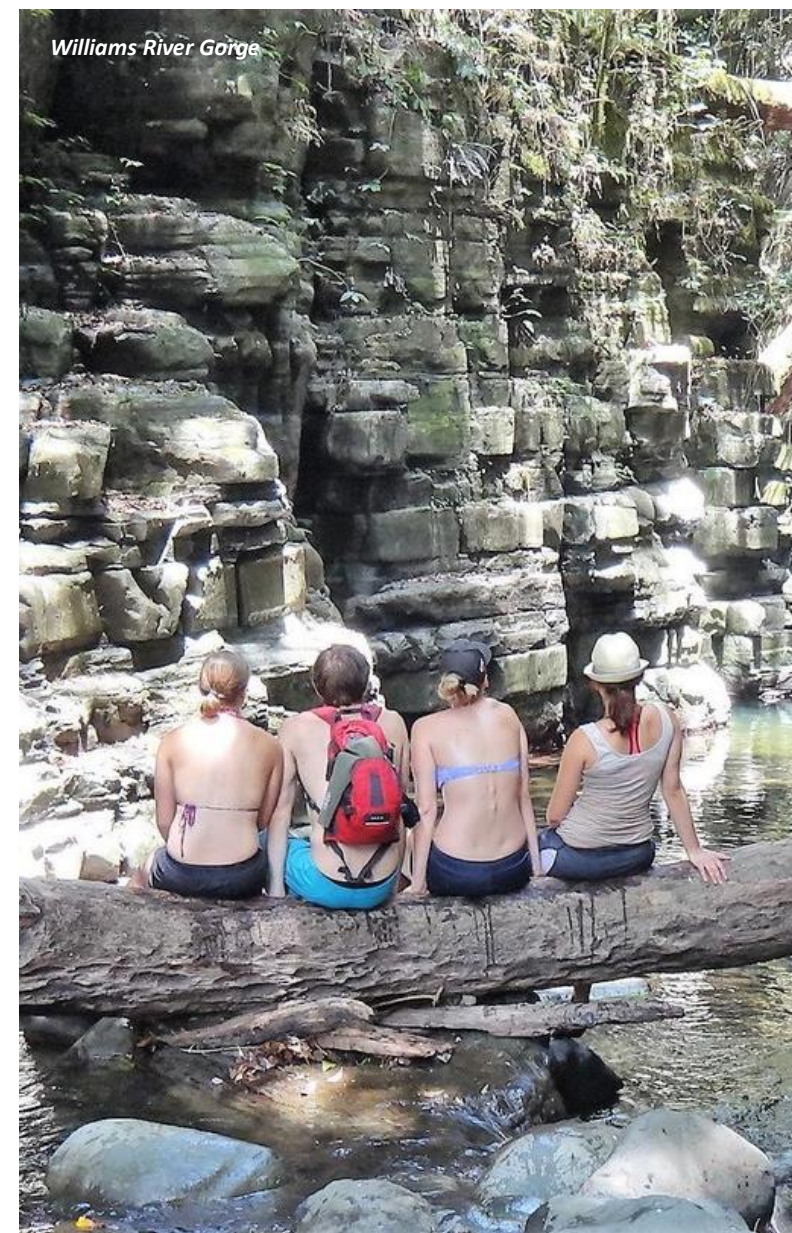


**DUNGOG SHIRE  
DESTINATION  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
2021 - 2026**



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*Credits for the images used in this document are listed on Page 118*



*Paddling on the Williams River*

## **DUNGOG SHIRE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Prepared for

**DUNGOG REGIONAL TOURISM** in consultation with **DUNGOG SHIRE COUNCIL**

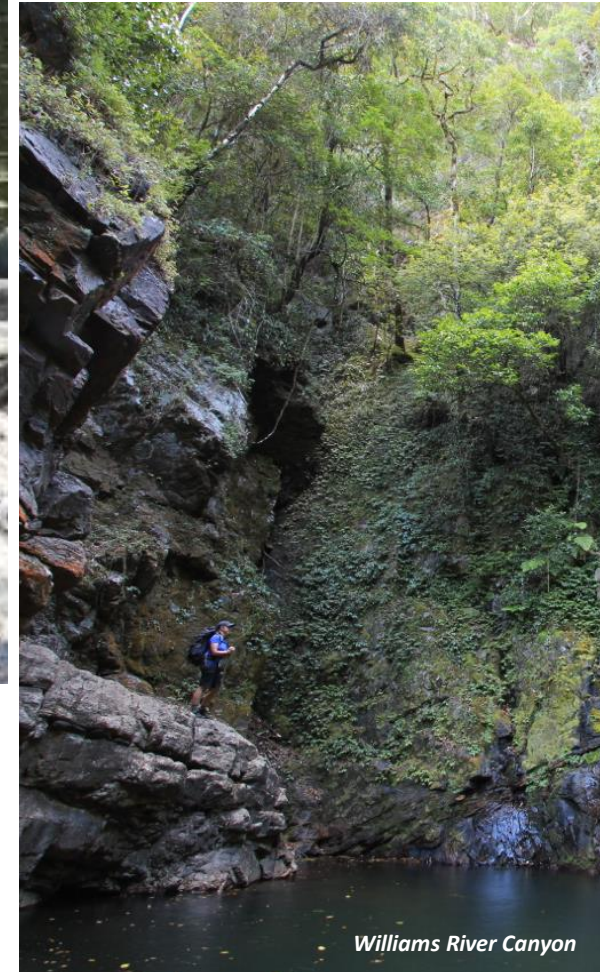
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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Dungog Regional Tourism wishes to thank all residents, businesses and organisations who have provided input and information for our Shire's Destination Management Plan.



*Williams River Canyon*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

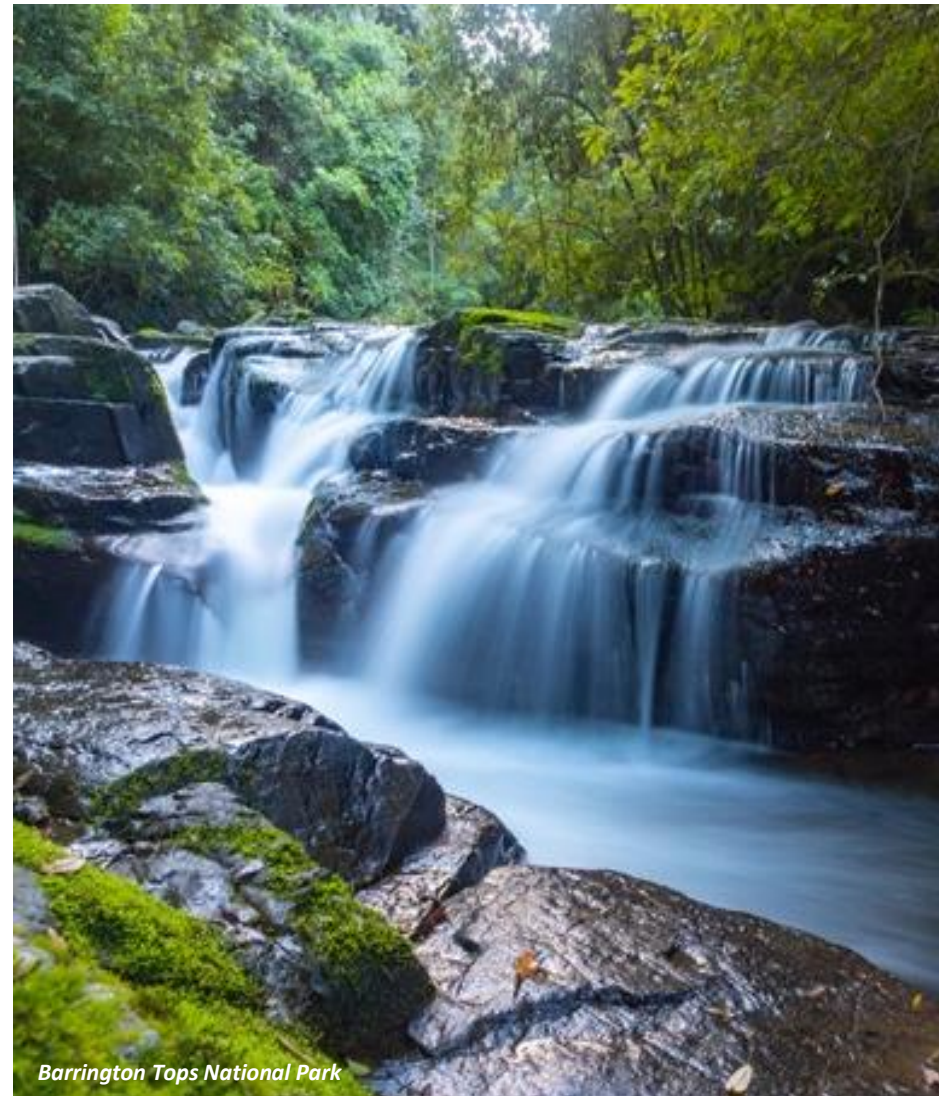
The visitor economy is a significant industry for Dungog Shire, contributing \$37.922 million to the Shire's output and \$17.228 million in value-add and supporting around 180 jobs<sup>1</sup>.

The on-going development of the visitor economy is a priority for Dungog Shire with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to:

- Grow and diversify the local economy, reducing its dependence on agriculture and build resilience.
- Bring 'new' dollars into the Shire's economy, helping to sustain and retain local businesses and services.
- Create employment.
- Attract new residents, businesses and investment.
- Raise the profile of the Shire and generate awareness.

Within the Shire, Dungog Shire Council and Dungog Regional Tourism are the key drivers of the tourism sector. Council owns the Dungog Visitor Information Centre, the Williams River Caravan Park and the James Theatre, supports events and has a significant investment in the reserves, parks and gardens, infrastructure and facilities that underpin visitation. Council is also the regulatory authority in areas such as planning, development and food safety. Dungog Regional Tourism (DRT) is an industry-based, not-for-profit organisation responsible for producing a range of visitor information and promotional collateral, marketing and promoting the Shire as a visitor destination and building industry capacity.

DRT, in consultation with Council, has prepared the Dungog Shire Destination Management Plan to provide the direction and framework to strengthen and grow the Shire's visitor economy over the next 5 years. Destination Management Plans (DMPs) are one of the tools introduced by the Federal and State Governments, to identify the product and infrastructure needed to support and facilitate growth in the visitor economy and to set the directions and priorities.



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<sup>1</sup> REMPLAN: Tourism Profile for Dungog Shire: based on ABS 2016 Census Place of Work Employment (Scaled), ABS 2016 / 2017 National Input Output Tables, ABS June 2019 Gross State Product, and ABS 2018 / 2019 Tourism Satellite Account.

## 1.2 Destination Management

Destination management introduces a ‘holistic’ approach to the development, management and marketing of tourist destinations. The approach requires that all tiers of Government, the tourism industry and business and community leaders work together to develop and manage destinations to ensure that tourism adds value to the economy and social fabric of the area, is sustainable into the future, is resilient to external shocks and is responsive to changes in both the marketplace and competitive environment. It involves formulating a strong vision for the future of the destination and putting in place the framework and resources to ‘deliver’ this vision. A DMP is a pre-requisite to accessing tourism funding and will assist in accessing a range of Federal and State Government grant programs.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Dungog Shire Destination Management Plan (DMP)

The purpose of the Dungog Shire DMP is to provide the direction and framework for taking Shire’s visitor economy forward over the next five years. The primary goals of this Plan are to:

- Increase visitor expenditure within the Shire, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community.
- Diversify the Shire’s economy and build resilience.
- Improve the viability and sustainability of local businesses.
- Create employment.

To achieve this, the Plan focuses on:

- Identifying opportunities to strengthen and grow the Shire’s market base to deliver visitation year-round.
- Encouraging and facilitating the development of tourist attractions, activities, experiences, accommodation and events.
- Ensuring that the infrastructure, facilities and services are in place within the Shire to meet visitor needs and expectations and support the growth of the visitor economy.
- Identifying priorities to ensure the most effective use of limited funds and resources.

## 1.4 Outcomes Sought

The main outcomes being sought from the Dungog Shire DMP are:

- To deliver on Council’s Strategic Objectives as articulated in the Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030 and Local Strategic Planning Statement – Moving Towards 2040, enhancing lifestyle and complementing and strengthening other economic sectors.



- A growing visitor economy that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Increased appeal and competitiveness of Dungog Shire as a destination – in particular, to build the Shire’s attraction and activity base.
- Higher profile / increased awareness of Dungog Shire - from both a tourism and economic development perspective.
- Retention and protection of the lifestyle, heritage, cultural, landscape and environmental assets that form the basis for tourism within the Shire.
- Increased public and private sector investment in appropriate and sustainable tourism products and facilities within the Shire.

## 1.5 Consultation

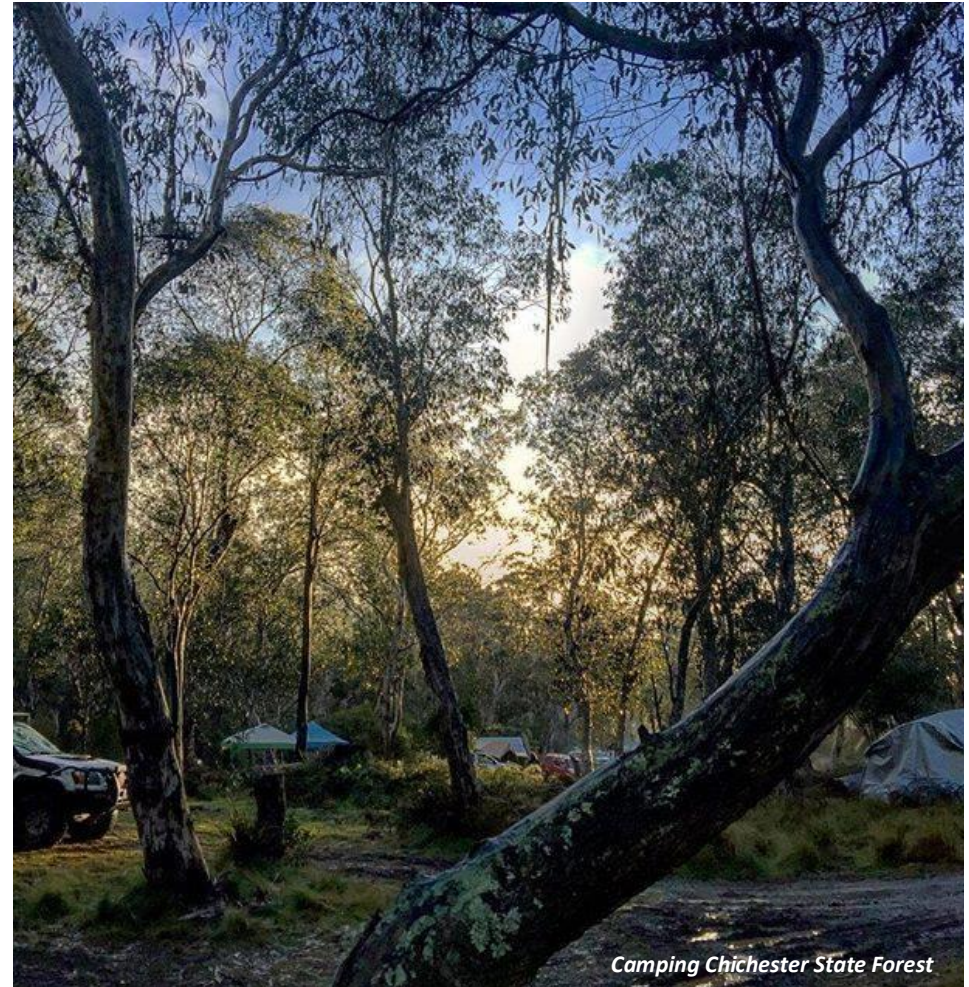
The preparation of the DMP included consultation with representatives from:

- Dungog Regional Tourism
- Dungog Shire Councillors and Council staff
- Dungog Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism and business operators
- Venue managers including the Dungog Showground, licensed clubs and the James Theatre
- Dungog Events
- Tourism and Economic Development Managers from surrounding LGAs
- Destination Network Sydney Surrounds North
- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Forestry Corporation of NSW
- Dungog Common Management Trust
- Ride Dungog
- Arts community

The draft Plan was placed on exhibition and forward to community groups for input.

The main themes from the consultation were:

- The importance and contribution of tourism to the Shire’s economy, with growth in tourism potentially delivering significant employment and economic benefits.
- Widespread recognition that tourism is largely dependent on the Shire’s natural assets (its stunning scenery, National Parks including a World Heritage listed area, State Forests and waterways) and lifestyle, with the need to manage these assets in a way that facilitates and supports growth in visitation whilst ensuring protection and preservation. This



*Camping Chichester State Forest*

including improving visitor facilities and infrastructure; providing funds and staff resources to manage visitation, particularly in peak times; and maintaining access (eg keeping easements open).

- The development of the Dungog Common for mountain biking is delivering significant economic and social benefits for the Shire, particularly for businesses in Dungog. Allied to this is the recognition that the infrastructure, facilities and services in Dungog need to be improved to support and better leverage this growth.
- The Shire is seeing strong growth in the cycling, camping, touring caravan and RV and motorcycle (road and off-road) touring markets with population growth in the surrounding region being one of the key drivers. The lifting of the COVID 19 restrictions in NSW and the inability to travel overseas or interstate has resulted in a significant influx of visitors.
- There are opportunities to grow tourism in the villages, in particular in Clarence Town and Paterson; to better promote the Shire's heritage; and to leverage the interest in Aboriginal Tourism.
- The Shire has a vibrant and growing arts community which is creating opportunities for place-making, business development and events.
- The Shire has some great venues for events and has been successful in delivering quality events, including a large music festival. Growth in this sector is constrained by lack of resources, the high dependence on volunteers and accommodation capacity constraints. This could be partially addressed by permitting suitable public and private land to be used for temporary accommodation.
- Infrastructure, facilities, and services need to be improved throughout the Shire to accommodate growth in visitation and maximise benefits. This includes improving local roads, signage, public toilets, and picnic facilities; updating the Dungog Visitor Information Centre and expanding information services; establishing a caravan park in Dungog, providing additional camping areas; extending mobile telephone coverage; and extending business trading hours. Allied to this was the recognition that Council and the land and water management agencies have limited funds and resources available for tourism infrastructure, facilities and marketing.
- The need for greater communication, cooperation, and collaboration between key stakeholders - including Council, Dungog Regional Tourism, Dungog District Chamber of Commerce, the land and water management agencies (National Parks and Wildlife Service, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Hunter Water, State Water, Reserve Trusts), tourism and business operators, Ride Dungog, the arts community and other community groups.
- The costs and difficulties of obtaining planning approvals with Council and State Government policies perceived as a barrier to investment.
- Managing irresponsible behaviour on some roads and anti-social behaviour in the State Forests and National Parks to protect the environment and improve the amenity for and safety of all visitors.

## 1.6 Implementing the Plan

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) is an important step to in consolidating and growing the Shire's visitor economy. While the DMP has been prepared by Dungog Regional Tourism, implementation of the Plan will require a strong partnership with Council and the Shire communities; support from tourism and business operators; and strategic relationships

with surrounding LGAs, Destination NSW, Sydney Surrounds North Destination Network, NSW National Parks and Wildlife; Forestry Corporation of NSW, State Water and Hunter Water, as well as funding support from the State and Federal Governments.

