
14.3 REVIEW OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED TO UNDERTAKE DEVELOPMENT OF SNOWY MONARO TOURISM STRATEGY

Record No:

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with Section 10A(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.

Responsible Officer:	General Manager
Key Direction:	3. Strengthening Our Local Economy
Delivery Plan Strategy:	DP3.7 Work together to plan, coordinate and implement tourism products.
Operational Plan Action:	OP3.23 Develop a strategic approach to tourism in the Region by integrating land use planning, product development and promotion.
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. TRC Tourism Strategy Proposal (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>)2. Univeristy of Canberra Tourism Strategy Proposal (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>)3. Stafford Group Tourism Strategy Proposal (<i>Under Separate Cover</i>)
Cost Centre	3900 - Tourism
Project	Tourism Strategy Review
Further Operational Plan Actions:	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To consider a report on the submissions received to undertake the development of a Tourism Strategy for Snowy Monaro regional Council. Submissions were invited and received from University of Canberra, The Stafford Group and TRC Tourism.

The following officer's recommendation is submitted for Council's consideration.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That Council accept the proposal from University of Canberra to undertake the development of the Snowy Monaro Regional Tourism Strategy at a cost of \$36,740.

BACKGROUND

One of the tasks identified as a result of the merger process is the harmonisation of policies and strategies. The development of a Snowy Monaro Tourism Strategy has been given a high priority as a result of not just the merger but also the review of Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) by the NSW State Government which resulted in Tourism Snowy Mountains being incorporated into Destination Southern NSW (including the Snowy Mountains and the Far South Coast). The documentation from the Minister at the time of the announcement indicated the following roles:

Destination Networks

- Working as destination managers, not just destination marketers
- Developing visitor experiences and tourism product, promoting destinations and industry professional development Providing support, information, and coordinating services to industry, local tourism organisations and Councils
- Acting as a local conduit for DNSW to ensure information flows between the regions and DNSW, and ensuring campaigns are reflective of local tourism offering Reviewing RVEF applications and assisting operators in applying
- Updating and administering Destination Management Plans (DMPs)

Industry, Local Tourism Organisations and Councils

- Utilising the Destination Network as a source of information, support and as a coordinating force for the region
- Collaborating on product development, smaller scale marketing and promotional campaigns, seeking support through the RVEF (Regional Visitor Economy Fund)
- Running regional events, where applicable, supported by the expanded Regional Flagship Event Program
- Developing tourism infrastructure supported by Government regional infrastructure funding

On 29 November 2016 the Executive Officer of TSM forwarded a proposal for the future of TSM (copy attached) which in part stated:

“TSM’s Executive Officer and Board members have the experience and expertise to undertake the important role of promoting the region and help to nurture economic development. There is strength in the unity of purpose TSM represents. If TSM was not embraced by SMRC, the region would lose this strength and over time become less competitive which would lead to an economic decline in the region.

TSM has funds to continue functioning for approximately 8 - 12 months, thereafter TSM should become this region’s LTO, formally adopted by and part funded by SMRC along with regional stakeholders.

We anticipate that SMRC would need to allocate a minimum of approximately \$100,000 pa to TSM commencing FY 2017- 2018 and onwards and we look forward to working with SMRC to frame a budget in detail highlighting the key activities to be undertaken against a series of specific and measurable KPI’s demonstrating the returns against the funds invested by SMRC. It is critical for the region that this model be adopted by SMRC and time is of the essence.’

Given the changes to TSM and the merger it was decided that before committing to on-going funding of TSM as an LTO Council undertake a review and develop a Strategic Tourism Plan. A selected Expression of Interest (EOI) was undertaken with organisations that staff believed were capable of undertaking such a process. The following scope was forwarded to the University of Canberra, TRC Tourism and the Stafford Group:

‘Snowy Monaro Regional Council was created through the merger of Bombala, Cooma-Monaro and Snowy River Councils by the State Government on 12 May 2016. Each of the former Council’s had their own Tourism Strategies which continue to apply until such time as Council develops its own Strategic Document for Tourism support and development within our Region.

Council currently operates two Visitor Information Centres (located in Cooma and Bombala) and the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) operate a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) related to NPWS parks as well as tourism activities within the former Snowy River Shire on behalf of Council under an agreement between Council and NPWS.

Council is a member of Tourism Snowy Mountains (TSM) a Regional Tourism Organisation and contributes funds for Administration as well as promotions under a Heads of Agreement. The NSW Government on 6 July 2016 announced it would invest \$43 million over four years in a major overhaul in the way regional and rural areas attract visitors, including the creation of six new Destination Networks throughout NSW. The Destination Networks will replace the current regional Tourism Organisation structure. Snowy Monaro regional Council will now be part of Destination Southern NSW which includes the former RTOs TSM and Tourism Far South Coast.

