

# Parkes Shire Council Events Strategy

## Contents

1. Mayor's message
2. Purpose, Objectives, Strategic Priorities
3. Today's event landscape
4. Alignment with existing Parkes Shire Council strategies
5. Parkes Shire Council's major events calendar
6. Implementation
7. Our event investment frameworks
8. Appendix
  - Consultation

## **1. Mayor's message/Introduction**

Our events and festivals in the Parkes Shire are the envy of regional communities across Australia and beyond. Our events put our towns on the map. They are a key pillar of the local economy, and provide platforms for our community to come together, connect and collaborate not just during the events themselves but throughout the year. Accordingly, they are critical to our social fabric.

The history and enduring success of Parkes Elvis Festival in particular has gifted our community a deep understanding of the many and varied benefits events can deliver.

As such, here in the Parkes Shire, we pride ourselves on supporting events and anyone that has a go at putting one on.

The events and festivals strategy that follows outlines Parkes Shire Council's approach to investing in events for the benefit of our community, how that approach helps deliver on key actions within other Council strategies, and the actions our staff will take to safeguard and continue to build on our events as assets that continue to deliver for our community.

DRAFT

## **2. Purpose, objectives and strategic priorities**

### **Council's core purpose when investing in events**

To deliver, support and facilitate events that deliver a strong return on ratepayer funds

### **Our objectives - What we want our investment in events and festivals to deliver**

In line with the benefits of events that our communities value most, we invest in events to deliver:

- Economic impact via visitation, not only during the event but throughout the year
- A sense of community, connectedness and local pride
- Liveability and vibrancy
- Increased awareness of our region and recognition by those outside of our community

How we weight each of the above impacts in our decision making around event investment has been guided by the community feedback provided by the surveying that informed this strategy. Our event assessment and impact evaluation frameworks can be seen on Page xxx of this document.

### **Strategic Priorities**

1. Provide greater clarity on Council's rationale for event investment and the return that investment (ROI) delivers
2. Futureproof locally based event delivery capacity and foster collaborative relationships
3. Maximise events activity that is delivered by parties external to Council

***By focusing on our purpose, the benefits we want events to drive and our three strategic priorities, Parkes Shire Council will play an integral role in safeguarding and growing one of our region's genuine strengths***

### 3. Today's events landscape

It's a particularly challenging time to produce and deliver major public events. Events and festivals across Australia are confronted by challenges on a number of fronts.

From large scale commercial festivals such as Splendour in the Grass and Bluesfest, through to events owned and delivered by Councils such as the Caloundra Music Festival, more and more events and festivals are having to postpone, reschedule, or stop indefinitely.

Threats posed by rapidly rising costs, increasingly onerous event compliance requirements, alongside a decrease in volunteer numbers are all at the heart of the challenges faced by the events sector today. Indeed, our neighbours in Dubbo have been unable to continue DREAM Festival – the arts and cultural celebration that had been running for over a decade – largely due to a lack of locally based event delivery capacity.

After PSC took on responsibility to deliver Trundle ABBA Festivals from 2022-24, PSC decided to undertake a review of its approach to event investment. This strategy and the investment frameworks that will guide how Council invests in events moving forward is the primary outcome of that review. By investing in line with these frameworks, PSC will play its part in ensuring that our region's entire event sector remains a key pillar of our community's economic and social fabric.

Delivered in partnership with major events strategists Silver Lining Strategy, this review and strategy focused on large scale (i.e. 500 attendees or more) public facing events and festivals.

It involved in-depth surveying of the community on their attitudes towards major events, research with attendees of both the Parkes Elvis and Trundle ABBA Festivals, along with extensive stakeholder consultation.