Some of projects and actions in this Plan that are 'aspirational' and are well beyond the financial capacity of DRT, Council and other key stakeholders to implement in their entirety at this time. These projects are however included in-case funding opportunities arise in the future. The fact that the projects have been identified and documented as important for the development of the local and/or regional visitor economy, should assist in securing funding.

To be effective, the DMP must be a living document that is constantly evolving. The recommended actions need to be implemented and the results evaluated. Periodically the DMP will need to be revised, building on what has been achieved, so that Dungog Shire can continue to move forward.

## 1.7 Abbreviations Used in this Plan

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 4WD   | Four Wheel Driving                           |
| ABS   | Australian Bureau of Statistics              |
| DDCC  | Dungog District Chamber of Commerce          |
| DMP   | Destination Management Plan                  |
| DNSW  | Destination NSW                              |
| DSSN  | Destination Sydney Surrounds North           |
| DRT   | Dungog Regional Tourism                      |
| DSC   | Dungog Shire Council                         |
| FER   | Functional Economic Region                   |
| FCNSW | Forestry Corporation of NSW                  |
| IMBA  | International Mountain Bicycling Association |
| LGA   | Local Government Area                        |
| MTB   | Mountain Bike                                |
| NPWS  | National Parks & Wildlife Service            |
| REDS  | Regional Economic Development Strategy       |
| RMS   | Roads & Maritime Services                    |
| RTO   | Regional Tourism Organisation                |
| RV    | Recreational Vehicle                         |
| TRA   | Tourism Research Australia                   |
| VEAP  | Visitor Economy Action Plan                  |
| VFR   | Visiting Friends and Relatives               |
| VIC   | Visitor Information Centre                   |





## 2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

### 2.1 Planning Framework

The Dungog Shire DMP was prepared within the framework set by Federal and State Government policies for the development and management of tourism destinations. It is also consistent with the NSW Government’s priorities for Regional NSW and key plans and strategies for the Hunter Region and the directions and strategic directions of the Dungog Shire Strategic Plans. (Alignment with these documents is summarised in Appendix 1).

| Context   | Strategies and Plans  |
|---|---|
| National and State policies and plans for the development and management of tourism destinations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Long Term Tourism Strategy</li> <li>• NSW – Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP) 2030</li> <li>• Destination NSW – Strategic Objectives</li> <li>• Statewide Destination Management Plan</li> <li>• Sydney Surrounds North Destination Management Plan</li> </ul>             |
| Hunter Region Plans and Strategies  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priorities for Regional NSW - A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW</li> <li>• Hunter Regional Plan 2036 (Planning NSW)</li> <li>• Hunter Valley Regional Economic Development Strategy</li> <li>• Hunter Joint Organisation - Aspire. Act. Achieve – Strategic Plan 2018-2021</li> </ul> |
| Dungog Shire plans and strategies   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Strategic Plan 2030</li> <li>• Local Strategic Planning Statement – Moving Towards 2040</li> </ul>   |

***Critical to the success of the Dungog Shire is the natural environment and the rivers that flow from the Barrington Tops, to the unique flora and fauna found in our area and the picturesque landscapes that change with the seasons highlighting the beauty of our Shire.***  
 - Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan

Of the 20 core experiences identified in the Statewide DMP, Dungog Shire’s can contribute to / deliver on:

- Nature and adventure
- Arts and culture
- Special interest
- Journeys and touring routes
- Events and festivals
- Caravan and camping
- Short-breaks



The Sydney Surrounds North DMP and the Hunter Regional Plan both recognise the Barrington Tops National Park UNESCO World Heritage Listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia as an iconic attraction. The Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030 and Local Strategic Planning Statement recognise opportunities to leverage the Shire’s natural environment, heritage and lifestyle assets to grow the visitor economy, as well as the need to enhance the visitor experience, increase accommodation and improve infrastructure and facilities to support visitation.

Priority 2 of the Dungog Shire LSPS – Moving Towards 2020 aims to improve tourism infrastructure across the Shire with the planning principles and actions being:

| Planning Principals   | Actions |  |
|---|---------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote inter-regional tourist routes.</li> </ul>  | 17      | Enhance inter-regional tourism through better connected infrastructure in roads, train network and possible tourism routes across adjoining LGAs   |
|   | 18      | Advocate for improved signage and infrastructure in National Parks   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage off the proximity to the Barrington Tops National Park, Columbeys National Park and the State Forests.</li> </ul> | 19      | Work with relevant local stakeholder groups to investigate opportunities for tourism signage as part of the marketing and signage plan including heritage interpretation and heritage route                |
|   | 20      | Review tourism infrastructure such as picnic facilities, amenities, camping facilities, signage and mapping across the LGA to identify any shortfalls  |
|   | 21      | Investigate opportunities for walking trails, mountain bike trails and cycling routes across the LGA while preserving and leveraging of those already established by working with local stakeholder groups |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage transient tourism through the LGA.</li> </ul>  | 22      | Work with Dungog Regional Tourism and local stakeholders, to investigate opportunities for events, routes and tracks for visitor activities such as walking, 4WD and motorbike touring to promote the LGA. |
|   |         |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote local heritage.</li> </ul>   |         |  |

## 2.2 Regional Context

Dungog Shire shares boundaries with Port Stephens, Maitland, Singleton, Upper Hunter and MidCoast LGAs. The positioning of these localities, the direction and priorities for product development and the implications and opportunities for Dungog Shire are summarised below.

| Positioning  | Product Development Focus  | Implications / Opportunities for Dungog Shire   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Port Stephens</b>   |  |   |
| Port Stephens is marketed by Destination Port Stephens under the tag of 'Incredible by Nature'. The focus is on the Tomaree Peninsula.               | <p>Growing the visitor economy is identified as a priority in the Local Strategic Planning Statement, with the product development priorities being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going development of and leveraging opportunities created by Newcastle Airport and surrounding aerospace precinct.</li> <li>Farm gate trail along Nelson Bay Road.</li> <li>Developing the Stockton Beach Walk.</li> <li>Providing accessible tourism experiences.</li> <li>Building the events sector.</li> </ul> <p>At the local level, the Seaham Park and Wetlands Committee and local paddling enthusiasts have expressed an interest in developing a Williams River Canoe Trail</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expansion of air routes and flights into Newcastle Airport will provide opportunities to target interstate and international markets.</li> <li>Port Stephens LGA attracts over a million visitors per year – this provides opportunities to position and promote Dungog Shire as a day trip destination for visitors staying in the Port Stephens area.</li> <li>To work collaboratively with the Seaham Park and Wetland Committee to develop and promote a canoe trail along the Williams River.</li> <li>To work collaboratively with Port Stephens Council to deliver accessible tourism experiences at a sub-regional level.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Maitland City</b>   |  |   |
| Make it Maitland – Uncover the city's rich heritage, unique buildings and beautiful scenery. Shop, dine, get active along the Hunter River corridor. | <p>Development to be focused on five destination hubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Maitland – lifestyle and entertainment precinct</li> <li>Morpeth – combine old world with 'hipsteresque' chic</li> <li>Maitland Gaol – an iconic attraction and events venue</li> <li>Walka Water Works – iconic attraction, nature-based tourism experience, function and events venue</li> <li>Tocal – hub for agri tourism.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paterson is well located to leverage Maitland City initiatives, particularly activities at Tocal, and to provide accommodation for event attendees.</li> <li>Maitland is looking for sites to provide overnight parking for the RV market and also a site for a caravan park. The proposed camping area at Paterson Sportsground could help meet this need.</li> <li>Paddling is potential growth market for Dungog Shire (see Section 12.3). The proposed paddling hub at Morpeth provides opportunities for promoting</li> </ul>   |

| Positioning  | Product Development Focus  | Implications / Opportunities for Dungog Shire  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>Core themes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activating the river corridor from Walka Water Works to Morpeth, including riverside dining and river boat tours between Newcastle and Morpeth, upgrading the Queens Wharf reserve at Morpeth as a focal point for paddling and river activities, and growing the paddling market.</li> <li>• Using history and heritage to create memorable cultural experiences.</li> <li>• Growing and diversifying the events sector.</li> <li>• Growing the agri tourism sector with Tocal Agricultural College as the hub – including markets, food events, farm gate trails and education (short courses and workshops).</li> <li>• Increasing the supply and diversity of accommodation including providing overnight parking for the RV market.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paddling on the lower Paterson River and working with Maitland and Port Stephens Councils to develop a canoe trail from Clarence Town to Paterson (Williams, Hunter, Paterson Rivers) and staging long distance paddling events.</li> <li>• For Dungog and Maitland to work collaboratively to develop agri tourism, particularly the proposed farm gate trail.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Singleton LGA</b>   |  |  |
| <p>Singleton LGA is being re-branded 'Where the Adventure Begins'.</p>   | <p>While continuing to promote quality food and wine experiences as part of Hunter Valley Wine Country, Singleton Shire is focusing on developing nature, adventure, golf, sports and cultural products and experiences. Lake St Clair and surrounding area is being developed as an adventure tourism precinct. Council is also looking to better leverage the National Parks, expand camping opportunities, grow boating and water-related tourism and further develop and promote touring routes, including the Putty Road as an iconic ride for motorcyclists. Touring caravans and RVs and motorcycle touring are identified as priorities for product and market development.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to collaborate in the development of sub-regional touring routes for the caravan, RV and motorcycle markets.</li> <li>• Collaborating with Singleton and MidCoast to develop the motorcycle touring market, link Sydney to the New England High Country via the three LGAs. This could include working with Hema to produce a motorcycle touring map which links with the New England High Country Touring Map.</li> <li>• The proposed Lake St Clair water sports and adventure precinct may compete with Clarence Town for the boating and paddling markets and potentially with Dungog Common if a MTB Park is established.</li> <li>• The proposed increase in camping, caravan and rural and bushland accommodation may reduce pressure on Dungog Shire in peak times, however will increase the competition during non-peak times.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Upper Hunter</b>  |  |  |
| <p>Promoted as 'Upper Hunter Country' with the invitation to 'Come on up'. The LGA's strongest points of difference are the horse studs (Horse Capital of Australia) and thoroughbred racing industry.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revitalizing the Scone CBD following the by-pass with a focus on lifestyle and public art.</li> <li>• Providing infrastructure to support the equine market, including a new covered arena at White Park and the redevelopment of the Scone Racecourse with project to include up-market accommodation and a major function centre.</li> <li>• Redeveloping the Scone Airport and Warbirds Museum and building war bird events.</li> <li>• Leveraging the refurbished Scone golf course to target the golf market.</li> <li>• Developing mountain bike trails – The Gundy Trails have just been completed, with additional trails proposed at Glenbawn Dam.</li> <li>• Advocating for the sealing of the Barrington Tops Forest Road from Scone to Gloucester.</li> <li>• Capitalising more effectively on the National Parks, State Forests and SCAs within the Shire to grow nature and adventure-based tourism.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborating with Upper Hunter LGA and Gloucester to develop 'Barrington Tops' MTB products and experiences, including long distance trails and events, and multi-day packages.</li> </ul>   |

| Positioning   | Product Development Focus   | Implications / Opportunities for Dungog Shire  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>MidCoast LGA</b></p> <p>MidCoast has recently re-branded the LGA as the Barrington Coast. Gloucester is promoted as the closest town to the Barrington Tops, with the Barrington Coast positioned as offering high altitude ancient rainforests, fertile agricultural valleys, charming towns, mighty rivers, untouched waterways and breathtaking beaches.</p> | <p>Product development and marketing and promotion is focused on positioning the MidCoast as 'Australia's leading nature and adventure-based tourism region'. Strategic themes for product development are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature's bounty – focusing on local produce and culinary experiences.</li> <li>• Natural Adventure – outdoor, adventure-based activities.</li> <li>• Contemporary Coast.</li> <li>• Vibrant Country Life.</li> <li>• Celebrating Culture on Country.</li> </ul> <p>Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gloucester Visitor Hub – a contemporary VIC, exhibition and interpretative centre to consolidate Gloucester's position as gateway to the Barrington Tops.</li> <li>• Gloucester Dairy Factory Redevelopment</li> <li>• Expanding mountain-biking opportunities including establishing a Technical Skills MTB Park in Forster.</li> <li>• Growing outdoor and nature-based tourism through the introduction of day and multi-day itineraries and packages, guided tours and experiences and new events. In the Gloucester Region, these will be showcased through the new Visitor Hub.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Creation' of the Barrington Coast has shifted the focus from the Gloucester area to an east-west outlook from the 'mountains to the sea'.</li> <li>• Opportunities to collaborate with Gloucester for product and market development have decreased, with the local Gloucester tourism organisation now working closely with MidCoast Council.</li> <li>• The proposed Visitor Hub in Gloucester will further strengthen Gloucester's position as the gateway to the Barrington Tops and the adventure node for the area.</li> <li>• The introduction of itineraries, packages and guided tours and activities will provide Gloucester with a competitive advantage in growing the interstate and international visitor markets arriving via Newcastle Airport.</li> </ul> |



*Military Swim-in, Williams River Clarence Town*



**DESTINATION ANALYSIS**

### 3. DUNOG SHIRE

#### 3.1 Overview

Dungog Shire is located at the southern end of the Mt Royal Range (Barrington massif) in the Hunter Region of NSW. By road, the Shire<sup>2</sup> lies approximately 225 kilometres north of Sydney and 75 kilometres north of Newcastle. The Shire shares boundaries with MidCoast, Port Stephens, Maitland, Singleton and Upper Hunter LGAs. The Shire is readily accessible to the Greater Sydney and Newcastle regions, with 1.09 million people living within 2 hours drive of the Shire and a further 5.3 million people in the Greater Sydney Region (2.5 - 3 hours' drive).

Dungog Shire covers an area of 2,248 square kilometres. The Shire extends south from the southern edge of the Barrington Tops plateau, with rugged forested slopes and gorges in the north, grading to rolling hills into the central and southern areas of the Shire. The Shire is drained by two significant river systems – the Williams River in the east and the Paterson-Allyn River in the west, both of which are major tributaries of the Hunter River. Approximately 16% of the Shire lies within National Parks, State Conservation Areas and Nature Reserves and 6% in State Forests, with the Barrington Tops National Park being a high-profile attraction. Part of the Barrington Tops National Park within Dungog Shire lies within the UNESCO World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia area. The Gondwana Rainforests<sup>3</sup> encompasses the largest and most significant remaining stands of subtropical rainforest and Antarctic Beech cool temperate rainforests in the world and the largest and most significant area of warm temperate rainforest.

The Shire extends across the traditional lands of the Gringai clan of the Wonnarua people. Europeans arrived in the area in the early 1800's to harvest timber. The first land grants occurred in the mid-1820's, with the Shire's towns established in the 1830's. Tourism in the Shire started in the early 1900's, with the Barrington Guesthouse (built mid 1920's) putting the area 'on the map'.

Today, agriculture and tourism are the Shire's main economic drivers. The primary agricultural activities are beef cattle, dairying and cropping for pasture with other activities including poultry production, viticulture and horticulture. Tourism is centred in and around the National Parks, State Forests and the Shire's river systems, with the historic and scenic character of the area and rural lifestyle appealing strongly to visitors.

In 2019 Dungog Shire had an estimated resident population of 9,423<sup>4</sup> of whom approximately 22.6% resided in Dungog. Dungog is the administrative and commercial centre of the Shire. Located on the Williams River, Dungog has a historic town centre with a growing number of cafes, galleries, lifestyle shops, quality boutiques,

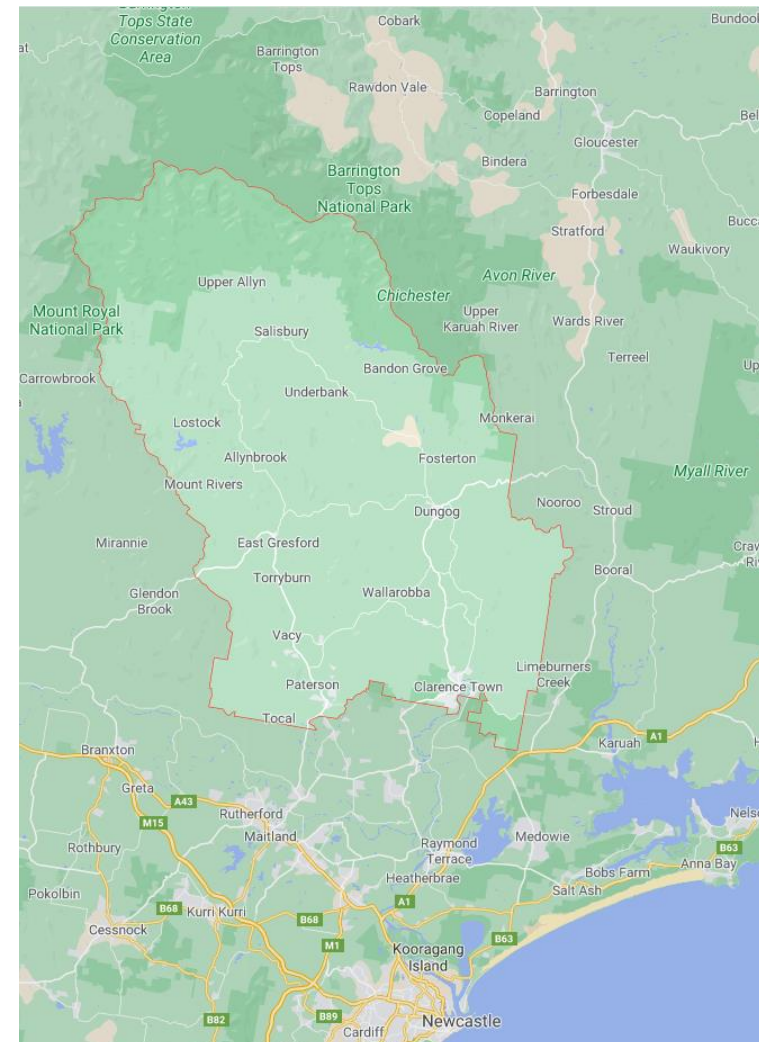


Figure 3.1 Dungog Shire

<sup>2</sup> The distances given are by road to the town of Dungog which is the main town and administrative centre of the Shire.

<sup>3</sup> The Gondwana Rainforests extend along the Great Dividing Range from Queensland through to Barrington Tops National Park with Dungog being the southern limit of these forests.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics: Regional Population Growth Australia 2018-2019

local providers and a boutique brewery. In addition to being a gateway to the Barrington Tops National Park, Dungog is emerging as a centre for mountain-biking and cycling. The other main settlements in the Shire are Clarence Town on the Williams River, and Gresford – East Gresford, Vacy and Paterson in the Paterson – Allyn River valley. These villages are local service centres and form part of the attraction base of the Shire.

### 3.2 Access

Dungog Shire lies to the west of the Pacific Motorway and north of the New England Highway and the Hunter Expressway. The Shire is accessed primarily by regional roads, with the main corridors being north-south routes feeding in from Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Gloucester and an east-west route across the centre of the Shire linking Singleton and Dungog via Gresford. Local roads provide access to the upper river valleys, Barrington Tops National Park and the Chichester State Forests. These roads are relatively narrow and in poor condition, with the capacity of roads often exceeded during peak visitation periods. NPWS and FCNSW maintain the roads and trails within their management areas, with these roads being unsealed and better suited to 4WD and all-wheel drive vehicles.

