between villages. The adjoining Councils will increase their commitment to specific initiatives in tourism and hopefully enter into heads of agreement regarding the sharing of Visitor Information Centre resources.

4.2.5. Infrastructure

Policy Goal
• Facilitate or provide, where appropriate, infrastructure for visitors which contributes to the visitor experience and provides amenity for Bathurst and District residents.

Key Strategies
• Provide information bays on all highway entrances;

• Determine the long term situation in regard to the location of the Visitor Information Centre and implement the decision;

• Develop a signage and City gateway strategy which:
  – facilitates visitor ‘way-finding’
  – identifies attractions and points of interest
  – creates a favourable impressions of the City and encourages visitors to stop

• Provide public toilets, BBQ facilities and lookouts which enhance visitor perceptions of the City;

• Facilitate the development of appropriate private sector infrastructure:
  – package tour development by:
    … subsidising approved operations for an agreed establishment period
Comment
A number of infrastructure issues have recurred through all aspects of consultation in regard to the development of this plan.

The need to improve signage to improve ‘way finding’ and signal to potential visitors that there are things to see and do in Bathurst as the most frequent point made. A related issue was the concept of using the highway entrances to influence perceptions of Bathurst and encourage visitors to stop.

The location of the Visitor Information Centre has been an issue within the local media in recent months and there is also a great deal of behind the scenes discussion taking place. The industry certainly expressed the need to establish a highway location. Strategies such as improving the visibility and facilities at the current site or adopting tactics such as improving information distribution and training of front line staff to handle tourism related enquiries did not rate a mention. It is clear that this is an issue that Council will need to resolve.

Despite the failure of two attempts to develop day tours over the past twelve years there is a strong support for the case to assist the development of day tours and tour packages. The community perceives this as an important means of conveying that Bathurst has ‘come of age’ as far as tourism is concerned, however, initiatives will need to be supported as the Bathurst area is not sufficiently developed from a tourism perspective for traditional tour operations to be viable.

4.2.6. Destinational Promotion

Policy Goal
- Create an overall awareness of Bathurst and the surrounding district in the general marketplace and give priority to initiatives which are likely to influence key market groups.

Key Strategies
- Develop a marketing and public relations strategy which increases the general exposure of Bathurst and surrounding district; and
- Implement the strategy.
Comment

Building on the awareness of Bathurst generated by Mount Panorama and converting this into an improved perception of the total picture of Bathurst and district emerges as a major challenge and perceived need.

More destintational promotion would provide the industry an opportunity to ‘piggy back’ specific promotions generating a twofold effect. Improved awareness of the Bathurst area may also serve as a means of stimulating interest from developers and from potential new residents. A further benefit could extend to internal marketing in Bathurst.

In developing a destinational marketing strategy attention needs to be paid to strategies more likely to reach the key market groups that currently visit the area. With an integrated economic development and tourism approaches, these strategies would also need to consider key source markets for developers and those people who are most likely to relocated to Bathurst.

For a regional centre with limited resources available for promotion, the option of developing promotions which integrate destinational awareness with the need for promotions oriented at economic development is to be endorsed.

4.2.7. Gateway

Policy Goal

- Position Bathurst as a gateway-hub for the District and immediate region.

Key Strategies

- Develop initiatives to attract visitors to the immediate district on a day and stay basis; and

- Establish strategic alliances with the Cowra, Orange, Mudgee area and the Blue Mountains with the view to developing and promoting joint products.

Comments

The proposal that Bathurst position itself as a gateway and hub emerges from a number of viewpoints.

Historically, Bathurst had always been a point of departure for those wanting to
explore areas beyond Bathurst. Today, Bathurst is the natural eastern gateway to Explorer Country (Central West Region). It is well positioned to take advantage of the wine areas of Cowra, Orange and Mudgee (and is developing its own boutique wine industry), and is the natural hub for exploring the natural, historical and rural features of the surrounding area.

4.2.8. Conferences

**Policy Goal**
- Establish Bathurst as New South Wales’ premier regional venue for conferences, meetings and trade displays.

**Key Strategies**
- Develop a ‘Bid Bathurst’ strategy to promote Bathurst as a conference venue;
- Secure industry involvement;
- Develop alliances with Regional New South Wales Conference Unit of the Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau; and
- Encourage local people to be active in identifying and securing conferences, meetings and trade displays for the City.

**Comments**
The extent and quality of convention and conference facilities, Bathurst’s central location from a State perspective and the need to bolster trough periods are key reasons for suggesting that Bathurst should focus on attracting conferences and conventions to the area.

This is a specialised field of marketing which requires strategic initiatives oriented at boosting awareness of the City as a potential venue as well as specific activities for bidding for and supporting bids for specific meetings.

Conference and Event tourism also have advantages in that there is strong feedback as a result of promotional efforts. Success is both measurable and often evident to the wider community.
4.2.9. Events

Policy Goal

- Improve coordination of existing events and attraction of new events, especially activities and events with a motor vehicle orientation.