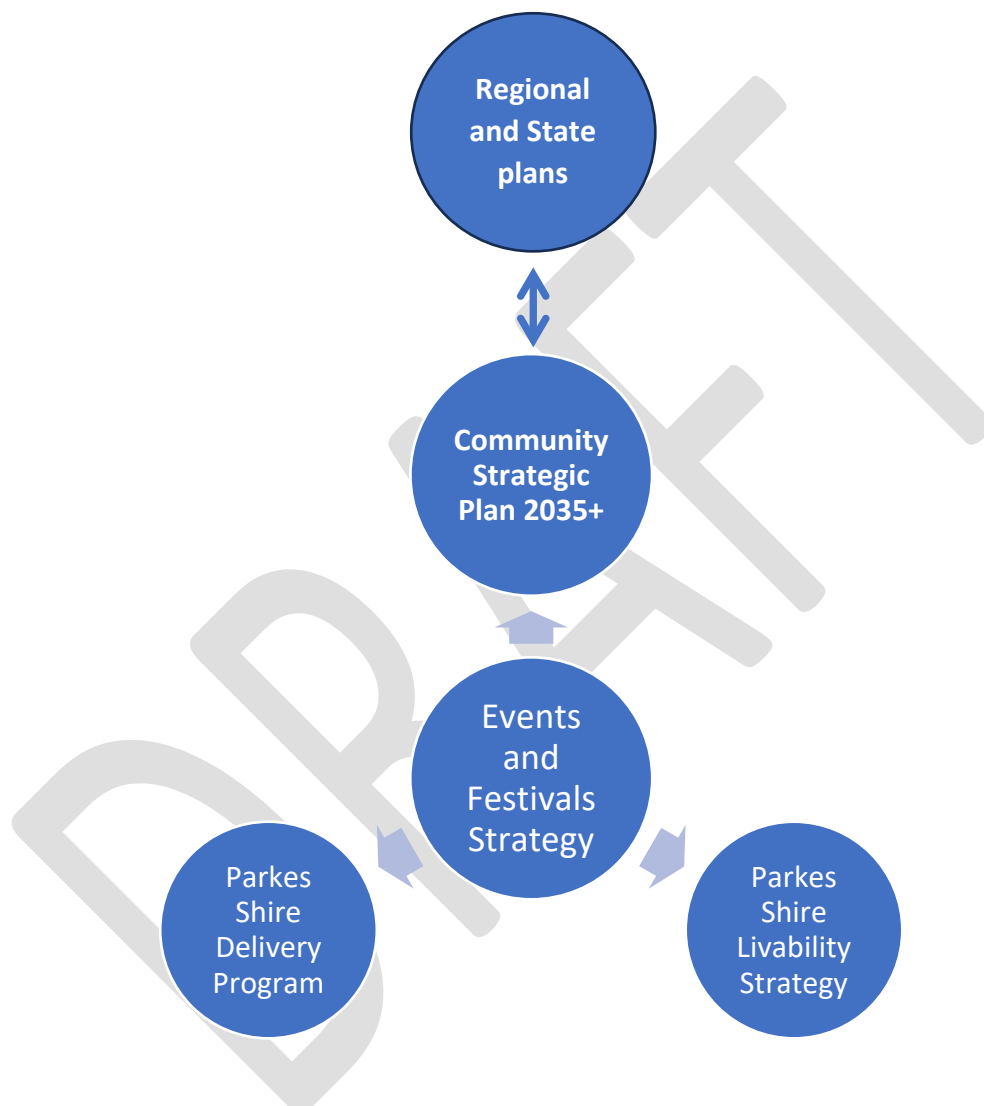
Given the current landscape, PSC has an opportunity to ensure our region's events calendar is maintained, and potentially grown, at a time that other parts of regional Australia find themselves losing event and festival content.

#### Snapshot figures – Parkes Shire's Major Events Calendar

- 20+ major annual events and festivals
- Over 90,000 attendees including an estimated 20,000+ visitors to region
- \$20m+ in direct visitor





#### 4. Alignment with existing strategies

This event and festivals strategy aligns with and will contribute towards how Council will deliver on the core roles detailed in the Community Strategic Plan 2035+. Further, it will help deliver on specific actions in our Delivery Program and Liveability Strategy as detailed below.



The implementation of this strategy will help Council continue to deliver in line with its guiding principle of governing in line with a Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) approach.

The way in which events and festivals feed into each of the four lines is outlined below.