Dungog Shire is accessible via rail. The North Coast Rail line traverses the Shire, with stations at Paterson, Martins Creek, several rural localities and Dungog. The North Coast line is the major trunk line from NSW to Queensland, with daily services linking Sydney and Brisbane via the NSW north coast. The section of the line, from Dungog to Maitland is part of the Hunter rail network with local services linking Dungog to Newcastle via Maitland, with the option to change at Maitland to travel onto Scone and the New England North West region of NSW. Dungog is seeing an increasing number of visitors arriving in both Dungog and Paterson by train as well cyclists from the Hunter Region using train services to access the Shire.

Newcastle Airport is located approximately 65km south of Dungog. The Airport currently handles around 1.3 million passengers per year. Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, the Airport was planning to expand domestic routes and introduce international flights in 2021, with domestic and international passenger numbers forecast to reach 1.526 million and 240,500 respectively by 2026, with a total of 2.6 million by 2037<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.3 Outlook

Dungog will remain a rural Shire, with Council and the community committed to preserving the Shire's rural character, lifestyle and natural environment. Over the next two decades the population of the Shire is forecast to increase by 3.3% (300 people)<sup>6</sup>. Agriculture and tourism will remain the primary industries. As part of the Rural Lands Strategy, Council is seeking to protect and enhance the rural and scenic character of the area while encouraging innovative rural industries and activities including rural tourism. The Shire is likely to see an increase in accommodation in rural areas, artisan food and beverage production and on-farm small events and recreational and creative activities.

Over the next two decades, significant population growth is forecast for the Lower Hunter (129,000 additional people), Central Coast (98,250 people) and the Greater Sydney Region (2.415 million people), with passenger numbers through Newcastle Airport also increasing significantly. This will translate into increased visitation to, and pressure on, Dungog Shire. Infrastructure, facilities and services will need to be improved and expanded and additional funds and resources needed for the management of the National Parks, State Forests and other key assets.

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<sup>5</sup> Newcastle Airport Masterplan

<sup>6</sup> Planning NSW (2019) Dungog Shire Council Population Projections – Fact Sheet

## 4. THE TOURISM SECTOR

### 4.1 Structure

Within the Shire, Dungog Shire Council and Dungog Regional Tourism are key drivers of the tourism sector. Council owns the Dungog Visitor Information Centre and the Williams River Caravan Park and the James Theatre, supports events and has a significant investment in the reserves, parks and gardens, infrastructure and facilities that underpin visitation. Council is also the regulatory authority in areas such as planning, development and food safety. Dungog Regional Tourism (DRT) is an industry-based, not-for-profit organisation responsible for producing a range of information and promotional collateral, marketing and promoting the Shire as a visitor destination and building industry capacity.

Other key players include:

- Land and Water Management Agencies – NPWS, NSW Forestry Corporation, Hunter Water and State Water – responsible for the Shire’s key attractions.
- Dungog and Gresford Showground and Dungog Common Reserve Trusts – venue managers.
- Ride Dungog – driving the development of cycle tourism in the Shire.
- Dungog District Chamber of Commerce and the village progress associations.
- Events Dungog – assists with the hosting of events in the Shire.
- Dungog arts community – including the Dungog Arts Foundation, Dungog Arts Society and Dungog by Design.
- Tourism and business operators.
- Community groups including the local historical societies.

### 4.2 Economic Contribution

The visitor economy is a significant industry for Dungog Shire, contributing \$37.922 million to the Shire’s output and \$17.228 million in value-add. The sector is the fifth largest employer in the Shire, supporting around 180 jobs<sup>7</sup>.

Tourism brings ‘new’ dollars into the local economy with these dollars having a multiplier effect, filtering through to most sectors of the local economy. The Shire’s economy is highly dependent on the performance of the agricultural sector. ‘Tourism dollars’ are largely independent of the fluctuations in the agricultural sector, providing cashflow year-round. This contributes to the sustainability and resilience of local businesses.



<sup>7</sup> REMPLAN: Tourism Profile for Dungog Shire: based on ABS 2016 Census Place of Work Employment (Scaled), ABS 2016 / 2017 National Input Output Tables, ABS June 2019 Gross State Product, and ABS 2018 / 2019 Tourism Satellite Account.



### 4.3 Attractions, Activities and Events

Dungog Shire has a concentration of natural attractions, with these supporting a range of outdoor, nature and adventure-based activities. The Shire's primary attractions are:

- The stunning setting and scenery - with the rugged profile of the Mount Royal Range – Barrington Plateau in the north, the forested hills of the Wallarobba Range separating the river valleys, the green rolling hills and the fertile river plains. The Shire is extremely popular for 'country' drives and motorcycle touring as well as for short breaks, with strong demand for accommodation with rural and bushland settings.
- Historic towns and villages – Dungog and the larger villages each have something to offer travellers and are popular destinations for both day trips and short breaks. Dungog is known for its picturesque setting, historic main street, galleries and lifestyle shops and cafes. Clarence Town and Paterson are historic river towns, with the Williams River being the main attraction in Clarence Town and John Tucker Reserve on the Paterson River and historic town centre, the main attractions in Paterson.
- Barrington Tops National Park – high profile, spectacular wilderness destination with a rugged landscape, stunning views, and crystal-clear creeks with waterfalls, rapids and swimming holes. The Park is part of the Gondwana Rainforests Australia World Heritage Area with vegetation including ancient Antarctic Beech forests, sub-tropical rainforest and sub-alpine woodlands. Dungog Shire being the southern-most limit of the Antarctic Beech forests and Gondwana Rainforest reserves. The NPWS visitor precincts in Dungog Shire are one of the best locations to explore the subtropical rainforest, see the giant trees and experience the wild rivers. National Park attractions within Dungog Shire include the Williams River picnic areas and Blue Gum Loop walking track, Rocky Crossing and Jerusalem Creek picnic areas and walking tracks, the Corker Trail which provides access to the Barrington Tops Plateau via a remote and challenging walk to Carey's Peak, and Burruga Swamp - a hanging swamp with a short walk through the Antarctic Beech forest.
- Chichester State Forest – located on the foothills of the Barrington Plateau the Chichester State Forest is divided into two distinct areas, the western side centred on the Allyn River and the eastern side centred on the Telegerry River. The Allyn River area includes the high-profile Ladies Wells swimming hole and cascades, four camping areas, picnic areas, several walking tracks including the Allyn River Rainforest track, and Mt Allyn Lookout. The Telegerry River area has four camping areas, picnic facilities, and outdoor logging museum and walking tracks. Activities undertaken in the Forest include camping, bushwalking, mountain biking, bird watching, picnicking, swimming, trail bike riding and four-wheel driving.
- The Rivers – the headwaters and middle reaches of the Williams, Allyn and Paterson Rivers. The headwater tributaries rise in the Barrington Tops National Park and flow south through the Chichester State Forest and upper valley rural areas. The upper reaches feature stunning waterfalls, rapids and cascades, and crystal-clear swimming holes surrounded by rainforest. The middle reaches of the rivers offer opportunities for swimming, kayaking and canoeing, boating and fishing with riverside reserves in each of the towns, and riverside camping at Clarence Town and East Gresford.
- Dungog Common – located on the western edge of Dungog, the Common is emerging as one of the most popular mountain-biking areas in NSW. The Common offers 22 kilometres of single tracks ranging from blue to double black diamond in difficulty, a 2.2km flow track (with additional flow tracks being developed) and a pump track. The Common is also popular for bushwalking, bird watching and horse riding.

Supporting attractions include the National Parks and State Forests near Clarence Town; local history museums in Dungog, Clarence Town, Gresford and Paterson; Rail Motor Museum, town walk (and App) and the historic Tocal Homestead at Paterson; Chichester and Lostock Dams; art galleries and lifestyle shopping; bird trails; and golf courses in Dungog and Paterson. (See Appendix 2 – Product Audit).

The activities undertaken in the Shire include:

- Camping
- Touring / scenic drives – by car, motorcycle and bicycle
- Cycling – mountain biking, road cycling and gravel grinding.
- Hiking, bushwalking, walking
- Birdwatching
- Swimming – in the creeks and rivers
- Boating and fishing – Lostock Dam, the Williams River at Clarence Town and the lower reaches of the Paterson River
- Canoeing and kayaking (paddling) – still water and white water (when river levels are suitable)
- Picnicking
- Farm Stays including visiting a dairy farm
- Horse riding (bring own horse) and horse events
- Four wheel driving
- Trail riding – motorbikes
- Golf
- Lifestyle shopping and dining
- Participation in a range of creative, lifestyle and activity-based workshops

Dungog Shire has a diverse calendar of events (Appendix 3), with the highest profile events being the Tocal Field Days, Dungog Festival, Sculpture on the Farm, Pedalfest and the Gresford Billy Cart Race. In the past, Dungog has successfully hosted large film and music festivals.

## 4.4 Accommodation

Accommodation in Dungog Shire includes:

- Two small 3 - 3.5 star motels, located in Dungog and Vacy, plus Glendarra (motel style accommodation) at Tocal College just outside the Shire boundary.
- Pub hotels – basic rooms with shared facilities in Dungog, Clarence Town, East Gresford and Paterson.
- Two B&Bs in Paterson.
- 70+ properties offering self-contained (apartments, houses, cabins, lodges, retreats, farm stays). Most of these properties are located in rural and bushland areas.
- Four commercial caravan parks and camping grounds (Williams River Holiday Park at Clarence Town, Lostock Dam, Camp on Allyn at Gresford and Ferndale).
- Camping and powered sites at Gresford Showground and under development at Dungog Showground and Paterson Sportsground.
- Campgrounds in the Chichester State Forest, with camping permitted in all State Forests within the Shire.
- Lostock Scout Camp – dormitory accommodation (60 beds) plus 100 camp sites.



Accommodation properties are generally at capacity at Easter and on long weekends and are is strong demand most weekends and during the Spring, Summer and Autumn school holidays. Mid-week occupancy is generally strong in Dungog but low in other localities. The capacity of the campgrounds in the Chichester State Forest is exceeded at Easter and on most long weekends, with camping occurring along forest roads, in day use areas and the along the Allyn River Road.

Dungog has significant accommodation capacity constraints, with the town needing additional hotel, motel and self-contained accommodation and a caravan park. 17 powered caravan sites are also being provided at Dungog Showground. This additional accommodation is not sufficient to meet demand in peak times. Camping and caravan sites are also being provided at Paterson Sports Ground and a boutique eco-resort has been approved at Munnii.

## 4.5 Venues

Dungog Shire has a range of venues suitable for indoor and outdoor events including:

| Indoor  | Outdoor  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Theatre – historic venue suitable for functions, meetings, entertainment and film festivals</li> <li>• Tocal Homestead Function Centre and Barracks accommodation</li> <li>• Licenced Clubs meeting and function rooms</li> <li>• Village halls</li> <li>• Historic churches</li> <li>• Accommodation properties with facilities for meetings and/or creative and lifestyle workshops</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dungog Common – suitable for mountain bike, horse and trail running events.</li> <li>• Dungog and East Gresford Showgrounds</li> <li>• Paterson Sportsground</li> <li>• Golf Clubs – Dungog and Paterson</li> <li>• Bridge Reserve and the Williams River at Clarence Town</li> <li>• Lostock Dam</li> <li>• State Forests</li> </ul> |



*James Theatre, Dungog*



*Tocal Homestead*



*Dungog Festival*

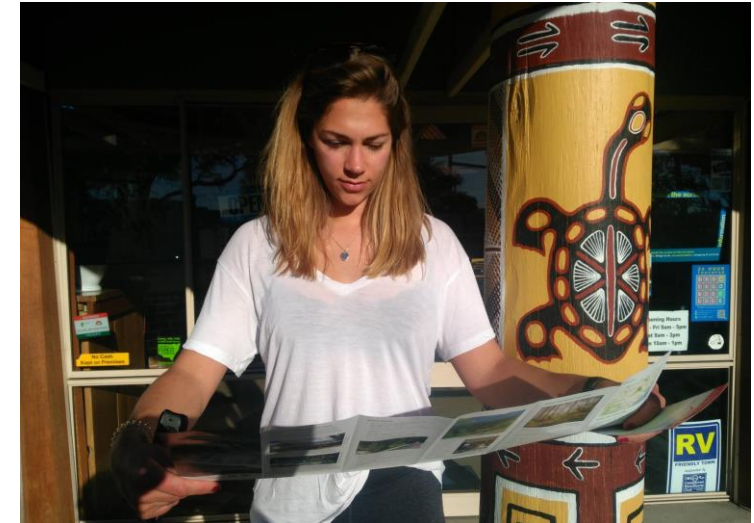
## 4.6 Infrastructure, Facilities and Services to support the Visitor Economy

Other facilities and infrastructure available in the Shire to support the visitor economy include.

- **Information services:** Accredited Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Dungog, supported by the visitdungog website and visitdungog Facebook and Instagram sites. The VIC is dated and focuses on the Barrington Tops National Park and Chichester Forest area and needs to be refurbished to incorporate displays that promote the Shire's villages as well its new attractions and activities (eg Dungog Common, mountain biking, the growing arts scene).
- **Eateries:** Hotels, licensed clubs and cafes – Dungog, Clarence Town, Gresford, Vacy and Paterson. Dungog also has a boutique brewery.
- **Retail and support services:** Dungog is a district service centre anchored by an IGA supermarket and has mix of local service providers and quality galleries, lifestyle shops and boutiques. Fuel is available in Dungog, Gresford, Vacy and Paterson.
- **Public toilets:** Public toilets are available in each of the towns. Most of the toilet blocks are dated, with the toilet block in the Dungog town centre needing to be replaced. There are very few accessible toilet in the Shire.
- **Dump Point:** There are public dump points for caravans and RVs in the Dungog Showground and at Bridge Reserve in Clarence Town and a dump point for guests at Camp on Allyn in Gresford.

### Gaps in the supply of infrastructure, facilities and services include:

- Modern, fully accessible public toilets in Dungog Town Centre including a baby change area / parents room.
- Laundramat – to service both accommodation operators and visitors.
- Access to fuel in Clarence Town.
- Easily accessible river access points in most of the towns, and lack of jetty / pontoon infrastructure in Paterson to support paddling.
- Dump points for caravans and RVs in the Gresford Showground and at the Paterson Sportsground.
- Lack of mobile telephone coverage in the upper river valleys, Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park. While these areas are very popular, they are relatively remote with poor access and are subject to flash flooding and bushfires. These areas are also used for outdoor and adventure-based activities which have higher risks of accidents and mis-adventure, and anti-social behaviour is sometimes an issue. Providing mobile coverage would significantly improve the safety of both residents and visitors and discourage anti-social behaviour.



## 5. STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC ASSETS

From a tourism perspective, the Shire's strengths and strategic assets and the opportunities they provide include:

| Strength  | Assets to Work With   | Opportunities   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Proximity and access to major population centres</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dungog Shire is one of the most accessible localities to the Sydney and Newcastle Greater urban areas for rural escapes, nature, soft adventure and 4WD/off-road activities.</li> <li>Access to domestic markets: Around 1.09 million people live within 2 hours drive of Dungog (Hunter LGAs, Central Coast and MidCoast) with a further 5.3+ million people in the Sydney Region – within 3 hours of the Shire.</li> <li>Relatively accessible from the Pacific Motorway and Hunter Expressways.</li> <li>Passenger rail services – part of the Sydney interurban and Hunter networks and North Coast line.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to build the day trip and short-breaks market.</li> <li>Ready market for events and activities.</li> <li>Attract day trips from VFR and other visitors staying in surrounding LGAs.</li> <li>Target interest-based groups and clubs (eg cycling clubs, art groups).</li> <li>Potential to run 'special' trains to Dungog and Paterson for large events.</li> <li>Potential to package day and short-break trips to groups such as Probus who often travel by train.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Proximity to domestic and international gateways</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than an hour from Newcastle Airport – significant growth is forecast for both domestic and international passengers.</li> <li>Within 3 hours of Sydney International Airport.</li> <li>An hour from the Port of Newcastle Cruise Terminal.</li> <li>UNESCO World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests as an iconic anchor for both domestic and international visitors.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fly-drive packages for the domestic and international markets.</li> <li>Campervan rentals coming out of Newcastle Airport.</li> <li>Possible (longer term) tours as part of cruise ship itineraries.</li> <li>Boutique guided tours – picking up from Newcastle Airport.</li> <li>Possibility of attracting interstate and potentially international mountain-bikers.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>National Parks / World Heritage areas</b>            | <b>Barrington Tops National Park / UNESCO World Heritage Gondwana Rainforests</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High profile / strong market-place awareness.</li> <li>World heritage status / wilderness.</li> <li>Southern most limit of the Antarctic Beech Forests + subtropical rainforest.</li> <li>Spectacular scenery.</li> <li>Visitor facilities – walking tracks and picnic areas.</li> <li>Accommodation located close to the Park.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage World Heritage status to raise and strengthen the profile of the area.</li> <li>Position the Corker Trail as a signature walk.</li> <li>Explore options for guided and/or supported walks.</li> <li>Remote, bookable camping areas, three of which are accessible from walking trails with track heads in Dungog Shire.</li> <li>Eco / nature-based tours.</li> <li>Packaged tours (accommodation + transport + activities).</li> <li>Investigate opportunities to better interpret the National Park in the Dungog VIC including providing virtual tours.</li> </ul> |
|   | <b>Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks – Clarence Town</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Readily accessible from Clarence Town.</li> <li>Network of trails – linking to adjoining State Forests.</li> <li>Plans of Management permit 4WD, horse riding and MTB on designated roads and management trails.</li> <li>Caves on Thunderbolt's Track</li> <li>Mount Gilmore + Gilmore Lookout – views of Clarence Town, Williams and Karuah River Valleys and distant views to Hawks Nest</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise profile of and promote as part of the attraction base of Clarence Town – camp at the Williams River caravan park and explore the National Parks.</li> <li>Promote for mountain biking and horse riding in conjunction with the adjoining State Forests.</li> <li>Incorporate into the Shire bird routes.</li> </ul>  |
|   | <b>Columbey State Conservation Area – access via Duns Creek</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily managed for conservation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low impact recreational activities and visitor infrastructure, subject to a Plan of Management.</li> </ul>   |

