

# DESTINATION MARKETING – RURAL COMMUNITY

Coolamon is a rural town of 2,200 a 30-minute drive outside of Wagga Wagga (population 64,000) in the agriculturally rich Riverina region of New South Wales. The Shire includes a number of villages around Coolamon: Marrar, Ganmain, Ardlethan and Beckom.



## PROJECT PURPOSE

Coolamon Shire Council was looking for an effective way to leverage off the large captive audience of locals and VFR's in Wagga Wagga and the region, as a strategy to increase visitor numbers and expenditure to the town and district.



*The Seasonal Event Calendar has effectively marketed our local events to a wide target audience and been instrumental in attracting increased visitors to our town. It is a wonderful resource that encapsulates and communicates the vibrant culture of our region beautifully.*

- BRON HATTY, ADVANCE GANMAIN



## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Tilma Group developed a seasonal calendar of events process for Council's Community Development Officer to implement every three months. This involves collecting details on upcoming events via a call out to a database of event coordinators and community groups, and via Council's newsletters and social media.

Event managers are incentivised to input their event details into a simple form on Council's tourism website because of the free marketing they receive which includes a listing on the Visit Coolamon Shire website and in the seasonal events brochure which is distributed throughout the region and available for download from the website, a mention in the Visit Coolamon Shire e-newsletter, a listing on the Riverina's tourism app, and promotion across Visit Coolamon Shire's social media channels.

Although a great success, the biggest challenge with this project was educating the event organisers on the value of loading their content into the form. This soon changed when the events saw the marketing and realised what they were missing out on if they did not submit their details.

## OUTCOMES

The calendar helps community groups and businesses to forward plan. It helps events ensure they do not clash with other events and be aware of what else is on. The consistency of the process helps to keep community groups aware of and on board with providing details of their events.

This promotion of Coolamon Shire's small events has had an impressive impact on visitation to Coolamon. For example, the local B&B has had an increase in bookings of 2% annually since the calendar rolled out. Along with a new anchor tourism product (a cheese factory and restaurant), new life has come to the communities on weekends, resulting in close to a dozen new businesses opening, a new bike track being developed, and Coolamon's caravan park being expanded. The rural region is becoming a destination where visitors can find enough to do to make the trip worthwhile.

## REFEREE

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