Guiding principle	Aligned theme from 2035+	Events and festivals strategy alignment
<b>Social sustainability</b> <i>Support cohesive, inclusive, diverse and dynamic communities</i>	<b>Community</b> 	Recognise, measure and prioritise the social impacts delivered by events. Particularly those that deliver a sense of cohesion and connection.
<b>Environmental sustainability</b> <i>Protect the natural, social, cultural and built heritage, and decrease the consumption of resources</i>	<b>Environment</b> 	i. Support and deliver events that have existing social and cultural importance, ii. Continue using demonstration of environmentally sustainable practice as a key criterion for event investment
<b>Economic sustainability</b> <i>Maintain a strong and stable economy and ensure the delivery of services, facilities and infrastructure is financially sustainable</i>	<b>Economy</b> 	i. Support events that deliver tangible, demonstrable economic benefit to our communities, ii. Invest in events to a level commensurate with the benefit they deliver
<b>Civic leadership</b> <i>Transparency and accountability in decision making</i>	<b>Leadership</b> 	i. Invest resource in measuring event impacts, and in turn deliver robust Return on Investment figures for each event investment made. ii. Publicly report on impacts driven by events

Specific strategies and actions within existing Council plans that our major events strategy will help drive and deliver on include:

Community Strategic Plan 2035+

- Strategy 1.2.1. (Theme: Community) Provide vibrant and welcoming town centres, streetscapes, public spaces and meeting places
- Strategy 1.3.2. (Theme: Community) Deliver and support events, festivals and celebrations that promote engaged citizenship and foster community pride
- Strategy 1.3.3. (Theme: Community) Encourage, support and recognise volunteerism and community participation

- Strategy 2.1.2. (Theme: Economy) Support our visitor economy through the Promotion of our Shire and enabling the continuation the Elvis Festival and other local events
- Strategy 4.1.1. (Theme: Leadership) Effectively collaborate, engage, and communicate with our community to inform decision making and promote services, projects and initiatives
- Strategy 4.1.2. (Theme: Leadership) Provide open and transparent decision-making and undertake the civic duties of Council with professionalism and integrity
- Strategy 4.2.2. (Theme: Leadership) Operate in a financially sustainable and responsible manner

#### Parkes Shire Delivery Program

Under the delivery area of *Economy and Engagement*

- Communication and Engagement: *We will promote the Parkes Shire as a place to live, work, invest and visit, and ensure our brand and our communication is inclusive and assists in connecting Council with our vibrant community*
- Elvis Festival, Special Events and Event Support: *We will work with our community to deliver the annual Elvis Festival and foster the development of other tourism, community and business events.*

#### Parkes Shire Liveability Strategy

Of the nine liveability themes used to create our Liveability Strategy, our events and festivals deliver on three of those, namely:

- i. Character - relates to an area's heritage, its identity and how unique it is.
- ii. Community - relates to people's identity, how they express that identity, and how they interact and define the broader community.
- iii. Economy - relates to revenue generation through different sectors and economic activities, and job creation.

## 5. Parkes Shire's Annual events and festivals calendar

Event	Month	Dates (2023/4)	Township
Parkes Elvis Festival	January	10-15	Parkes
Sounds at the Pavillion (Series)	February	Various	Parkes
Parkes Masters Games	March	22-24	Parkes
Trundle Vintage Rally and Tractor Pull	March	25-26	Trundle
Bogan Gate Village Fair	May	18	Bogan Gate
Parkes Picnic Races	June	8	Parkes
Tullamore Show	August	9-10	Tullamore
Trundle Show	August	16-17	Trundle
Peak Hill Show	August	20-21	Peak Hill
Parkes Show	August	26-28	Parkes
Trundle Bush Tucker Day	September	7	Trundle
AstroFest	September	28-29	Parkes
Parkes Homegrown	October	12	Parkes
Trundle ABBA Festival	October	19	Trundle
Christmas Parade and Carnival	December	1-2	Parkes
Parkes Carols in the Park	December	15	Parkes

The calendar includes a broad range of events that:

