

REGIONAL EVENT STRATEGY TO DRIVE OFF PEAK VISITATION

The Bass Coast southeast of Melbourne includes Phillip Island, one of Australia's most-visited regional destinations, which draws 3.5 million visitors annually from around the world to watch fairy penguins and motorsports.

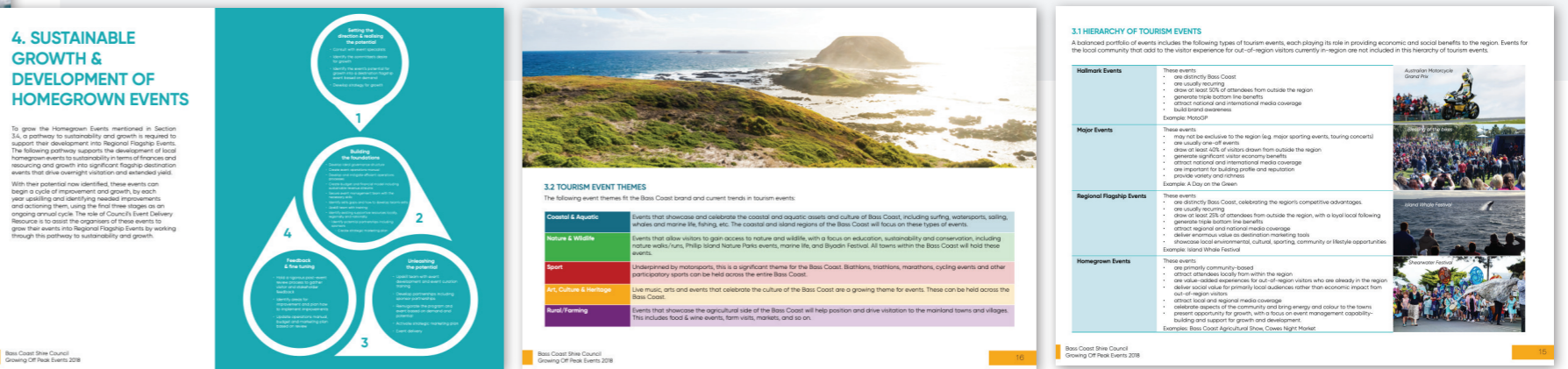
PROJECT PURPOSE

Bass Coast is Australia's second most tourism-dependent shire, with tourism accounting for 17.4% of the region's economy, though visitation is highly seasonal with low visitation in the colder months. The primary goal in the region's Visitor Economy Strategy is to grow off-peak visitor expenditure.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Tilma Group developed a strategic plan for Bass Coast Shire Council on how to grow off peak events, outlining how Council could support growth in existing events to smooth seasonal visitation. Research included analysis of an event and event venue audit, and benchmarking against other regions to identify gaps and opportunities, along with consultation with key stakeholders. A discussion paper was developed which outlined the region's event strengths, challenges and opportunities, along with recommended strategic priorities and a suggested annual events calendar. The paper was tested with a project control group who discussed and finessed its proposals. The strategic activation plan developed from this feedback included a recommended event calendar outlining the kinds of events that are a good fit for the Bass Coast brand and assets, along with funding opportunities and strategic partners. The report also included details of governance and resourcing, and a balanced portfolio of homegrown and external events. Consultation for the plan revealed a need for upskilling in the Shire's event committees. Tilma Group facilitated a capability-building program using the rEVENTS Academy platform. A one-day event development bootcamp was held for Bass Coast event committees. Three events with the potential to grow into significant off peak events received intensive one-on-one monthly coaching via webinar in a six-month structured development program. This was a modified version of the 10-module rEVENTS Academy course where each committee selected five modules for a customized program. The committees also received supporting templates for each module; access to a Q&A platform where all the local event committees could ask questions, share knowledge and cross promote; and a wrap-up report with an action plan outlining the strategic and operational priorities for their event moving forward. Lastly, an in-region half-day presentation and Q&A session was held for all of the Bass Coast event committees where the three events who had undertaken the intensive development program shared their learnings with the others.



The off peak event strategy has been the catalyst for lots of good things. We are about to restructure our Economic Development, Events and Tourism Department to get greater collaboration across the teams. We will add more operational resources by employing a new Visitor Economy and Events Officer.

The Events and Tourism Coordinator is planning a new marathon event for next off peak season and we are working with lots of event operators about either shifting the date of their existing peak season event or developing their off peak events. We have also started leveraging off events more.

The report has definitely helped clarify our direction and provide strategic justification.

- PETER FRANCIS, MANAGER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, BASS COAST SHIRE COUNCIL

REFEREE

Peter Francis
 Manager, Economic Development and Tourism
 Bass Coast Shire Council

PO Box 118
 Wonthaggi VIC 3995

0419 560 603
 peter.francis@basscoast.vic.gov.au

www.basscoast.vic.gov.au



www.tilmagroup.com.au