| Strength   | Assets to Work With   | Opportunities   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>State Forests</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used for walking, running and mountain-biking – mainly by locals</li> <li>• <b>Chichester State Forest</b> – adjoining the Barrington Tops National Park – high profile / well known. Variety of very attractive camping sites; network of roads and trails. High profile Ladies Well attraction.</li> <li>• <b>Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests</b> near Clarence Town – suitable for horse riding and possibly mountain biking.</li> <li>• State Forests can be used for a much wider range of activities and events than National Parks</li> <li>• Wallaroo – network of trails popular with 4WD and registered trailbikes.</li> <li>• Easier to get approval to hold events in State Forests than National Parks.</li> <li>• Network of roads and trails suitable for a range of activities.</li> <li>• State Forests are dog and horse friendly.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase mid-week use.</li> <li>• Eco / nature-based / 4WD tours eg to the Dundungurra glow worm waterfall site</li> <li>• Use the State Forests as ‘venues’ to host a range of events eg mountain biking, endurance events, horse events, trail running, orienteering and rogaining etc.</li> <li>• Capitalise more effectively on the Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests – possibly developing mountain bike tracks.</li> <li>• Potential gravel 4WD and trail bike touring routes from Raymond Terrace / Medowie through State Forests, National Parks and on gravel local roads to Stroud and to the Barrington Tops National Park.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Rivers and Waterways</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three rivers: Williams, Paterson, Allyn – pristine headwater streams with waterfalls, rapids and swimming holes; downstream – swimming holes and areas suitable for canoeing and kayaking.</li> <li>• Lostock and Chichester Dams.</li> <li>• Fishing at Lostock Dam.</li> <li>• Riverside caravan parks and camping – Clarence Town and Gresford, Chichester State Forest; caravan park at Lostock Dam.</li> <li>• Riverside reserves</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Events – Williams River at Clarence Town and Lostock Dam.</li> <li>• Identifying and promoting areas suitable for canoeing / kayaking / stand-up paddle boarding.</li> <li>• Adaptive canoeing at Clarence Town for people with disabilities.</li> <li>• Canoe trail – Clarence Town to Paterson via Williams, Hunter and Paterson Rivers.</li> <li>• Canoe / kayak / stand-up paddle board hire.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Dungog Common</b>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large bushland reserve on the edge of Dungog</li> <li>• Emerging high-profile destination for mountain biking – network of cross country trails, flow track and pump track.</li> <li>• Popular for horse riding, walking and bird watching.</li> <li>• Saleyards adjacent to the Common.</li> <li>• Links to the Showground.</li> <li>• Pipeline.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop the mountain bike trails and facilities.</li> <li>• Link the Common to the town centre by a dedicated cycleway.</li> <li>• Utilise the Common and Showground facilities and stables to grow the equine market.</li> <li>• Utilise the area for MBT, horse and other events.</li> <li>• Public art on the Common, possibly utilising the pipeline as a canvas and installing sculptures.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Pilchers Reserve</b>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stunning setting – with gorges and pockets of rainforest.</li> <li>• Talus chasms and caves.</li> <li>• Aboriginal significance.</li> <li>• Located close to Dungog.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boutique guided eco-tours – a high end, bookable product.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Dungog Shire is emerging as a cycling destination</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dungog Common MTB trails, facilities and events.</li> <li>• Network of local and regional roads suitable for road cycling – cycling routes mapped and promoted - low traffic, series of different length loops, flat to undulating topography and very attractive scenery.</li> <li>• Gravel local roads and trails in the National Park and State Forests suitable for ‘gravel grinding’.</li> <li>• MTB trails being developed / promoted on rural properties – eg Wangat Lodge.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that Dungog and Clarence Town are cycle friendly.</li> <li>• Guided cycling tours.</li> <li>• Host MTB clinics.</li> <li>• Effective marketing and promotion of cycling opportunities within the Shire – including displays and information in the Dungog VIC, inclusion on the visitdungog website and production of print information.</li> <li>• Work with the NPWS and Forestry Corporation to develop trails and routes in and around Clarence Town and possibly in the Chichester State Forest.</li> </ul>  |

| Strength  | Assets to Work With  | Opportunities   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very active Ride Dungog cycling group.</li> <li>• Active cycle and MTB clubs in the surrounding region.</li> <li>• Pedalfest – high profile event.</li> <li>• Rail access to Gloucester and Scone – potential for long distance, regional MTB / gravel grinding trails – returning via rail.</li> <li>• Bicycle shop in Dungog.</li> <li>• Bike library.</li> <li>• Electric bikes – increases access to cycling.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess the feasibility of establishing IMBA recognised EPIC cross country and down hill trails.</li> <li>• Explore options for longer distance routes – ride Barrington Tops – linking Dungog, Scone and Gloucester.</li> <li>• Establish a MTB skills park at the Common and explore options for an indoor skills facility.</li> <li>• Direct marketing to cycling and MTB Clubs and groups.</li> <li>• Position Dungog Shire as a prime location for gravel grinding.</li> <li>• Grow the event market - Introduce a gravel grinding event/s; increase the number of MTB events; promote the Shire to cycle clubs as a venue for cycle events; invite commercial cycle / MTB / adventure racing event organisers to bring their event to Dungog Shire.</li> <li>• Explore the feasibility of establishing a cycling trail adjacent to the Hunter Water pipeline – concentrating on the area between Clarence Town and Dungog.</li> <li>• Work with Transport NSW to develop ‘bike friendly’ train travel on the Hunter network and between Dungog and Gloucester.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Strong arts-based community and increasing number of arts-based attractions and activities.</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reputation for being an artistic area.</li> <li>• Three art galleries in Dungog + other businesses showcasing / selling locally produced art and other products.</li> <li>• Active and enthusiastic artist and artisan organisations.</li> <li>• Events at the James Theatre – movies, film festivals.</li> <li>• Reputation for film events.</li> <li>• Arts-based / music events – Sculpture on the Farm, Dungog Festival, Tea Cosy Festival, Lostock Shindig,</li> <li>• Accommodation and retail properties hosting art and artisan workshops.</li> <li>• Dungog has successfully hosted large music festivals.</li> <li>• Rail access for large events and festivals.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased marketing and promotion of creative workshops.</li> <li>• Marketing suitable venues / accommodation properties to workshop organisers and arts societies and co-ops.</li> <li>• Grow the number of arts-based events.</li> <li>• Re-build film-based activities.</li> <li>• Attract large music events – targeting music festival organisers and touring companies.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Multitude of quality bush and riverside camp sites – one of the closest locations to Sydney</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Williams River Holiday Park, Clarence Town.</li> <li>• Gresford Park at Gresford Showground.</li> <li>• Lostock Dam.</li> <li>• Chichester Forest Campgrounds (8).</li> <li>• Commercial campgrounds – Ferndale, Camp on Allyn.</li> <li>• Primitive camping (hikers) Barrington Tops National Park.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase mid-week and off-season use.</li> <li>• Include commercial campgrounds and caravan parks in campervan packages targeted to the international market.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities with campervan companies to offer packages for the domestic market arriving via Newcastle Airport.</li> <li>• Develop the proposed caravan facilities at Dungog Showground and Paterson Sportsground.</li> <li>• Encourage the establishment of additional commercial camp grounds in suitable locations.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Boutique / unique accommodation in stunning locations</b></p>                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabins, cottages, farm stays, lodges, tree houses, luxury houses – rural, riverside, bushland and wilderness retreats.</li> <li>• Romantic accommodation for couples.</li> <li>• Family and group accommodation.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on the setting and the experiences offered to target specific markets – eg romantic escapes, short breaks, extended family and social groups.</li> <li>• Building the workshops and special interest-based markets.</li> </ul>  |

| Strength                                 | Assets to Work With   | Opportunities  |
|--|---|--|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accommodation suitable for small lifestyle, creative and environmental workshops.</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Historic river towns and villages</b> | <p>Well located for scenic drives and to service travellers to the southern end of the Barrington Range.</p> <p><b>Dungog</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gateway to the southern end of the Barrington Range</li> <li>Attractive town and setting.</li> <li>Historic town centre and historic buildings + interpretative plaques</li> <li>Quality shopping – boutiques, antiques and lifestyle shops, local provedores.</li> <li>Reputation for being ‘arty’ – three art galleries + workshops.</li> <li>Growing café scene.</li> <li>Emerging as a MTB / cycling hub.</li> <li>Historic hotels / B&amp;Bs.</li> <li>Access to the Williams River – attractive riverside reserve.</li> <li>Dungog Common – mountain biking, horse riding, bushwalking, bird watching.</li> <li>Dungog Showground – attractive venue, horse stables, caravan / camp sites.</li> <li>James Theatre.</li> <li>Rail access.</li> <li>Accredited Visitor Information Centre.</li> </ul> <p><b>Clarence Town</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Williams River and rievierside reserves and infrastructure.</li> <li>Williams River Holiday Park.</li> <li>Historic Erringhi Hotel.</li> <li>Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks and Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests.</li> <li>Events with the potential to be grown: Hoedown and Military Swim + a range of outdoor areas that could be used for events</li> </ul> <p><b>Gresford – East Gresford</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service centre for Lostock Dam and Upper Allyn River.</li> <li>Crossroad location – part of the route between Singleton and MidCoast.</li> <li>Riverside camping – Showground and Camp on Allyn.</li> <li>Access to Allyn and Paterson Rivers.</li> <li>Gresford Showground – venue for outdoor events.</li> <li>Historic Beatty Hotel.</li> <li>Historic Churches – St Annes, St Helens, St Mary-on-Allyn.</li> <li>Historic Paterson River Bridge.</li> </ul> <p><b>Vacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small service centre – general store, café, historic hotel, motel, park.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Day trip and short breaks market out of the surrounding region.</li> <li>Destinations for the touring caravan and motorhome markets.</li> <li>Strengthen Dungog as a destination for mountain biking and cycling.</li> <li>Placemaking – improving the presentation of the town centre and entry corridors and the infrastructure and facilities to service visitors.</li> <li>Strengthen the links between the Common, town centre and Showground.</li> <li>Increase the supply of accommodation.</li> <li>Improve access to the Williams River.</li> <li>Improved promotion of the town’s history – story telling.</li> <li>Revamp the VIC to showcase and promote the Shire’s attractions, assets and lifestyle.</li> <li>Upgrade the Williams River Holiday Park, increasing the number of cabins if possible.</li> <li>Upgrade Wharf Reserve and strengthen the link with the Village Green.</li> <li>Leverage the nearby National Parks and State Forests for a range of outdoor activities and events.</li> <li>Build the events sector, including water-based events.</li> <li>Raise the profile of the riverside camping areas.</li> <li>Improve access to the Allyn and Paterson Rivers – promote for swimming and canoeing.</li> <li>Wedding market – leveraging the historic churches and Beatty Hotel and potentially the Bowling Club and Showground Pavilions.</li> <li>Provide access to the Paterson River.</li> </ul> |



| Strength | Assets to Work With   | Opportunities  |
|----------|---|--|
|          | <p><b>Paterson</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic buildings and sites, town walk, Court House Museum</li> <li>• Paterson River and riverside reserves: John Tucker Park and Kings Wharf. River navigable to Morpeth.</li> <li>• Paterson Recreation Ground and Golf Course.</li> <li>• Historic hotels.</li> <li>• Rail Motor Museum.</li> <li>• Tocal Homestead.</li> <li>• Proximity to Tocal Agricultural College.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing caravan and camping facilities at the Paterson Recreation ground.</li> <li>• Promote the town walk App.</li> <li>• Golf weekends – packaging Dungog and Paterson golf courses with accommodation.</li> <li>• Improving access to the Paterson River – possibly including a boat ramp / canoe access point at John Tucker Park.</li> <li>• Leverage Maitland City Council paddling, touring caravans and RVs, and agri-tourism initiatives.</li> </ul> |



Gorge at Pilchers Reserve



Café, at Tempest Cycles, Dungog



Forest Road

## 6. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Addressing challenges and removing barriers is fundamental to delivering sustained growth in the visitor economy. Issues and challenges faced by Dungog Shire include:

| Issue  | Challenges  |
|--|---|
| <p>Funding and resource constraints within Council, the business sector and the community.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourcing service delivery, including the on-going cost of running the Visitor Information Centre.</li> <li>• The Shire does not have a professional, dedicated tourism manager responsible for product, market and industry development and marketing and promotion. Responsibility for coordinating and driving tourism is 'split' between Council and DRT.</li> <li>• Accessing the funds needed to maintain and augment attractions, facilities and infrastructure (particularly roads) to support visitation.</li> <li>• Providing the funds and resources to effectively market and promote the Shire to attract investment, workers, new residents and visitors.</li> <li>• Very limited funds available to access grants (\$ for \$) and cooperative marketing campaigns.</li> <li>• Concentration of micro and small businesses, without the skills, capital and/or resources to market and promote effectively.</li> <li>• Bringing key stakeholders together to work towards achieving shared vision and goals for the Shire.</li> <li>• Attracting and retaining volunteers.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Strong population growth in the Lower Hunter and Central Coast Region is placing increasing pressure on facilities and infrastructure in Dungog Shire. This will be compounded by population growth as well as increased visitors coming into the area via Newcastle Airport.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents of the Lower Hunter and Central Coast Regions are increasing looking to Dungog Shire for outdoor recreation and leisure activities. This is resulting in increased use of the Chichester State Forest, Barrington Tops National Park and riverside reserves, which is increasing the pressure on infrastructure (eg roads) and creating management issues including competition for campsites and conflict between different types of visitors and activities.</li> <li>• From 2016 to 2041, the population of the Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Greater Sydney Region is forecast to increase significantly, which will increase pressure on facilities and infrastructure in Dungog Shire and exacerbate management issues. The population of the Lower Hunter and Central Coast regions are forecast to grow by 129,300 (22.7%) and 98,250 (29.5%) people respectively, while the population of the Greater Sydney Region is forecast to grow by 2.415 million people (51.6%).</li> <li>• The Plans of Management for the National Parks and State Conservation Areas within the Shire do not take into consideration the likely increase in demand and use resulting from population growth with the primary catchment area and increased visitor arrivals through Newcastle Airport.</li> <li>• Finding additional funds and resources to assist Dungog Shire Council, Forestry Corporation of NSW, NPWS and NSW Police to manage the expected increase in visitation.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Gloucester, rather than Dungog, is recognised as the gateway to the Barrington Tops Region.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MidCoast Council has built on the profile of Gloucester as the gateway to Barrington Tops and for tourism, has re-branded the LGA the 'Barrington Coast'. Gloucester is promoted as the closest town to the Barrington Tops, with the Barrington Coast positioned as offering high altitude ancient rainforests, fertile agricultural valleys, charming towns, mighty rivers, untouched waterways and breathtaking beaches.</li> <li>• How to differentiate the Barrington Tops National Park experiences offered in Dungog Shire from those in the Gloucester area – encouraging visitors to explore both localities.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Increasing competition from surrounding LGAs – with increased focus on outdoors and nature-based tourism as well as the development of commercial tour products and experiences.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surrounding LGAs are shifting their focus to leveraging their natural assets to grow outdoor, nature and adventure-based activities, moving into a market position that has traditionally been held by Dungog Shire. These LGAs have more funds and resources to invest in product, infrastructure and market development than Dungog Shire.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>The Shire's natural attractions are not achieving their full potential.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of the Shire's natural attractions are managed by organisations for which tourism is not a core function. These organisations need additional funds and resources to develop, improve and maintain visitor infrastructure and facilities and supervise the area during high use periods.</li> </ul>   |

| Issue   | Challenges   |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing communication and collaboration between Council and the land management agencies– NPWS, Forestry Corporation of NSW, Hunter Water, State Water and Crown Lands – to protect key assets while catering for growing demand.</li> <li>• Increasing the use of the National Parks and State Forests around Clarence Town for a range of activities and events, in line relevant Plans of Management and agency policies.</li> <li>• Improving the presentation and maintenance of river access points in the towns and rural areas including addressing issues with aging visitor facilities, poor signage, bank erosion, weeds and litter.</li> <li>• Managing the anti-social behaviour by a small minority of visitors to minimise environmental impacts and protect the amenity and reputation of the area.</li> <li>• Maintaining easements and historic access ways to local landmarks and waterways – preventing landowners from restricting access to key assets.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Relatively narrow product base – Most of the visitation to the Shire is driven by outdoor, nature and adventure-based activities and highly exposed to inclement weather, bushfire threats and ability to access areas (ie roads cut by flooding).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging visitation year-round regardless of the weather – strengthening the towns as attractions and destinations is fundamental to addressing this.</li> <li>• Diversifying the product base to include non-weather dependent attractions and activities.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Leveraging emerging visitor markets.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving infrastructure and facilities within the Shire, particularly in Dungog, to leverage the strong growth in mountain biking, road cycling and gravel grinding.</li> <li>• Providing facilities and infrastructure to cater for the growing camping, caravan and RV markets and seeking RV friendly accreditation for localities (eg Clarence Town) and destinations eg Lostock Dam Caravan Park.</li> <li>• Leveraging initiatives in surrounding LGAs to capitalise on and build motorcycle touring.</li> <li>• Catering for international visitor (post COVID) – developing products that are ‘export ready’.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Accommodation capacity constraints.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the supply of accommodation, particularly in the towns.</li> <li>• Ensuring that planning controls permit the development of accommodation in suitable locations and enable areas to be used for temporary / overflow accommodation during peak periods and large events.</li> <li>• Providing the facilities and infrastructure to attract and cater for the growing caravans and RV markets – particularly in Dungog and Paterson.</li> <li>• Addressing capacity constraints to facilitate growth of the events sector.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Aging infrastructure and infrastructure capacity constraints.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving the condition of the local and regional roads – many of the Shire roads are in poor condition, with visitor traffic in peak times exceeding the capacity of key access roads (eg Allyn River Road). Unsealed roads are an issue for visitors in rental vehicles and also limit access by some 2WD vehicles, particularly in wet weather.</li> <li>• Upgrading / replacing dated visitor facilities in some parks and reserves.</li> <li>• Upgrading / replacing public toilets – Most of the public toilets are dated and present poorly, with the toilets in the Dungog town centre needing to be replaced.</li> <li>• Improving signage throughout the Shire – there is a need to update and/or improve gateway, directional, facility and interpretative signage.</li> <li>• Extending mobile telephone coverage, particularly in the north of the Shire and along the main access roads and tourist routes.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Maximising the yield from visitors</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging visitors coming into the area to camp or stay at self-accommodation to visit the towns and spend money within the Shire.</li> <li>• Encouraging businesses to extend trading hours – to be open when visitors are in the Shire.</li> </ul>  |

| Issue  | Challenges   |
|--|--|
| <p>Improving the safety of residents and visitors in the upper river valleys, Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops and Mt Royal National Parks.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving road conditions, signage and mobile phone coverage to reduce risks from bushfires, flooding, misadventure and anti-social behaviour.</li> <li>• Increasing the presence of Police, NPWS Rangers and Forestry officers during high visitation periods.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Disjointed approach to marketing and limited marketing and promotional collateral. There is no dedicated Dungog Shire visitor guide; Fairfax media produce a Barrington Towns Guide which includes Dungog Shire and the Gloucester area; Council maintains the visitdungog website and visit dungog facebook page; and DRT produces a range of promotional brochures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a coordinated and targeted approach to marketing the Shire.</li> <li>• Expanding the information and promotional collateral available.</li> <li>• Building the Shire's online presence including building its profile on third party web and social media sites; communicating through social media, and harnessing user generated content.</li> </ul> |



*Camping, Music Festival, Dungog*

## 7. VISITATION

Data available on visitation to Dungog Shire is limited<sup>8</sup>. The Shire attracts over 200,000 visitors per year<sup>9</sup>. Around 64% of visitors are day trippers, with 36% staying one or more nights in the Shire. Domestic overnight visitors spend on average 3.29 nights in the Shire, with around 73% of these visitors being holiday and leisure travellers and 22% visiting friends and relatives. Approximately 58% of overnight visitors come from Regional NSW (predominately the Hunter and Central Coast), 26% from Sydney, 17% from interstate and 1% from overseas. The majority of international visitors are from the United Kingdom and Europe. In 2017, DNSW estimated that domestic overnight visitors to the Shire spent on average \$188 per visitor per night, with day trippers spending on average \$112 per visit.