- i. Occur on an annual (or every 2-3 years) basis
- ii. Aren't ceremonial or civic events (eg: ANZAC Day, Australia Day ceremonies)
- iii. Are open to the general public to attend and/or participate in
- iv. Generally attract 500 or more attendees and/or participants
- v. Have significant history and/or strong links to place and local culture



## 6. Implementation

In delivering on our major events and festivals strategy and the three identified strategic priorities, PSC will play one (or more) core roles when it comes to events and festivals. Those core roles will be:

- i. **Deliver and/or help sustain** the Parkes Elvis and Trundle ABBA Festivals as our region's iconic destination events
- ii. **Support** our community's event organisers
- iii. **Optimise** the use of our major event hosting assets and infrastructure
- iv. **Welcome and facilitate** event organisers external to the LGA are looking to host their event in our region

Under each of our three strategic priorities are the core role PSC will play, along with specific actions and desired outcomes to ensure our resources are used as efficiently as possible.

DRAFT

Strategic Priority 1 – Provide greater clarity on Council’s rationale for event investment and the return that investment (ROI) delivers			
Actions	PSC’s aligned role(s)	Timeframe	Desired outcomes
1.1. Conduct robust, independent economic and social impact assessments of Parkes Elvis Festival and any other significant <sup>1</sup> investments in events	Deliver and sustain	Short term (> 6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide internal clarity on the ROI delivered by Council’s most significant investments in events,</li> <li>ii. Provide transparency to the community on the rationale for Council’s investment in both events, and the impacts they deliver</li> </ul>
1.2. Implement a robust, yet cost-effective assessment and measurement programs to monitor the ongoing ROI of PSC’s investment in events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver and sustain</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>	Medium term (6-18 months) & then ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. PSC have greater clarity on the impact their investment in events has</li> <li>ii. Ensure PSC decision making is guided by reliable, robust data</li> </ul>
1.3. Communicate the impact of the Parkes Shire’s entire event calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver and sustain</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>	Medium term (6-18 months) & then ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Continue to grow the community’s understanding of the benefits events and festivals deliver for the community</li> <li>ii. Ensure events and festivals investment is aligned with the “Leadership” theme from our Community Strategic Plan 2035+</li> </ul>
1.4. Monitor uptake of Events Financial Assistance Program and ask event organisers for feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver and sustain</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul>	Short term (<6 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Gather relevant information to improve the framework and how it functions</li> <li>ii. Integrate events and festivals strategy frameworks into the structure provided by the Financial Assistance Program</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> “Significant investments” is a subjective term to be judged on a case-by-case basis by the PSC team and executive. SLS would recommend any event on which more than \$150k of PSC money is being spent would justify investment in an impact assessment

## Strategic Priority 2 – Futureproof event delivery capacity and foster collaborative relationships

Actions	PSC's aligned role(s)	Timeframe	Desired outcomes
2.1. Publish and distribute the Parkes Shire's annual major event calendar (twice annually)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver and sustain</li> <li>Support</li> </ul>	Medium term (6-18 months) & then ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Improved communications about major events both within Council and externally with key stakeholders</li> <li>ii. Raise the profile of key events on the calendar within and beyond the shire area</li> </ul>
2.2. Hold "town hall" meetings in each township (annually or bi-annually depending on resources available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support</li> </ul>	Medium term (6-18 months) & then ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iii. Facilitate connections between event organisers across the Shire and foster improved collaboration</li> <li>iv. Encourage the transfer of event delivery knowledge and capacity to the next generation</li> </ul>
2.3. Proactively engage with event committees to assist them in meeting their administrative and regulatory obligations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support</li> </ul>	Short term (<6 months) & then ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>v. Alleviate administrative burden on event organisers</li> <li>vi. Improve operational sustainability of events across the Shire</li> <li>vii. Deepen relationships between Council events team, communities and event organisers</li> </ul>