Key Strategies

- Improve the coordination of events by developing an events register;

- Production of an events lists and programs of a monthly, seasonal and annual basis;

- Develop a strategy for the promotion of events;

- Encourage the development of new events and bids for rotational events with particular emphasis on establishing events in tourism through periods; and

- Establish and market events based packages targeted at car and bike clubs.

Comment

Bathurst has a considerable depth of experience in handling events. The City has a good range of sporting facilities and, without doubt, the capacity to develop special activities and events for car and bike clubs.

The peaks and troughs of the industry as it currently stands could in part be leveled through the improved coordination of current events. Attendances could also be boosted through improved promotion of events.

4.2.10. Investment and Development

Policy Goal

- Secure additional investment, development and population growth in Bathurst through tourism based promotional programs and the development of a sustainable tourism industry.

Key Strategies

- The utilisation of tourism promotion to convey positive messages about Bathurst that will attract potential investors, developers and residents to the City; and
• Through strategies designed to boost tourism, create a profitable climate within the industry that is conducive to the development and creation of employment opportunities.

Comment
An underlying rationale for promoting tourism is the creation of a climate which stimulates growth and development. It would appear that Bathurst is about to undergo a period of growth in some parts of its tourism infrastructure. If this growth is to be justified, and for complementary development to take place, it is essential that a climate of success is created. There is also evidence to suggest that a strong tourism industry also leads to enhanced prospects for economic development in other fields. This further strengthens the case for developing integrated strategies for promoting overall awareness of the district.

4.3 Bathurst Visitor Information Centre - Business Plan

4.3.1 Mission
The mission of Bathurst Visitor Information Centre is to support Bathurst’s vision for tourism by providing information services which enhance visitor satisfaction levels and extend length of stay through the provision of initiatives to promote Bathurst and the surrounding district, and by facilitating the development of tourism infrastructure and product.

At the present time, this can best be achieved by focusing on results in four key areas:

• Information Services
• Promotion
• Tourism Development
• Entrepreneurial Activities

4.3.2 Key Result Areas
The objectives and broad strategies for each area are outlined in the tables below.
### Key Results Area: INFORMATION SERVICES

**Objective/s:**  
- Increase visitor length of stay and visitor numbers to Bathurst and District through the provision of an information service which meets the needs of current and intending visitors and contributes to overall awareness of Bathurst and District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of informed, friendly and personal service at Bathurst Visitor Information Centre</td>
<td>• Visitors express satisfaction with services of Visitor Information Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish appropriate Level 3 (Local) Visitors Centres at appropriate locations within the district</td>
<td>• Number of people using the services provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distribute information via outlets including accommodation providers and attractions within the District</td>
<td>• Supplies of publications are maintained agreed distribution points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Distribute information via key outlets in other parts of the state</td>
<td>• Publications are produced in accordance with schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilise appropriate technology, including the Internet, 1800 number and fax, to enhance the provision of Visitor Information Services</td>
<td>• Appearance and layout of the Visitor Information Centre creates a positive impression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fulfill requests for updates on information on Bathurst and District from publishers and web sites</td>
<td>• Feedback indicates users are satisfied with content of tourism component of Bathurst City web-site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Each year revise and publish a Visitors Guide, Tour Planner and City Map and maintain supplies of Visitor Information Sheets</td>
<td>• Tourism publications, databases and web-sites which are provided with information, contain accurate information about Bathurst and District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implement training programs to ensure that staff are well informed about tourism facilities in Bathurst and the surrounding district</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Maintain accreditation under the Visitor Information Network and pro-actively support the concept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Results Area:</td>
<td>PROMOTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective/s:</td>
<td>1. Provide general collateral resources to facilitate the overall promotion of Bathurst and District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Promote general awareness of Bathurst and the surrounding District, giving priority to initiatives that are oriented towards the families and seniors market and/or involve short breaks and touring by car holiday types.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Encourage the local industry to develop cooperative marketing initiatives oriented at specific and relevant target markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Increase the involvement levels of Bathurst and regional residents as tourists in their own area and motivate the resident population to become tourism advocates for the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Recognise conferences, meetings and events (particularly vehicle oriented events) as target markets where Bathurst has strong competitive advantage by developing and initiating specific promotions oriented at these markets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Collateral Material</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop and maintain an image library that is available on CD in high resolution scans</td>
<td>• Initiatives completed to agreed standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop wild footage video in broadcast digital format</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produce a quality A4 promotional brochure on a regular basis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produce and maintain a media Kit that includes background information and generic feature stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Produce supplies of a presentation folder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. General Promotion