The Shire attracts a diversity of markets, with the market mix varying in different localities throughout the Shire<sup>10</sup>. The day trip market is drawn primarily from the Lower Hunter region and Central and MidCoast LGAs, with the short breaks market coming out of the Lower Hunter Region, Central Coast and the Greater Sydney Region.

| Locality                 | Primary Markets   | Secondary and Minor Markets  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Dungog                   | Day trippers<br>Short breaks leisure market – primarily adult couples and small groups of friends<br>Business and work-related travellers<br>Mountain bikers<br>Event attendees<br>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) | Touring motorbikes – both road and trail bikes<br>Touring caravan and RVs – primarily retirees and semi retirees (55+ years)<br>Horse riders (own horses)<br>Road cyclists<br>Creative arts and lifestyle workshop attendees.<br>Golfers   |
| Clarence Town            | Through traffic / day trippers<br>Campers: primarily families and groups of families on weekends and during school holidays<br>Touring caravan and RV markets: mid week outside of school holiday periods.              | Water Skiers and Wake Boarders (Seaham Weir Pool, downstream of Clarence Town)<br>Anglers – individuals and groups<br>Boating enthusiasts.<br>Paddlers (canoes and kayaks)<br>Event attendees<br>VFR<br>Activity-based markets attracted by the surrounding National Parks and State Forests – 4WD, trail bikes, mountain bikers, horse riders: drawn primarily from surrounding LGAs. |
| East Gresford / Gresford | Through / touring traffic (cars and motorbikes): travelling to the Upper Allyn River area, Lostock Dam and between Singleton, Dungog and beyond<br>Event attendees  | Campers: primarily families and groups of families on weekends and during school holidays<br>Touring caravan and RV markets: mid week outside of school holiday periods.<br>Short-breaks market: staying in accommodation in and around Gresford<br>VFR<br>Workshop participants: Camry Allyn  |
| Vacy                     | Touring and through traffic – Gresford Road.  | Short breaks market – mainly couples and groups of couples, staying at Eaglereach Wilderness Resort and other properties in and around Vacy<br>Event attendees   |

<sup>8</sup> Visitation statistics in this are taken primarily from the Dungog Shire visitor profile 2017, provided by Destination NSW. These figures are based on a 4 year rolling average and should be regarded as indicative only.

<sup>9</sup> Sydney Surrounds North Destination Management Plan.

<sup>10</sup> Information on the type of visitors is qualitative and based on observations by DRT, Dungog VIC staff, NPWS, Forestry Corporation, and tourism and business operators.

| Locality                      | Primary Markets   | Secondary and Minor Markets   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Paterson                      | Touring and through traffic – Gresford Road<br>Day trippers – including picnickers  | VFR<br>Short-breaks market: staying in accommodation in and around Paterson<br>Education and work-related visitors, generated by Tocal Agricultural College<br>Event attendees, including overflow from events at Tocal and in Maitland<br>Rail enthusiasts<br><br>Boating and fishing enthusiasts<br>Paddlers<br>VFR |
| Rural areas                   | Through and touring traffic<br>Day trippers – including picnickers<br>Short breaks markets: mainly couples and small groups of couples staying in rural and bush land retreats. | Family market: primarily school holidays and weekends, staying in private camping ground and at farm stay and rural and bushland properties<br>School groups (Wangat Lodge)<br>Creative arts and lifestyle workshop attendees<br>Paddlers   |
| Barrington Tops National Park | Day visitors – including picnickers<br>Bushwalkers / hikers   | Touring travellers<br>4WD and trail bike enthusiasts<br>Bird watchers   |
| Chichester State Forest       | Day visitors – including picnickers<br>Campers: including couples, families, social groups; 4WD enthusiasts (clubs and individuals), bushwalkers and motor cyclists.            | Mountain bikers / gravel grinders<br>Horse riders<br>Bird Watchers<br>Touring caravan and RV market   |

The Shire is seeing strong growth in:

- Short breaks and day trip markets, coming primarily out of the Lower Hunter and Central Coast.
- Mountain bikers with this stimulated primarily by the mountain bike park at Dungog Common and Ride Dungog initiatives.
- Touring caravan and RV markets – primarily retirees and semi-retirees, travelling outside of school holiday periods.
- Touring motorcycle market - both road and trail bikers. The road bikers are primarily travelling in a loop from Sydney to the New England-North West Region or North Coast via Dungog Shire and Gloucester. Trail bikers are primarily coming from the Hunter and Central Coast areas attracted by the unsealed roads and trails in the Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park.
- Camping market – families and social groups, looking for bushland and riverside camping sites, with the focus often being to ‘escape’, relax and reconnect both with others and with the natural environment.



## 8. MARKET TRENDS

Understanding, embracing and responding to changes in the marketplace is fundamental to driving growth in the visitor economy in Dungog Shire. The development of tourism products, activities and experiences needs to be based on an understanding of the changing expectations of consumers, while information delivery and marketing and promotion needs to respond to changes in the way that consumers are sourcing information at all stages of the 'path to purchase' and during the journey itself. Trends providing opportunities for Dungog Shire are discussed below.

### 8.1 Growth in Regional Travel

Pre the COVID-19 pandemic, Tourism Research Australia was predicting strong growth in both domestic and international visitation to regional areas. Over the 10 years to 2026-27, the number of domestic nights spent in Regional NSW was forecast to grow by 1.9% per annum, with Regional NSW attracting 71.9% of domestic visitor nights by 2026-27 (85.47 million nights). Over the same period, nights spent by international visitors to Regional NSW were forecast to grow by 5.4% per annum, with Regional NSW attracting 15% of all nights spent by international visitors in NSW (15.783 million nights in 2017-18 increasing to 24.232 million nights by 2026-27).

COVID-19 has severely disrupted domestic and international travel. Australia's international border is expected to remain closed in the short to medium term. Once borders open, the global recession is likely to continue to impact on international travel, particularly from long haul markets.

Domestically, travel in Australia will increase as State borders re-open and restrictions on gatherings are lifted. Already in NSW there has been an increase in travel to rural and coastal destinations with travellers seeking to be outdoors after the lockdown restrictions. Avoidance of crowds, higher unemployment and reduced household incomes is resulting in people looking for lower cost options, such as camping. On the plus side, the COVID-19 lockdown has encouraged people to exercise and 'rediscover' the outdoors, with people taking up cycling, bushwalking and other activities. Tourism Research Australia<sup>11</sup> is forecasting that in the short term, regional destinations close to major populations will see a surge in visitation, however as State borders re-open and flights return, domestic travellers are likely to travel interstate and more remote destinations, spending money that they would have spent on overseas travel.

With the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in NSW, Dungog Shire is seeing a surge in visitation from NSW residents, particularly from the Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Greater Sydney regions. The Shire has the characteristics and assets that travellers are looking for – it is close to major population centres; has a stunning rural and bushland setting; fresh air; is uncrowded; provides opportunities for low cost short breaks and holidays (eg camping); and offers a range of outdoor activities with Dungog also having a vibrant arts, boutique shopping and café scene. As State borders re-open, the ramping-up of flights into Newcastle Airport will provide opportunities for Dungog Shire to attract interstate visitors.



*Camping at Ferndale*

<sup>11</sup> Tourism Research Australia (2020) Moving Forward: The Role of Domestic Travel in Australia's Tourism Recovery

## 8.2 Strong Growth in the Caravan and RV Markets

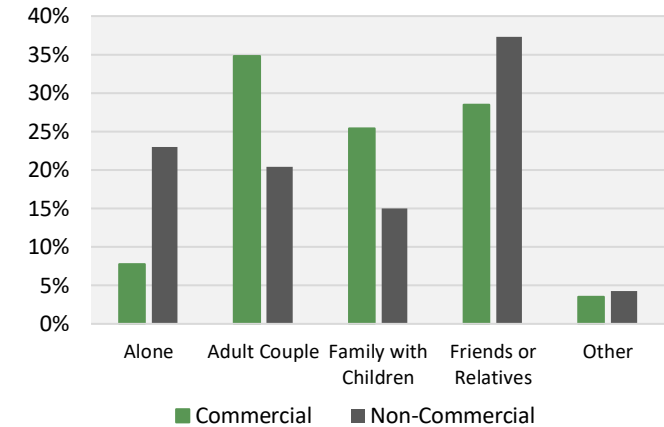
The caravan and RV markets have been growing strongly, with growth forecast to continue. From 2018 to 2019, the number of people aged 55+ years holidaying in a caravan increased by 11.4%, while those aged 30-54 years increased by 2.2%. Most touring van travellers aged 55+ years do not have 'fixed' itineraries. As such these travellers are relatively flexible in where they travel and how long they stay. Factors that are important to this market and influence travel patterns include:

- Word-of-mouth referrals from other travellers.
- The 'RV Friendly' status of a town / locality and localities listed on caravan and camping websites (eg Wiki Camps).
- Access to free or low-cost camping areas in scenically attractive areas, with bush settings and river foreshores being favoured locations.
- The attraction base of an area and the events being held – with caravaners often looking for self-drive itineraries, soft adventure-based activities, walks available, unusual landforms, national parks and forests, access to rivers and lakes, seasonal food events and local produce and artisan markets.
- Rallies, meetings and events held by the caravan / motor home clubs and associations, with travellers slowly making their way to and from these activities.
- Road conditions and the volume of truck traffic. The increase in caravan and camper trailers designed for unsealed roads / off road is resulting in more travellers on unsealed roads and venturing into National Parks and State Forests.
- Safety - there is a fear and avoidance of areas that have a reputation for crime.
- Caravan park configuration and services – with a strong preference for drive-through sites and access to Wi-Fi.
- Need to access facilities such as a dump point, laundry, power to recharge batteries etc (every few days).

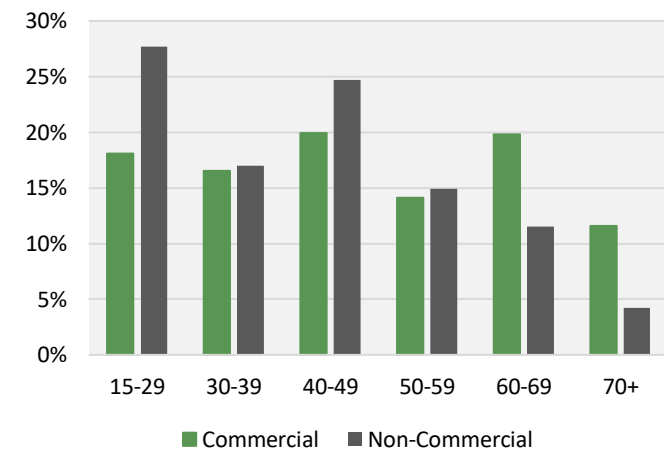
Research undertaken by DNSW in 2017, found that 58% of caravaners and RVs stayed in commercial caravan parks and 42% in non-commercial locations. Non-commercial sites include free camping, campgrounds in National Parks, State Forests and SCAs, camping on private property and other locations such as sporting venues and showgrounds. This tallies with information provided by the CMCA who estimates that 34% of caravaners / RVs always stay in commercial caravan parks, 16% always free camp and 50% use a mix of commercial parks and other sites. Different travel parties and age groups had different propensities to stay at commercial and non-commercial sites.

Dungog Shire has always been a popular destination for campers, particularly families and younger social groups with an increasing number of these campers arriving in 4WD vehicles with camper trailers. In recent years, Dungog Shire has started to attract the 55+ years caravan and RV markets. While some travellers with 4WD vehicles and vans are camping in the Chichester State Forest and at commercial camping grounds, this market is showing a preference for town sites, with the Williams River Holiday Park, Gresford Showground and Camp on Allyn being popular. This market is looking for sites in Dungog, with this need likely to be partly met by the development of additional sites at Dungog Showground. Consideration also needs to be given to re-opening the powered sites at the Dungog Bowling Club. To the south, the Maitland City DMP has identified the need for caravan and camping sites

**Figure 8.1 Travel Party Mix: Proportion of Visitors staying in Commercial Parks and Non-Commercial Areas**



**Figure 8.2 Age Structure (Years): Proportion of Visitors Staying in Commercial Parks and Non-Commercial Areas**



Source: Destination NSW Domestic Caravan and Camping Travel to NSW, YE Dec 2017



to meet the growing demand from touring travellers. This demand can be partly met by the proposed use of part of the Paterson Sportsground for caravans and camping. Paterson Sportsground is also ideally located to attract visitors attending events at Tocal Agricultural College and in Maitland and Dungog LGAs.

Improving caravan and camping facilities will also provide the opportunity to work with campervan hire companies that are expected to establish at Newcastle Airport.

### 8.3 Growth in Nature-based<sup>12</sup> Travel

Pre-COVID 19 NSW was experiencing very strong growth in the number of domestic overnight visitors and day trippers who travelled to undertake nature-based (nature, outdoors, adventure) activities. From YE December 2014 to 2019, the number of domestic overnight and day visitors undertaking nature-based activities increased by 58.2% and 59.3% respectively.<sup>13</sup> From 2018 to 2019 the number of overnight visitors undertaking a nature-based holiday increased by 14.6% with the number of day trippers increasing by 25.4%. COVID-19 appears to have further stimulated interest in nature-based tourism, with people looking to spend time in natural environments to escape the pressures of day-to-day life, rejuvenate and reconnect. Nature-based travellers are often looking to challenge themselves through physical activities and/or by learning new skills.

World-wide there has been very strong growth in the number of women travellers pursuing outdoor and adventure-based activities, with a significant proportion of women travelling solo. Women have a higher propensity than men to join guided or structured tours, particularly for hiking, cycling, mountain-biking and paddling activities.

### 8.4 Emergence of the Accessible / Inclusive Tourism Market

Accessible tourism is broadly defined as the ongoing endeavour to ensure tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. The introduction of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014) and the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan (2015) seeks to ensure that people with a disability have the right to full and effective participation in society. The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), has provided scheme participants with greater opportunity for travel and participation in activities, with the scheme funding travel and recreation for both the person with the disability and their carer/s.

Research undertaken by Destination NSW<sup>14</sup> has found that 18% of the population of NSW (1.4 million people) have some form of disability. In the March Quarter, 2017, people with disabilities made 1.2 million overnight visits in NSW, generating 4.6 million visitor nights. Sydney was the most popular destination (32% of trips), followed by followed by the North Coast (16% of trips) and the South Coast (14.5% of trips).

Dungog Shire currently has limited accessible tourism products and experiences. Several of the camping grounds and picnic areas within the Shire have accessible facilities and a small section of the Blue Gum loop in the Barrington Tops National Park is wheelchair accessible. Forestry Corporation is looking to establish an accessible rainforest walk in the Chichester State Forest. Trails suitable for hand cycling (adaptive mountain-biking) are also mooted for the Dungog Common. The Williams River at Clarence Town may be suitable for disabled

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<sup>12</sup> DNSW defines nature-based travel as travel for the purposes of undertaking outdoor or nature-based activities, including bushwalking, going to the beach, cycling, adventure sports and activities, golf, birdwatching and wildlife viewing.

<sup>13</sup> Statistics in this paragraph taken from DNSW Nature Based Tourism in NSW YE December 2019

<sup>14</sup> Destination NSW Domestic Overnight Visitation to NSW by People with Disabilities

water-skiing and/or canoeing as well as jetty access for fishing. With product development, Dungog Shire could target the travellers looking for accessible outdoor and adventure-based activities.

## 8.5 Changing Traveller Expectations

Over the past decade there has been a paradigm shift in the expectations of travellers, with travellers increasingly looking to:

- Experience something different from everyday life.
- Understand and learn about different lifestyles and cultures.
- Hear the stories.
- Through participation, experience the lifestyle rather than just observe it.
- Meet and interact socially with locals and other travellers – making friends and developing personal relationships.
- Challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and/or mentally.
- Be outdoors and active, with a focus on natural settings (eg National Parks).
- Visit 'authentic' destinations.
- Have unique and personally compelling experiences.

In addition to the above expectations, different market segments also have additional motivators and drivers.

### Baby Boomers – over 55's

The baby boomer market is at, or approaching, retirement age. This market has a strong sense of freedom and a desire to travel. Baby boomers are generally healthy and active and are seeking new places, different lifestyles, soft-adventure and new experiences. The most appealing experiences are nature and outdoors based (56%); touring by car – sightseeing (51%); relaxation, health and indulgence (43%); and food and wine (35%). This market is knowledgeable, sophisticated and demanding, and generally prepared to spend to achieve what they want. They are more interested in value-for-money than in the lowest price. They expect quality customer service and are intolerant of poor service. They are also technologically capable and use on-line sources to research, plan and book travel. Trends in this market include:

- Increasing demand for soft adventure and recreational activities – seeking a variety of activities and experiences on each trip.
- Growth in the number of 'learning' visitors – wanting to come away with new knowledge and/or skills.
- Recognition that the journey is part of the experience.
- 'Slow movement' – travel slowly and immersion in the locale.
- A desire to feel like a local – to be welcomed by locals and treated like a visiting friend rather than a tourist.
- The freedom to interact - the ability to strike up a conversation and make themselves at home.

Baby boomers are a significant day trip market for Dungog Shire. The Shire is also attracting older activity-based groups such as bush-walkers, bird watchers and touring motorcyclists.



*Workshop at Hive and Gobbler, Dungog*

## Gen X

Generation X refers to people born between 1965 and 1979 and now aged 40 to 55 years. This generation has grown up in a period of relative prosperity, with technology and access to information. Generation X is starting to reach the height of their careers and moving into the wealth accumulation stage. X'ers have embraced inner city and higher density living, tending to prefer lifestyle locations within the city, the areas with the restaurant precincts and trendy shops. They are also a market for 'sea change' and 'tree change' lifestyle locations. Work-life balance is important with Gen X is far more health conscious than previous generations. Going to the gym, team sports or individual physical activity (jogging, cycling, swimming) is generally part of the weekly routine.

Socially, Xers tend to have a large circle of acquaintances. They enjoy getting together and dining out. It is a generation that goes away together as informal social groups, for short breaks and long weekends. 'Activity-based' (eg mountain biking), 'pampering / luxury' and 'stress release / escape' breaks are popular with this generation. Most travel is researched and purchased on the internet. This is a generation that will patronise resorts (with kids clubs), health spas and boutique accommodation. Upmarket cabins with stunning views are also very popular. There has been a significant increase in Gen X family camping trips, however the camping is generally 4-5 star with camper trailers and quality equipment.

## Family Market

The family market straddles Gen X and Gen Y. For this market, domestic travel fulfils a key role in busy lives by offering a chance for families to reconnect, recharge and have a break from normal routine. A domestic holiday is an opportunity for families to relax and to open lines of communication between adults and children without time pressures. The emphasis is on destinations that offer a range of activities that are enjoyable for every member of the family. Families have a high propensity to undertake outdoor and nature-based activities (52%) and to participate in sports and active outdoor activities (29%) and visit local attractions (27%).