**Strategic Priority 3 – Maximise events activity that is delivered by parties external to Council**

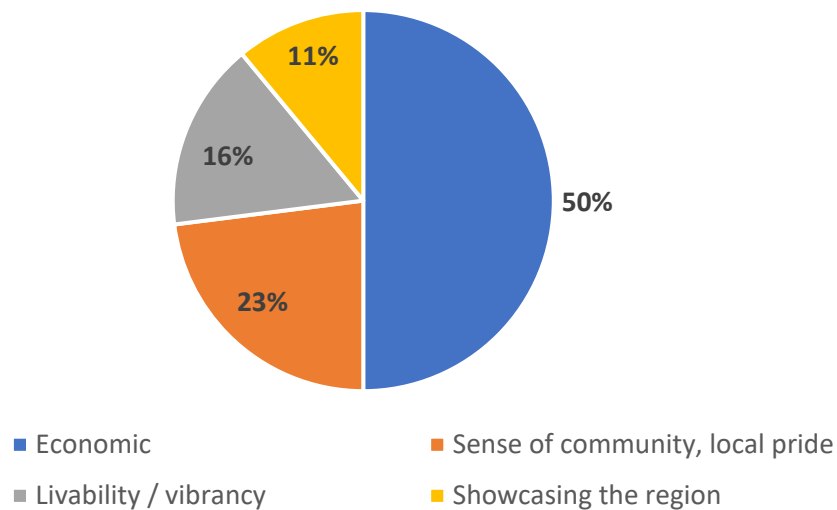
Actions	PSC's aligned role(s)	Timeframe	Desired outcomes
3.1. Connect with sports clubs in the Shire capable of being the host for regional, state and national tournaments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Optimise</li> <li>• Welcome and facilitate</li> </ul>	Medium (6-18 months)	Attract more events to Parkes Shire that are delivered by parties external to PSC
3.2. Explore the potential for Parkes to host business events in areas it has natural strengths and alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimise</li> <li>• Welcome and facilitate</li> </ul>	Medium (6-18 months)	
3.3. Connect with all existing events on the annual calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support</li> <li>• Optimise</li> </ul>	Short (< 6 months)	Identify events poised for growth and/or in need of assistance to futureproof themselves

DRAFT

## 7. Our event investment frameworks

Community feedback from the primary research that informed this strategy is at the heart of the frameworks that follow. Specifically, in that research we asked an open-ended question about the most important impact that events and festivals deliver for the community. All responses were analysed and categorised, giving the results seen below.

**The most important benefit(s) of events and festivals according to Parkes residents**



After the adoption of our events financial assistance program in June 2024, we will monitor its uptake and feedback from stakeholders before assessing the feasibility of integrating the two frameworks seen below in to our processes.

Firstly, for mature events for which we have existing data and intelligence, we will assess the justified levels of investment using our Due Diligence Framework. Using the scores from the chart above as weightings, each area of benefit will be scored as per the table below.

**i. Mature events due diligence investment framework**

*(Acquired events, or Place-based events that have been going for five years or more and/or have an awareness level in the community greater than 50%)*

Benefit	Key measures	Weighting
Economic	Direct visitor spend	50%
Sense of community / Local pride	Spontaneous local pride x % of population that strongly agree that it “makes them feel more connected to the community”	23%
Liveability / local vibrancy	Total cumulative attendance x Extent to which it is publicly accessible / visible	16%
Showcasing the region	Media monitoring figures x Quality and uniqueness of coverage	11%

## ii. *Nascent events due diligence investment framework*

The framework below is somewhat different to the outputs-based investment approach seen above. It prioritises investment based on the health of key inputs that lie at the heart of long-term sustainable place-based events. We will take this approach for place-based events (i.e. events that are owned and delivered by locals) that are less than five years old (or at a specific point in their evolution that an inputs-based investment approach is deemed appropriate).

We take this approach as during the initial years of an event's life, as its capacity to spend resource and time focusing on driving specific outcomes such as economic impact can be a distraction from the core business of event delivery.

To be clear, PSC will only use this framework for place-based events, not acquired events where the typical approach of investing based on a likely set of outcomes (eg. An anticipated number of visitors and/or economic impact) remains relevant and reasonable.

The rationale and details of this place-based events investment framework are outlined below.



As seen in the diagram above, this approach reframes the outputs as *outcomes of getting the inputs right*, as opposed to them being the primary focus of investing in an event in the first place.