- Engage a public relations specialist to provide ongoing liaison with the media to prepare news releases, feature stories, and material for the electronic media.
- Conduct media monitoring.
- Advertise in key publications targeted at groups in key markets and holiday types, e.g., NRMA holiday planners.
- Advertising support for Bathurst and District feature in publications targeting appropriate markets.
- Participate in consumer shows including:
  - Sydney Supershow
  - Sydney Holiday and Travel Show
  - Sydney Seniors Expo
- During 2000/01 refine area of general promotion to give greater focus on specific markets and holiday types.
- Improve events coordination and marketing by:
  - Developing an on-line events registration procedure
  - Produce an upgraded monthly What’s On publication
  - Investigate the potential of producing a seasonal events brochure
  - Produce annual lists of key events as required
  - Include events promotion in ongoing media promotion

### 3. Cooperative Marketing

- Develop guidelines and structure for providing up to $4 for $ assistance to industry cooperative groups proposing marketing initiatives for high priority markets.

### Other

- Extent of media exposure
- Placement of advertisements in publications
- Response to generic advertising
- Conversion rates from trade show responses
- Produce and gain approval for a destination marketing program
- Development of an online events registration system
- Production of ‘What’s On’ on schedule and to agreed standard

- Produce and issue guidelines for cooperative, industry driven target marketing initiatives
- Support programs of up to $40,000 value in year 1 and $60,000 in year 2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>4. Local Promotion</strong></th>
<th><strong>5. Target Markets</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a promotional/ PR campaign to increase to attendance of local residents at attractions and events and motivate local residents as ambassadors for the area</td>
<td>• Develop and initiate PR/campaign targeting local and regional residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Secure increased industry participation and commitment to promotional activities by-</td>
<td>• Increased attendance by locals and regional visitors at attractions and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Issuing monthly A4 newsletters</td>
<td>• Industry supporter program generated $20,000 in industry contributions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Holding three industry forums per year</td>
<td>• Hold 3 tourism industry forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Issue monthly industry newsletter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | Develop and market product that is specifically designed for vehicle oriented groups |
| | Develop marketing plan for conference and meeting market |
| | Public conference planner |
| | Develop marketing plan for events generally with specific initiatives targeting car and bike clubs. |
### Key Results Area: TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

**Objective/s:**

1. Identify tourism infrastructure development needs, recommend priorities and develop strategies to provide infrastructure according to needs and availability of resources.

2. Monitor Bathurst and District’s key tourism markets to identify product development needs and develop strategies for the development and marketing of product.

3. Provide financial and resource support for approved product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Infrastructure</strong>&lt;br&gt; • Utilise feedback from visitors, industry and community to monitor what infrastructure is required&lt;br&gt; • Plan for the provision of priority infrastructure including resource considerations&lt;br&gt; • Proactively pursue the implementation of agreed plans</td>
<td>Bathurst demonstrates leadership in terms of providing appropriate tourism infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Product Development</strong>&lt;br&gt; • Continually review markets and product offerings to identify product that the Bathurst area could develop to meet market needs&lt;br&gt; • Work with the tourism industry to develop those products deemed to have the highest potential</td>
<td>New products developed&lt;br&gt; Meet with market success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Product Support</strong>&lt;br&gt; • Identify products which have high potential or those which are considered to have significant merit from a ‘total tourism’ perspective&lt;br&gt; • Provide agreed support to approved products.</td>
<td>Products are identified and support mechanisms agreed and delivered&lt;br&gt; Products success is evaluated in terms of cost and desired outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Results Area: ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES

**Objective/s:** Conduct business activities which assist in the promotion and development of tourism in the Bathurst area that provide an economic return that is appropriate to the relevant area of activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Performance Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. **Sale of Souvenirs and Gifts**  
- Quality product which promote Bathurst and/or Australia  
- Priority to products that are produced in Bathurst or Australia  
- Provides a resale facility for other local operators  
- Operates under normal commercial practices for this type of business |  
- Annual sales of $80,000  
- Net profit of 15% of gross sales |
| 2. **Operate a tour service for international visitors** which focuses on home and farm hosting |  
- Net profit of 5% on each tour |
| 3. **Operate an accommodation booking service for major events** which utilises accommodation in private homes |  
- Net profit of 5% on overall operation |
| 4. **Offer package tours to Bathurst and District** |  
- Development of strategy in longer term |
| 5. **Provide a Conference and event accommodation booking service** |  
- Development of strategy in longer term |
| 6. **Provide an accommodation and attraction booking facility**  
- Investigate the availability of technology that is suited to the needs  
- Negotiate protocols with industry  
- Promote and operate the service |  
- Facility commences operation within 6 months of move to relocated Visitor Information Centre |

The business plan, as stated, is reasonably ambitious and will require further refinement in the light of longer term financial resources. Time lines for implementation, the development of the various ‘sub plans’ and specific tactics can be developed once broad agreement is reached.

An important aspect in determining the overall ‘health’ and direction of tourism, and in the evaluation of performance relative to this plan, will be the design of tools to measure these various aspects. At the time of writing, it is understood that this is to be considered as part of a broader Council initiative.