Touring holidays offers opportunities for families to have a 'safe adventure' and to reconnect and bond as a family. Many of the experiences sought are 'aspirational' – escaping the city, camping by a river, camp-fires under the stars, exploring the National Parks, exploring the unsealed roads and trails; getting back to nature and a simpler lifestyle; and doing 'fun' things together. 'Digital detox', opportunities for the children to 'learn' and nostalgia (wanting their children to experience the holidays they experienced as a child) are also motivators.

## Youth Market – Gen Y and Z <sup>15</sup>

The youth market (defined as travellers aged 15-29 years) is the fastest growing visitor market. The youth market accounts for 33% (1.3 million visitors) of international visitors to NSW, with the market divided into travel for education, working holidays and holiday – leisure which includes VFR. The main source markets are Mainland China, United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand and Germany.

Domestically, the youth market takes around 6.5 million trips per annum in NSW. The most visited destinations are Sydney, the NSW North Coast and the NSW South Coast. In selecting destinations, the youth market seeks out experiences, particularly those that are unique, immersive, challenging and/or contribute to personal knowledge and development. They have an appetite for risk and a strong interest in environmentally sustainability. The youth market is sophisticated and reasonably wealthy, with value-for-money more important than price. Young people primarily take inspiration from word-of-mouth recommendations (67%), social media postings by friends and family (60%), and user generated content (45%).

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<sup>15</sup> Information in this section taken from the Destination NSW Webinar on the Youth Market and from TNS Domestic 2016.

## Implications for Dungog Shire

- Dungog Shire will continue to see an increase in the touring markets, with the majority of travellers likely to be in caravans, RVs, or 4WD with camper trailers. Baby boomers will generally have the flexibility to spend multiple nights in the Shire, with the decision likely to be made once they arrive. The VIC can play a pivotal role in the decision process. In contrast, the family and youth markets typically have time constraints, and will have largely planned their trip before leaving home. Information (particularly images and video clips) available on-line will significantly influence decision-making.
- Product development needs to focus on activities and experiences that provide the opportunity for travellers to be outdoors, active, learn and 'connect'. Dungog Shire is extremely strong in outdoor, soft adventure and nature-based assets and experiences, providing a range of opportunities for visitors to be active, 'connect' with nature and challenge themselves. The Shire also has a range of assets (eg pubs, galleries, cafes, Dungog Common) and events (eg weekly markets) that can be leveraged to 'educate' travellers and enable them to 'connect' with locals.
- Marketing and promotion needs to focus on the 'aspirational' reflecting what travellers are seeking from their rural / bush experience – the adventure, scenery, camping by the river or in a national park, campfire under the stars, bushwalking, cycling, boutique and lifestyle shopping.



## 8.6 Changing Technology

New technology is changing the tourism industry. Digital technology provides significant opportunity for information delivery, communication, marketing and promotion, and for enhancing the visitor experience. It also enables growth in the 'shared economy' and provides opportunities for new activities and businesses. Changing technology requires an investment in infrastructure and training. Opportunities include:

- Information delivery, marketing and promotion: Digital technology has and is continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book and pay for travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points including:
  - Tourism, travel and product websites and travel directories– information and bookings.
  - Google Maps and Google Earth – maps, satellite images, photographic images, routes, directions, distances and travelling times.
  - Social networking sites including Facebook, WhatsApp, Bebo, Twitter etc.
  - Trip Itinerary planning apps.
  - Pod casts and applications (eg sound trails, geo-caching).
  - User generated content (eg blogs, You Tube, Instagram) both on websites and through the social networking sites.
  - Travel specific networking sites – such as Trip Advisor, Google Review, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet Thorn Tree. These sites not only advertise destinations, accommodation, attractions, tours, events etc, they also provide forums where travellers can discuss their experiences – providing a digital word-of-mouth referral system

Allied to this is the ability to capture and process data which can be used for personalised, direct marketing of tailored experiences and the application of artificial intelligence – including use of website chatbots and biometrics; and to capture the sale and value-add with real-time bookings and seamless connectivity between products.

- Story telling: The use of virtual and augmented reality to promote destinations visually and through 'story-telling'; enabling 'virtual' access to remote and/or highly sensitive areas; and enhancing visitor experiences by adding additional 'layers' of information.
- The rise in the share economy: Providing options for home sharing (eg Airbnb, Couch Surfing), farm camping (eg Hipcamp, Under the Stars), ride sourcing (eg Uber, Go Get), tours (eg Airbnb tours by locals) and more recently dining options (dine with a local).
- Changes in building materials and technologies: Resulting in different types of (eg bubble tents, tiny houses) and the ability to go 'off grid' which is enabling accommodation to be located in remote and/or environmentally sensitive locations and relocated quickly (eg during flooding, bushfires) if needed.
- Introduction of electric cars: Creating the need for charging stations. Over the next decade, the number of electric vehicles in Australia is forecast to grow at 28% per annum and reach 20% of new car sales by 2030<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> ENERGEIA (2018) Australian Electric Vehicle Study

# DESTINATION AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



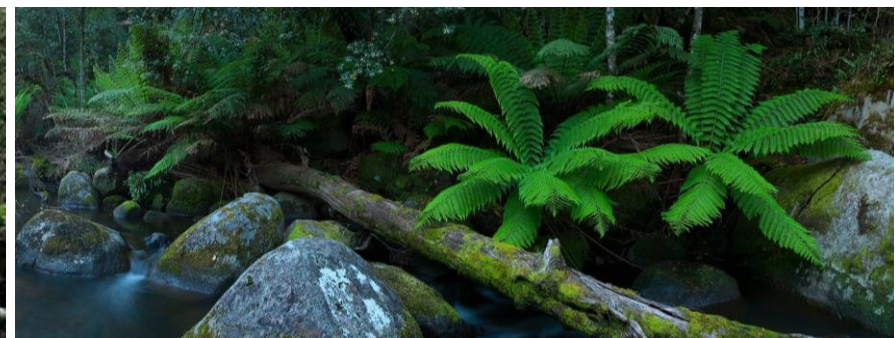
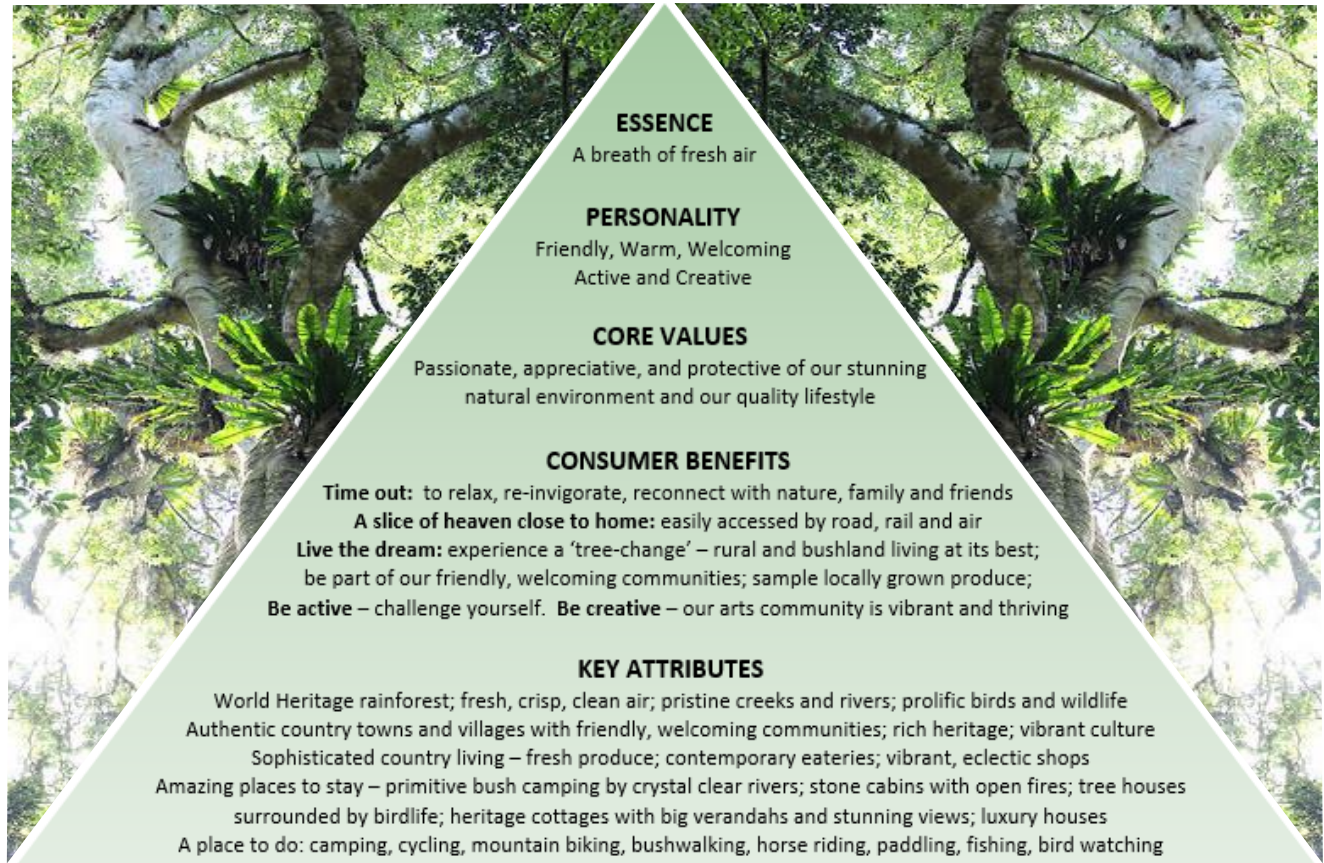
## 9. DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

### 9.1 Positioning

Dungog Shire's strengths lie in its stunning natural environment, picturesque setting, and contemporary country lifestyle. The Shire is being marketed by DRT under the banner of 'A breath of fresh air'. The marketing features the Shire's spectacular landscapes and focuses on the breath-taking national parks and state forests, great country drives and the heritage towns and villages.

The Shire's offers visitors the opportunity to take 'time out' - to escape, relax and reconnect - to get back to basics, in a spectacular setting. Visitors are invited to:

- Experience the Shire's World Heritage listed rainforest, pristine creeks and rivers, and fresh, crisp, clean air.
- Stay in amazing places.
- Be active; be creative; challenge themselves.
- Experience a tree-change: sophisticated country living at its best.



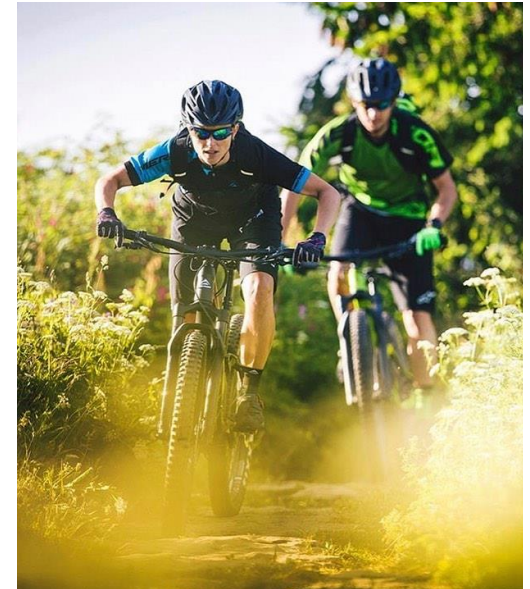
## 9.2 Development Framework

Development of the visitor economy in Dungog Shire needs to:

- Be consistent with Council's and the community's vision for the Shire.
- Deliver on the Shire's brand values and its promise and invitation to visitors.
- Maintain and protect the Shire's key assets – its scenic and rural character, national parks, state forests, waterways, heritage and lifestyle.
- Focus on activities that are compatible and sustainable and offer opportunities for value-adding and packaging.
- Take into consideration the changes that are occurring in the marketplace.

The priorities are:

- **To enhance and strengthen key attractions, activities and experiences**
  - Place-making: Continuing to improve the presentation of and facilities offered by the Shire's towns and villages, consolidating them as attractions in their own right and encouraging visitors to stop, explore and spend.
  - Cycle Tourism: Continuing to grow cycle tourism, leveraging the work undertaken by Ride Dungog and the Dungog Common Reserve Trust and focusing on putting in-place infrastructure to support this sector and facilitate growth, additional product development and targeted marketing and promotion.
  - Outdoor and Nature-based Tourism: Leveraging opportunities to enhance and grow outdoor and nature-based products and experiences – focusing on bushwalking, paddling and horse riding. This will be dependent in part on Improving access to and facilities and infrastructure within the National Parks, State Forests and Crown Reserves and along the Shire's rivers.
  - Arts based / cultural tourism: Supporting the Shire's arts and cultural organisations, artists and artisans, and venues to develop and promote a range of creative activities, businesses and events.
  - Events: Continue to build the events sector – growing local events and attracting events to the Shire.
- **To leverage emerging markets**
  - Touring caravan and RV market
  - Touring motorcycle market
  - Agri-tourism
  - Accessible tourism
- **To ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to enable and support growth in the visitor economy are in place.**





## 10. PLACE MAKING: ENHANCING THE SHIRE'S TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The towns and villages in Dungog Shire provide a range of visitor facilities and services and are part of the Shire's attraction base. Enhancing presentation and improving facilities will increase the likelihood that visitors will stop, explore and spend. From a visitor perspective, the key areas that make an impression are the gateway entry points, routes through the area, appearance and presentation of the town and village centres, and the parks and gardens. The presentation of businesses, particularly in the smaller centres, is also critical with businesses that present as clean and vibrant more likely to attract patronage than those that appear dated, tired and/or run down. Presentation is also an attribute for people who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with tourism being a driver of the 'tree change' process.

Encouraging visitors to stop, explore and spend can be achieved by:

- Creating strong and favourable first impressions: through quality presentation of the gateway entry points and corridors, town centres and parks and gardens.
- Improving gateway, directional and facility signage.
- Creating points of interest: through art, landscaping, colour, footpath activation etc.
- Businesses presenting well and providing quality customer service: meeting the desire by visitors to interact with locals and encouraging positive on-line reviews and word-of-mouth referrals as well as repeat visitation.
- Continuing to link the Dungog and the villages by touring routes and scenic drives (eg DRT Great Country Drives promotion).

### 10.1 Dungog

Dungog is the Shire's main service centre and one of its most popular destinations. The town is the main gateway to the southern end of the Barrington Ranges and is the primary access point for Williams River area of the Barrington Tops National Park and the Telegerry precinct of the Chichester State Forest. Situated on the Williams River and surrounded by hills, Dungog is one of the most picturesque towns in the Hunter Region. In addition to mainstream shops and services, Dungog's historic 'high street' has a collection of vibrant and eclectic lifestyle shops, boutiques, galleries and eateries. The town has a strong creative community with this reflected in the galleries and lifestyle businesses. The development of the Dungog Common Mountain Bike Park has significantly raised the profile of the town, attracting high yield visitors and stimulating business investment. The town is also seeing an increase in the day trip and short breaks markets (arriving by both car and train) as well as the touring caravan, RV and motorcycle markets. Working with the Dungog Chamber of Commerce, Council is implementing a place-making strategy aimed at improving the presentation and amenity of the town centre and stimulating investment.

#### Issues and Challenges

From a tourism perspective, the main issues and challenges are:

- Competition with Gloucester, with Gloucester having the profile as the gateway to the Barrington Tops National Park.
- The rapid growth in mountain biking and cycle tourism has taken the town by surprise, with infrastructure not in place to maximise the benefits from these activities (Chapter 11).
- Lack of connectivity between key precincts – the town centre, Dungog Common, the Showground and Frank Robinson Park (river access point).
- Accommodation capacity constraints, particularly motel rooms, self-contained accommodation and caravan and camping sites.
- Poor signage – the gateway entry signs are faded and directional and facility signs are limited. There is no directional signage to Dungog Common.

- VIC is dated and not effectively promoting the town or Shire.
- Dated presentation of Lioness Park and the toilet and picnic facilities within the Park. While the visitor directory provides good information it is on the wrong side of the road for travellers arriving from the south and there is no designated pull-off area on the northern side of Clarence Town Road for vehicles (particularly those towing caravans) to pull off safely. Caravanners would be reluctant to turn into Reservoir Road. There is also a need to update the visitor directory to including mountain biking and to erect advanced warning signs on Clarence Town Road with icons showing the facilities available in the Park ('i' sign, toilet, picnic facilities, lookout).
- Limited access to the Williams River with most of the river corridor being private property.
- Poor quality of the public toilets in the town centre.

## Directions Forward

To strengthen and consolidate Dungog's position as:

- A small, vibrant, country town with a rich heritage and a strong creative, community.
- The gateway to the southern end of the Barrington Range – focusing on the warm temperate rainforest and pristine rivers.
- A centre for mountain biking and a hub for road cycling and gravel grinding (see Chapter 11).

## Product and Infrastructure Development Opportunities and Priorities

- To put in place the infrastructure needed to support and leverage mountain biking and cycle tourism (see Chapter 11). As part of this partner with the arts community to create bicycle themed art installations, bicycle racks, visitor infrastructure and directional and other signage. Key locations for installations include the town gateways, town centre, entry / arrival points at Dungog Common and at Dungog Railway Station (see following images for examples).
- Create a strong entry statement at Lioness Park that reinforces the town's positioning and key attractions – for example, the hillside could be used for the installations relating to mountain biking, bushwalking and possibly horse riding.
- Continue to develop the Dungog Common for mountain-biking, horse riding and bushwalking. Creative initiatives mooted by the local community, such as the painting of the pipeline and installation of sculptures, should be considered. With the growth in mountain biking, consideration should also be given to providing a safe parking area and entry for horses with the saleyards precinct being a potential site (see Section 12.4).
- Link the key visitor precincts – town centre and railway station, Common, Showground and Frank Robinson Reserve - preferably by shared walking – cycleways.
- Incorporate art installations into the town centre and key visitor precincts.
- Update the gateway, directional and facility signage on the approaches to and throughout the town.
- Increase the supply of accommodation (see Section 16.1).
- Continue to improve the Showground precinct and improve the marketing of the venue.
- Providing facilities and infrastructure to cater for the growing touring caravan and RV market (see Section 15.1).
- Improving information services including updating the Dungog Visitor Information Centre (see Section 16.3).
- Providing new public toilets within the town centre.



## Examples of Bicycle Art Installations



## 10.2 Clarence Town

Clarence Town is a historic river town and is one of the gateways to Dungog Shire. Its key attractions are the Williams River and the Williams River Holiday Park – Bridge Reserve - Lions Park precinct, with the town popular for riverside camping, boating, fishing, paddling and water skiing. Bridge Reserve is one of the most attractive riverside camping areas readily accessible to the Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney regions. Local attractions include the historic Brig O'Johnston Bridge, Erringhi Hotel and School of Arts building, the Village Green constructed wetlands and Wharf Reserve. The Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks and the Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests are located close to the town.