The assessment framework below is a decision-making tool designed to help identify events that have fundamentals in place that maximise their chances of being operationally sustainable and in turn, capable of growing the benefit they deliver the community.

<b>Fundamental 1 – Local ownership</b> <i>Extent to which the event is owned and driven by a passionate, locally based individual, organisation or group of individuals/organisations</i>	
Score	Definition
5	Wholly owned by township locals and event aligns strongly with core business/activity of the event owner(s)
4	Wholly owned by township locals. Event stretches event owner(s) slightly beyond their core business/activity
3	Wholly owned by Parkes Shire locals. The event does not comprise part of the event owner(s) existing core business/activity
2	Ownership lies with people/organisations in surrounding Council areas that have interests in the Parkes Shire
1	Ownership lies with people/organisations outside of PSC and surrounding Council areas

<b>Fundamental 2 – Point of difference / Unique selling proposition</b> <i>Extent to which the event centres on a genuine point of difference within our community(ies) that they are proud to call their own</i>	
Score	Definition
5	Highlights an asset that is genuinely different from elsewhere, and represents something the broader community is proud to “own” and be known for
4	Few other events of its type exist in NSW. Contains some genuinely unique content that is “true to place”
3	Contains unique content, or content that would appeal to a specific audience. Not necessarily reflective of “place” or wholly aligned to the values locals aspire to.
2	Contains content comparable to that of other events. Isn’t necessarily reflective of, or unique to place. Has limited potential to attract visitation or deliver branding benefits.
1	Similar events with comparable content already exist in surrounding areas and/or contains content that isn’t necessarily aligned with the community’s value set.

<b>Fundamental 3 – Spirit of collaboration</b> <i>Extent to which the event owner has (or has the potential to have) positive, constructive relationships with others in the community</i>	
Score	Definition
5	Well established and known in the community with a strong reputation for being collaborative and constructive to work with
4	Well known in the community for being collaborative, or in the case of a new resident/organisation, are collaborative and constructive in their spirit
3	Known in the community for having the ability to be collaborative when the circumstances suit. For those new to the community, show signs of being collaborative
2	Rarely seek the assistance or guidance of others, and generally protective in their decision making. Have shown signs of potentially being collaborative
1	Not known for being collaborative. Protective and “centralised” in their decision making.



Further to our investment frameworks, we will monitor our own performance in terms of the health of our relationships with key stakeholders from an events and festivals perspective.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b><i>Needs to improve.</i></b> <i>Not a productive relationship.</i>	<b><i>Room for improvement.</i></b> <i>Good but could be improved.</i>	<b><i>Excellent.</i></b> <i>Mutually beneficial and productive.</i>
Event owner A			
Event owner B			
Portfolio holders (Elvis Festival)			
Townships (CCCs, Progress Assoc etc)			
Destination NSW			
Arts Out West			
Forbes Shire Council			
Department of Regional NSW			
NSW Police			
Transport NSW			
State member of Parliament			
Federal member of Parliament			

We will maintain regular contact with event organisers across Parkes Shire and use those moments of connection to gauge the extent to which Council's work is helping with the delivery of their events. Key areas Council will explore with event organisers on an ongoing basis will include:

- The extent to which they feel supported by Council.
- The extent to which they feel Council is responsive and communicative.
- The extent to which they feel connected to / can collaborate with other event organisers
- Monitoring of volunteer numbers

## 8. Appendix

### a. Consultation

A summary of the research and consultation undertaken to inform our approach to this strategy is outlined below

Quantitative research with the community:

- Responses received – May 6-22, 2024
- Delivered via an online platform, distributed via social media channels and resident databases
- Final sample size, n=154

25 one-on-one and group consultations:

- Parkes Shire Council staff including:
  - Councillors
  - Events team personnel
  - Economic Development team personnel
  - Operational personnel
- Community representatives and business owners from Alectown, Peak Hill, Bogan Gate, Trundle and Tullamore
- Event founders from Parkes Elvis Festival and Trundle ABBA Festival
- Portfolio holders from Parkes Elvis Festival
- Regional Development NSW
- Destination Central West NSW