Further details regarding Destination Networks is available from:

<http://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Regional-Destination-Networks.pdf>

Council has within its boundaries such iconic attractions as the Snowy Mountains Scheme, Australia's Premier Ski Fields, the Snowy River, Platypus, Bundian Way, Alpine Lakes, motor cycle rides through Snowy Monaro Highway, Alpine Way and Monaro Highway/Cann Valley Highway etc. As well as an active events program, growing cycle tourism and the advent of international flights to and from Canberra. To ensure that Council invests appropriately in the tourism area we require a review of our involvement in Tourism both directly and indirectly.

Council is seeking a proposal including cost estimates to undertake a review of Council's tourism involvement into the future. The review would address such concerns as:

1. Governance

- *What is the most appropriate governance model for Council?*
- *Does Council continue with Tourism Committees for particular towns/areas or absorb them into a single tourism committee?*
- *Is there a role for Tourism Snowy Mountains or should it be incorporated into a Council Local Tourism Committee*
- *Should the Council committee be an internal one or should it comprise a skills based committee*
- *What is the most appropriate method of linking with the Destination Network?*
- *Is there a need for the continuation of TSM as a Local Tourism Organisation?*
- *Should Council's involvement with the Destination Network be through Canberra Region Joint Organisation (GBRJO) or through an MOU?*
- *What is most appropriate method to link with ACT tourism, Canberra Airport Eden Wharf and Sapphire Coast Tourism?*
- *What is an appropriate method for Council's involvement in further development of the Bundian Way?*

2. Operational

- *How do we manage VICs into the future especially in the digital/social media age?*
- *How do we now manage tourism services including promotion?*

- *Do our planning instruments facilitate development of tourism within our region?*
- *What tourism services should Council directly deliver and which should be outsourced?*

3. Promotion

- *Does Council have a role in promotion and if yes how do we clearly define it?*
- *If yes then how does Council gain best value for money with its promotion of the area?*
- *Is Council's role to attract visitors to the area and the business operators' role to attract to their operation?*
- *How do we ensure that Council's promotion is coordinated within a marketing plan?*
- *Is there an opportunity to develop an educational tourism sector based on use of available accommodation during non-peak season for University week long intensive residential courses?*

4. Infrastructure

- *Council manages various infrastructure which supports tourism – e.g. footpaths, parks and gardens, public toilets, car parks etc. How does Council ensure that this support is recognised and differentiated from use by residents?*
- *What infrastructure would further expand tourism opportunities within our region in addition to those opportunities being further explored by Council such as Shared Trail around Lake Jindabyne, expansion of cycle facilities in both Cooma and Bombala, development of Platypus Trail incorporating Delegate, Bombala and Dalgety?*
- *What infrastructure would assist in further expanding the fishing tourism sector?*
- *What infrastructure should be provided by Council and which should be provided by private enterprise?*
- *What opportunities are available for Council to fund the ongoing operation, maintenance and renewal of tourism infrastructure under its control?*

5. Measuring Performance

- *What are appropriate Key Performance Indicators and Targets for tourism services?*

As part of this project we would need to you undertake appropriate engagement with the various stakeholders involved in our tourism sector. Please note that since the merger the Administrator has been holding numerous meeting with various groups within our community. This has included holding meetings with major tourism stakeholders and the details of this engagement will be made available to you.

The end product should be a Tourism Strategic Plan for Snowy Monaro Regional Council. Again the Administrator Dean Lynch and I enjoyed meeting with you and look forward to receiving a proposal from you for this project. Should you require further information or which to discuss the project further please do not hesitate to contact me.

In response to this EOI request we received submissions from all three organisations approached. The submissions are attached to the report.

QUADRUPLE BOTTOM LINE REPORTING

1. Social

As tourism is a major employer in Council's area it is important that Council has a coherent and relevant tourism strategy to ensure a viable economy. As well tourism infrastructure and product enhance the social opportunities for our residents to enjoy an active social life to achieve a good work life balance.

2. Environmental

The environment within Council's area is the major tourist attraction and any development must seek to mitigate and impacts it may have on the environment.

3. Economic

The submissions received quoted the following costs for the project:

University of Canberra	\$36,740
TRC Tourism	\$39,500
The Stafford Group	\$58,000

Based on costs University of Canberra is the preferred supplier.

4. Civic Leadership

The harmonisation of policies and strategies is an on-going project and Council has been aware of the need to address our tourism strategy for the reasons detailed earlier in this report.

A review of the submissions indicates that the services provided, methodology proposed and personnel are similar as such it is considered that the submission from University of Canberra be accepted