### Issues and Challenges

- Travellers on the Clarence Town Road are not aware of what the town has to offer. The road skirts the town with the Queen Street – Rifle Street section not being particularly attractive. The signage along the road corridor is limited to the town centre sign on the corner of Prince Street and the Stroud directional sign and caravan-camping icons on the corner of Duke Street, with no signage promoting the River, the historic sites or the facilities available (directional icons for eateries, picnic facilities, public toilets, information board etc).
- The Williams River Holiday Park is tired and dated with the riverside camping area non-compliant. This is being addressed by Council.
- Directional and facility signage within the town is poor.
- Availability of visitor information within the town is limited. The visitor directory outside the School of Arts is not signposted and in poor condition and does not promote either Clarence Town or the Shire effectively.
- Wharf Reserve is poorly presented with dated amenities and no orientation or directional signage within the Reserve to the boat ramp or to the town centre (just dirt tracks disappearing into the bush). The Reserve is within easy walking distance of the town centre – an opportunity that needs to be leveraged.
- Access to the river via the Village Green and constructed wetlands is not signposted and there is no riverbank infrastructure (jetty, pontoon).
- The surrounding National Parks and State Forests are under-utilised and have not been 'claimed' nor promoted as part of the attraction and activity base of the town.
- Visitors staying in Clarence Town tend to look to Stroud and Gloucester for day trips, rather than to Dungog and other localities within the Shire.
- Visitation is highly seasonal, with the Williams River Holiday Park being at or close to capacity on long weekends, at Easter and in summer school holidays.
- Limited non-camping accommodation.
- Lack of a fuel outlet in town.



## Directions Forward

- Strengthen and consolidate Clarence Town’s position as a river town and anchor attraction for paddling (and possibly fishing) through both product development, events and marketing and promotion.
- Leverage the surrounding National Parks and State Forests for outdoor and adventure-based activities – focusing on mountain biking, responsible 4WD and horse riding, to build shoulder and off-season visitation.

## Product Development Opportunities

- Position Clarence Town as the anchor attraction for paddling in the Shire and link this with other paddling experiences (see Section 12.3).
- Work with Ride Dungog, NPWS and State Forests to identify, develop and promote cycling and mountain biking opportunities in the Clarence Town area – potentially developing a ‘Ride Clarence Town’ website / webpage.
- Explore options to increase the use of the surrounding State Forests and National Parks for outdoor activities – bushwalking, bird watching, responsible 4WD and horse riding.
- Upgrade the Wharf Reserve – Village Green Precinct – improving visitor facilities and signage and strengthening the link between the town centre and the River.
- Continue to upgrade the Williams River Holiday Park and potentially using Wharf Reserve for overflow camping during peak times, with this managed by the Holiday Park.
- Explore options for additional caravan and camping sites and/or cabins in Clarence Town (possibly adjacent to the Bowling Club) and for temporary camp sites for events and to accommodate overflow during peak times.
- Grow the events sector, including growing the Hoedown and the Military Swim and organising / attraction new events.

## Infrastructure Priorities

- Improve the gateway arrival points – signage and landscaping, with the signage promoting the Williams River and including icons for the facilities and services available in the town.
- Improve attraction, directional and facility signage along the main access roads and within the village, including signposting the National Parks and State Forests from both the access roads and town centre.
- Install comprehensive information directories in the Bridge Reserve – Lions Park Precinct and within the village centre, with the directory including information on both Clarence Town and the remainder of the Shire.
- Define / improve pedestrian and cycle links between the town centre and Bridge Reserve to encourage visitors to walk and cycle into the town centre.



## 10.3 Gresford – East Gresford

Situated at the intersection of Glendonbrook, Bingleburra, Gresford and Allyn River Roads, Gresford – East Gresford is the closest centre to the Upper Allyn and Upper Paterson River valleys and the ‘gateway’ to Lostock Dam, the Allyn River section of the Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park. Glendonbrook – Bingleburra Road is a part of a popular motorcycle touring route between Sydney and the New England Region via Singleton, Gresford, Dungog and Gloucester. The town is bordered by the Allyn River to the east and the Paterson River to the west. Services include a small supermarket, corner store, butcher, hotel, licensed club, post office and fuel outlet. Attractions and assets include the Gresford Recreation Reserve and Showground, the suspension bridge, the historic Beatty Hotel and historic churches. The village hosts several popular events including the Billy Kart Derby and several of the homesteads in the area are featured in the Paterson Allyn Garden Ramble event. Riverside camping and caravan sites are available at the Showground and at Camp on Allyn on the edge of town, with a safari tent at Boydell’s vineyard. Camry Allyn homestead offers accommodation for small corporate groups and lifestyle and creative workshops.

### Issues and Challenges

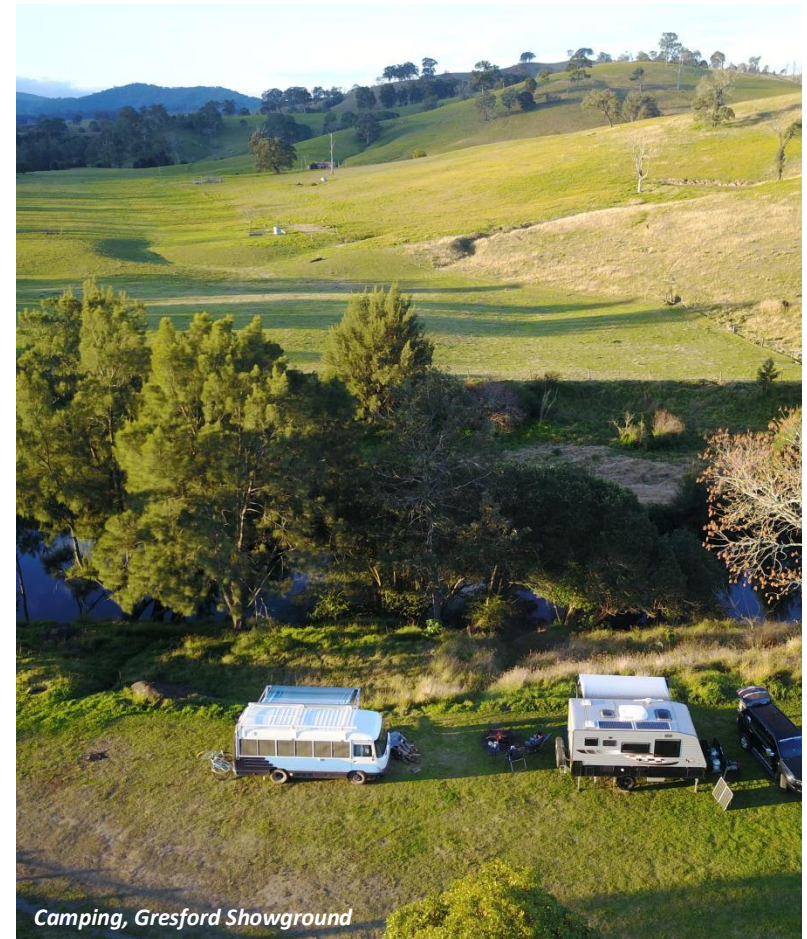
- River access points are not well-presented or sign posted, with the river banks being weed infested.
- The visitor information board is tired and does not effectively promote Gresford or the Shire.
- Fuel is often not available outside of standard business hours.

### Directions Forward

- Position Gresford – East Gresford as a destination for the touring caravan and RV markets, encouraging travellers to stay at the Showground and Camp on Allyn, and use the town as a base to explore the upper Allyn and Paterson River valleys.
- Promote Gresford as an ideal location for the family camping market – featuring the access to the river and the proximity to the upper river valleys.
- Grow existing events and market and promote the East Gresford Showground as an event venue.
- Explore the potential for developing horse riding trails within the area surrounding the Showground.
- Explore the potential for targeting small weddings, leveraging the historic churches in Gresford and at Allynbrook, upmarket accommodation, and local venues within the area including Tocal Homestead.
- Assess whether there is potential to promote ‘driving the suspension bridge’ as one of the ‘must do’ quirky attractions in the Shire – linking it with Boot Hill.

### Infrastructure Priorities

- To improve the presentation of and sign post the river access points, with the priority being the riverbank adjacent to the Gresford Reserve camping area.
- Updating / replacing the information directory in the Park to more effectively promote Gresford, the upper river valleys and the remainder of the Shire.
- Explore the need for a dump point at Gresford Showground.



## 10.4 Vacy

Vacy is located at the confluence of the Paterson and Allyn Rivers. The key assets are Memorial Park which is well used by passing travellers, the Farmers Hotel, General Store (also a café, takeaway and fuel outlet), the Vacy Motel and Flying Duck Restaurant. Vacy is a popular dining destination for day trippers from the surrounding region.

### Direction Forward

- Assess the possibility of providing access to the Paterson and/or Allyn Rivers for picnicking, day use and paddling.
- Update the information directory in Memorial Park.
- Explore with Ride Dungog the possibility of incorporating the local roads surrounding Vacy as part of the 'Local Rides' routes promoted on the Ride Dungog website.

## 10.5 Paterson

Paterson is one of the oldest towns in the Hunter Valley and a significant gateway to Dungog Shire. Located on the Paterson River, the town a popular day trip destination, with the main attractions being the historic Paterson Tavern, John Tucker Park riverside picnic area and the nearby Tocal Homestead. Other attractions and assets included the Rail Motor Museum, Kings Wharf Reserve, the Court House Museum, Court House Hotel, CBC Bed and Breakfast, historic town walk supported by an App, and the golf course. Paterson is accessible by rail. A boat ramp providing access to the Paterson is located near Tocal, with the river being navigable for small boats between Paterson and the confluence with the Hunter River just north of Morpeth. A camping area is being established at the Paterson Sportsground. The camping area will be well located to attract the touring caravan and camper van market looking to explore Maitland City and surrounding areas and people attending events at Tocal and in Maitland LGA and other localities in Dungog Shire.

### Issues and Challenges

- Difficulty in accessing the Paterson River with the riverbank adjacent to John Tucker Park and Kings Wharf Reserve being steep and weed infested. There are informal tracks from the picnic area at Kings Wharf down to the river, however these are steep and slippery.
- Limited accommodation. While the development of the camping area at the Sportsground will provide facilities for campers, caravans and RVs, there is a need for more motel / hotel style rooms and/or self-contained cabins.
- Improving access to visitor information for visitors arriving in Paterson by both road and rail.
- Building a relationship with the Maitland City Council Tourism Unit - with visitation to Paterson dependent in part on visitation to Maitland City.

### Directions Forward / Product Development Opportunities

- Position and promote Paterson as a day trip destination for regional residents, linking the town to other historic villages (eg Morpeth) and sites (eg Walka Water Works) in the surrounding area. This should include working with Maitland and Port Stephens Tourism Units to develop and promote drives originating from Raymond Terrace and Maitland / East Maitland that link Morpeth, Hinton, Paterson and Tocal Homestead.
- Leverage the rail access to encourage regional residents and walking groups (eg Probus Clubs) to visit Paterson by train.

- Liaise with Maitland City Council regarding the proposed camping area at Paterson Sportsground. The Maitland City DMP identifies the need for caravan, RV and camping facilities to service Maitland LGA and recommends exploring options to provide overnight parking areas for RV vehicles at Walka Water Works and/or Queens Wharf at Morpeth. The proposed Paterson camping area could readily service Maitland LGA, particularly for caravanners and visitors looking to stay in the area for more than one night.
- Leverage the proposal by Maitland LGA to construct a beach and canoe – kayak launching area at Queens Wharf Reserve at Morpeth and run paddling tours between Morpeth and Maitland, to grow paddling on the Paterson River between Paterson and Morpeth.
- Explore with the new owners of the Court House Hotel, opportunities to develop additional accommodation.
- Encourage the Paterson and Dungog Golf Clubs to work together to grow the social golf market – stay and play packages.
- Explore the feasibility of establishing an interpretative board walk through the Pumby Brush remnant rainforest at Tocal College.

### Infrastructure Priorities

- Improved access to the river at John Tucker Park and Kings Wharf including a small pontoon or jetty as well as facilities for launching and retrieving canoes. River access points also need to be well sign posted.
- The establishment of the camping ground at Paterson Sportsground, with this linked to the town centre with a shared walking – cycleway.
- Comprehensive visitor information directories at strategic locations throughout the village, including a directory at Paterson Railway Station and the proposed camping area.





## 11. CYCLE TOURISM

Dungog Shire is rapidly emerging as a destination for cycle tourism. The work that has been undertaken by Ride Dungog and the Dungog Common Reserve Trust, with support from DRT, local residents and businesses, has been a game-changer for the Shire, providing a very strong foundation for growth. Going forward the Shire needs to focus needs on putting in-place infrastructure to support this sector and facilitate growth, additional product development and targeted marketing and promotion.

### 11.1 Overview

Cycle tourism is a strong and high growth, high yield niche market. In 2019 it was the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular participation sport in Australia and also one of the fastest growing sports<sup>17</sup>. Broadly this market incorporates:

- Cycling enthusiasts who are motivated to travel to destinations primarily or solely because of the routes, trails and the riding experiences available. This is currently the primary market for Dungog Shire.
- Event attendees – cyclists who travel to participate in or watch community and competitive cycling events.
- Cycling tours – independent, supported, and escorted.
- Recreational cyclists – visitors who will ride while visiting a destination, with cycling not the primary reason for their visit.

Research into cycle tourism has identified a diverse range of benefits for the host destination, including:

- Cycling enthusiasts have a higher propensity to travel to regional areas and generally stay longer.
- Cyclists have a higher level of repeat visitation and change the way they 'experience' the location – they may visit the area initially to attend an event, returning as part of a club organised ride, visit as part of an informal social group and/or visit with their families.
- Cyclists are a high yield market, spending across a range of sectors.
- Cyclists tend to travel frequently – day trips, short breaks and extended holidays.
- Cycle tourism creates opportunities for business investment: accommodation, eateries, bike hire, bike sales and maintenance, transfers, tours etc.
- Cyclists are an easy and cost-effective market to target.

Cycling can be broadly divided into road cycling (sealed road), gravel grinding (also called adventure riding incorporating a mix of sealed and gravel roads, fire trails and MTB tracks) and mountain biking. Gravel grinding is relatively new, and currently the fastest growing cycling sector.



<sup>17</sup> SportAus (2019) AusPlay Participation Survey Top 20 participation sports and physical activities – Australia 2019

Cycle tourism in Dungog Shire is being driven by Ride Dungog, an incorporated association of cycling enthusiasts, who are looking to establish the Dungog Region as a world-class biking destination. Ride Dungog, working with the Dungog Common Reserve Trust, has developed an extensive network of mountain bike trails, a flow track and pump track at Dungog Common. Ride Dungog has also identified and mapped a network of road cycling and gravel grinding routes in Dungog Shire and the surrounding region, actively promotes cycling in the Shire and organises rides, events and activities. Over the past 12 months, mountain bikers have become one of the primary visitor markets for Dungog, with the growth in MTB visitation stimulating business investment in the town. The success of the Dungog Common MTB Park has also generated significant media coverage, raising the profile of the Shire. Dungog Shire is also seeing growth in recreational cycling, with the touring caravan and RV market arriving in the area with bicycles and are looking for places to ride.

## 11.2 Attributes and Assets to Work With

Dungog Shire has a range of attributes and assets that renders it highly attractive for cycling:

- An ideal environment: suitable topography, a network of low traffic local and regional roads, stunning scenery, and well-placed towns and villages.
- Dungog Common MTB Park: The Common is the anchor attraction for cycle tourism, providing 230 hectares of bushland on the edge of Dungog – with 22 kilometres of single MTB track ranging from green through to double black diamond in difficulty, a network of fire trails and gravel roads, a 2.2km flow track and a pump (fun) track. Additional flow tracks and new visitor facilities are proposed. The Common is fast becoming a destination of choice for mountain-bikers from the Hunter, Central Coast and Sydney Regions.
- A diversity of areas to ride including the Chichester State Forest in the foothills of the Barrington ranges, the State Forests and National Parks around Clarence Town, the Tops to Myall Heritage Trail (200km) and a network of scenic local roads. Ride Dungog promotes 13 local road and gravel grinding routes ranging in difficulty from easy to extreme plus a multi-day gravel grinding route that extends into MidCoast LGA. Some farm stay properties and rural retreats also provide access to trails for guests, with Wangat Lodge having a flow track and pump track designed for beginners and plans to build more trails. Both NPWS and NSW Forestry Corporation permit mountain biking in suitable locations. NPWS permit mountain biking and gravel grinding on access roads and most management trails in accordance with relevant Plans of Management. NSW Forestry Corporation will enter into agreements to permit Councils, MTB clubs and community groups (eg Rotary) to build MTB trails within State Forests. Forestry also support the use of State Forests for MTB events.
- Cycle-friendly businesses being established in Dungog. This includes a bicycle shop with a ‘bike library’ (borrow a bike).
- Pedalfest – a high profile cycling event incorporating both community (social) and competitive activities. Ride Dungog also organises mountain bike events and clinics and there are several high-profile cycling events in the surrounding area including the Barrington Coast 500 and Thunderbolts Ride (1000km through the Hunter).
- Rail access – Dungog is seeing an increasing number of cyclists arrive in town by train to ride at the MTB Park. The train is also being used by regional road-cyclists who ride to Dungog and return home by train (and vis a versa). Rail access also provides opportunities to link cycling experiences in surrounding LGAs – arriving in Dungog to mountain bike, riding or going by train to Gloucester, riding across the Barrington Tops Plateau to Scone and returning via train. There are several MTB trails near Gloucester and Gundy (near Scone) with trails also proposed for Glenbawn Dam in the Upper Hunter and the Lake St Clair adventure precinct in Singleton Shire.
- Proximity to Newcastle Airport – providing the opportunity to offer fly-ride-stay packages for interstate and international mountain-bikers and other cyclists.

## 11.3 Opportunities

- To continue to develop MTB trails and infrastructure at the Dungog Common MTB Park. Consideration is being given to installing sculptures / public art at the Common, which if done well, would provide a point of difference to other MTB Parks and also encourage use of the Park by non-cycling visitors who may be tempted to borrow / hire a bike in town to see the sculptures. Other opportunities could include a track for adaptive mountain biking (hand cycling) for people for disabilities and a 'Skills Park'.
  - Establishing an IMBA<sup>18</sup> 'EPICS' MTB trail in the Barrington Tops region. EPICS trails offer back country / wilderness experiences and will attract overseas mountain-bikers. Currently Mount Buller in Victoria is the only EPICS accredited trail in Australia. If the trail is developed, it would assist Dungog Shire to become an IMBA designated 'Ride Centre'.
  - Ride Clarence Town: Develop and promote cycle tourism products and experiences in the Clarence Town area including a network of MTB tracks in the State Forests and/or National Parks surrounding Clarence Town and looped road and gravel rides commencing in Clarence Town. The Plan of Management for Wallaroo National Park<sup>19</sup> includes recommendations to:
    - Undertake a review and assessment of potential mountain biking trail loops in Wallaroo National Park.
    - Following consultation with local mountain biking groups, prepare a strategy for the development and management of a sustainable mountain biking trail network in Wallaroo National Park.
- Clarence Town would also be ideal for multi-sports events that include mountain biking and water sports, such as Adventure Racing and Dirty Tri.
- Identify and promote cycling loops in the Paterson – Allyn River Valley.
  - Promote rail access for cyclists and investigate opportunities to develop rides that can be accessed from the railway stations within the Shire.
  - Establish the Barrington Region as a MTB and gravel grinding destination – working with Gloucester, Scone and Singleton to package the trails and experiences into multi-day stays (eg 7 – 14 day packages).
  - Explore the potential for establishing trails along all or part of the Hunter Water Pipeline easement, road corridors and /or a 'beside the rail trail' within the rail corridor.



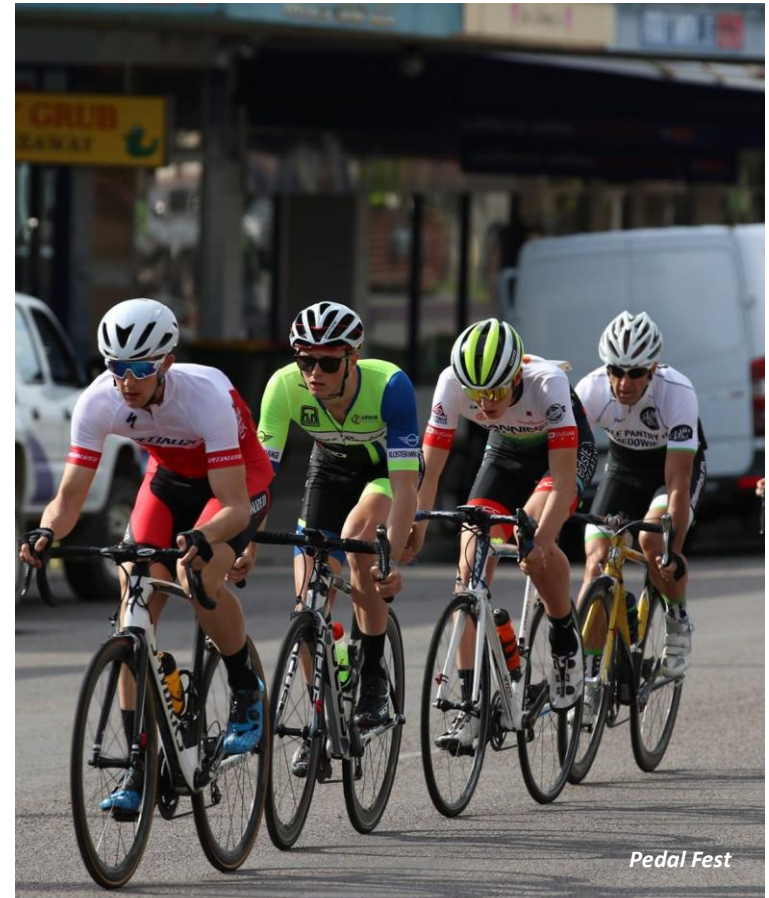
<sup>18</sup> International Mountain Bicycling Association

<sup>19</sup> Office of Environment and Heritage (2016) Plan of Management Karuah, Medowie and Wallaroo Group

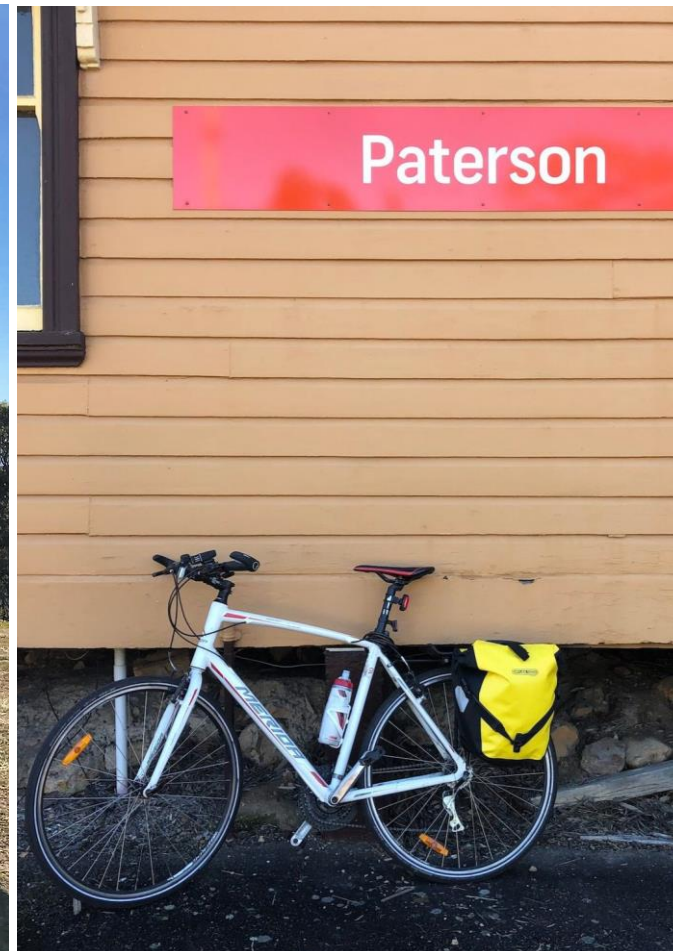
- Grow the cycling events market – increase the number of MTB events held in the Shire as well as other events such as road criterion, Audax (on and off-road), cycle marathon, cyclo-cross, enduro events and gravel grinding and multi-sports such as adventure racing and dirty tri. As part of this, invite cycle event organisers, clubs and associations to bring their events to Dungog Shire.
- To establish supported (drop off / pick up) and escorted cycle tours within the Shire and/or approach adventure and cycle tour companies to include Dungog Shire (Barrington Tops World Heritage Area) in their tour programs.

### 11.4 Challenges to realising these opportunities

- Neither the township of Dungog nor the Shire are cycle-friendly. The outstanding success of the Dungog Common MTB Park has caught the town and Council un-prepared with infrastructure not in place to cater for this market. The infrastructure needed includes:
  - Quality amenities at the Dungog Common – while an amenities block is being developed, there is a need to other supporting infrastructure such as picnic shelters and a sealed car park.
  - A dedicated, preferably off-road, cycleway between Dungog Common and the town centre.
  - Bicycle racks in strategic locations within the town centre. There may also be a need for bike lockers and/or e.bike charging facilities.
  - Directional signage within the town to the Dungog Common MTB Park.
  - Improved visitor information services, including a section within the Dungog VIC promoting (video clips, images, maps, brochures) cycle tourism, information on visitor information directories throughout the Shire and information directories at Dungog Common (promoting the town and Shire) and Dungog Railway Station.
  - Route infrastructure – directional signage, trail heads (safe areas to park cars with information / orientation maps), route markers, warning / safety signs for motorists and cyclists.
- Ride Dungog and the Dungog Common Reserve Trust are volunteer groups with limited funds and resources. Investment is required in product and infrastructure development, developing / securing events, and marketing and promotion to capitalise on the foundation that has been put in place and the opportunities that are emerging. (Note: the establishment of Derby in Tasmania as a world-class MTB destination required significant investment from the local Council and State Government).
- Potential for conflict on the Dungog Common by different users / activities.
- Accommodation capacity constraints in Dungog and the surrounding area, with this being a significant constraint to growing the events sector.



- Gaining support and/or approval from the NPWS, Forestry Corporation and other land management agencies to establish trails on their land, provide access for commercial cycle tour operators, and/or provide access for events and activities.
- Many of the local roads in Dungog Shire are narrow and in poor condition and may not have the capacity to accommodate a significant increase in the number of cyclists, particularly during peak holiday periods.
- Transport for NSW / NSW TrainLink regulations render it difficult to take bicycles on some train services. On all regional services bicycles have to be folded or boxed and there is a limit of five bikes on XPT services and three bikes on Explorer services. This limits the ability to use rail services between Dungog and Gloucester.



## 12. OUTDOOR AND NATURE-BASED TOURISM

### 12.1 Overview

The visitor economy in Dungog Shire is highly dependent on outdoor and nature-based activities. In addition to cycling, the main outdoor activities include:

- Camping
- Bushwalking
- Horse riding
- Paddling (canoeing, kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding)
- Fishing
- Bird-watching
- Golf
- Boating and water skiing (downstream of Clarence Town)
- 4 wheel driving
- Trail-bike riding

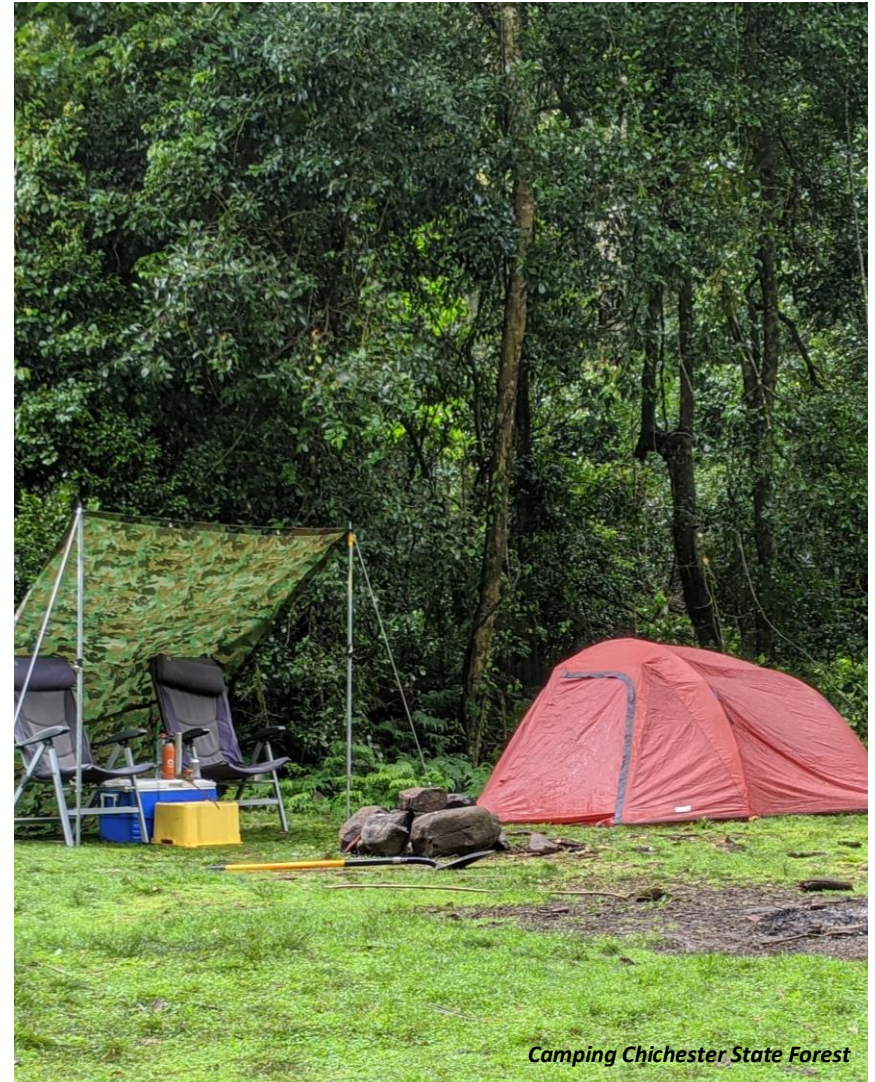
With the assets and infrastructure available, camping, bushwalking, horse riding and paddling have the strongest growth potential. These activities:

- Are aligned with and reinforce the branding and positioning of the Shire.
- Are more sustainable environmentally and have lower impacts on other visitors.
- Complement cycle tourism and each other (eg visitors coming into the Shire to bushwalk may also hire a canoe or a bicycle).
- Provide opportunities for value-adding and packaging – multi-day, multi-activity adventures.
- Provide opportunities to grow the events sector.
- Encourage dispersal across the Shire.

Golfing, fishing and birdwatching are also well aligned with the Shire’s brand and positioning with the product and infrastructure for these activities largely in place. Bird watching and fishing will benefit from improving riverbank access. These activities can be grown primarily through targeted marketing.

With the restrictions in place on the Williams River, power boating and water skiing have limited growth potential. The focus needs to be on upgrading the Williams River Holiday Park and Wharf Reserve to support paddling and fishing and generate benefits for Clarence Town businesses from visitors (see Section 10.2).

4 wheel driving and trail-bike riding are more contentious activities that, if undertaken irresponsibly, can have significant environmental impacts and create conflict with other users. The challenge for the Shire lies in managing these activities to minimise environmental damage and irresponsible anti-social behaviour.



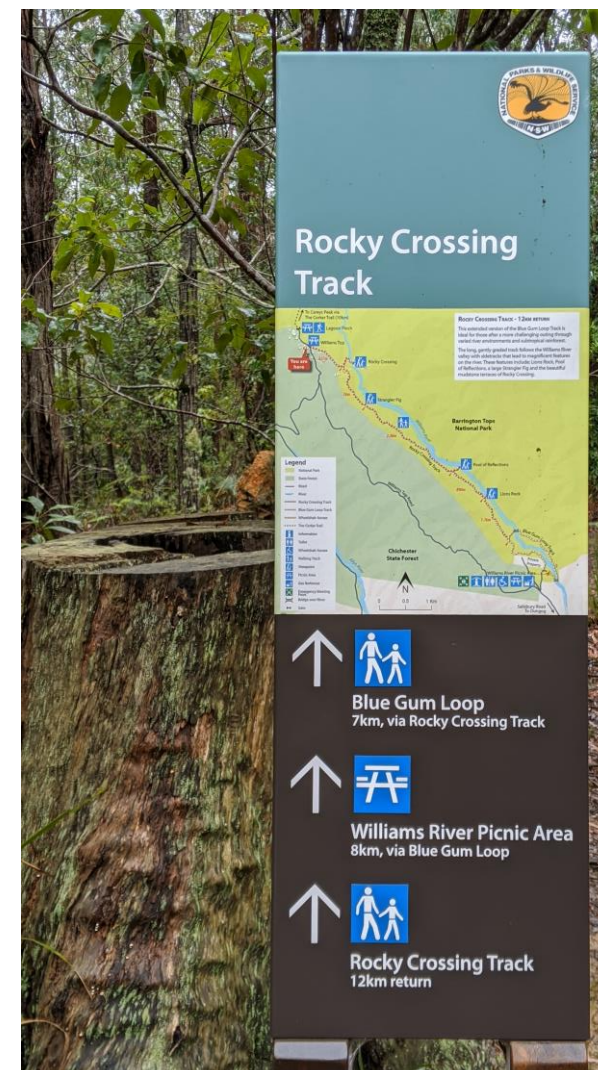
## 12.2 Walking / Bushwalking

### Overview

According to the AusPlay Sports Participation survey, walking for pleasure and bushwalking rank as the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> most popular physical activity – sport in Australia<sup>20</sup>. Bushwalking is one of the main activities undertaken in Dungog Shire. Most of bushwalking is undertaken in conjunction with other activities (eg 4WD, camping) with a small proportion of visitors (including walking groups and bushwalking clubs) coming to the Shire specifically to walk.

### Attributes and assets to work with

- Five designated walks in the Barrington Tops National Park, three of which are short walks (2-3.5km) with two longer walks (16-18 km return). The Blue Gum walk is a loop, with the other walks being linear (return the same way). The Blue Gum walk is a grade 3 walk and suitable for most ages and fitness level. A small section (from the car park to the River) is wheelchair accessible. The other walks are Grade 4 and suitable for people with bushwalking experience with the Corker being a steep, challenging walk.
- The Allyn River Rainforest Walking Track in the Chichester (west) State Forest and short walking tracks at Fry Pan Creek and the Telegraphy picnic area in the Chichester (east) State Forests. NSW Forestry is proposing to make the rainforest walk fully accessible. Forestry has also identified a need for additional walks in both sections of the Chichester State Forest.
- Fire trails / tracks in the Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks and Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests near Clarence Towns. These tracks are not promoted and mainly attract local residents.
- Girrawa Walking Loop on the Dungog Common.
- Pilchers Reserve near Wallarobba – Council managed reserve with limited access. The Reserve has several deep gorges, talus caves and areas of rainforest. It is currently used by local and regional groups for bushwalking, bird watching, caving and abseiling. The Reserve is not promoted.
- Farm stay / rural retreat properties with on-site bushwalks.
- Self-guided heritage trails in Dungog and Paterson, with Paterson also having an annual guided heritage walk.
- Rail access to Dungog and Paterson and rural localities between the two towns.



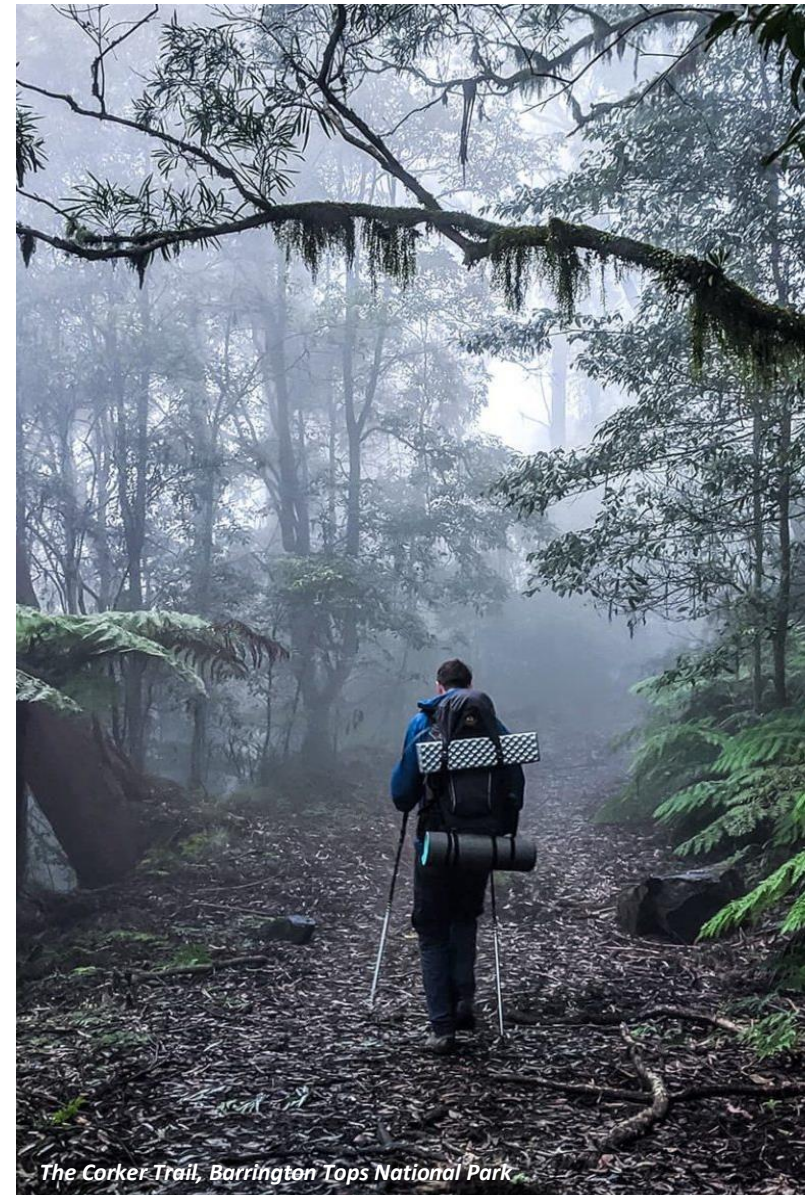
<sup>20</sup> SportAus (2019) AusPlay Participation Survey Top 20 participation sports and physical activities – Australia 2019

## Challenges

- Competition from the Gloucester area which has both plateau (Antarctic Beech Forest / sub-alpine environment) and rainforest gully walks.
- Linear rather than loop walks. Walkers prefer loops to linear trails.
- No fully accessible walks – this is being addressed by NSW Forestry (funding dependent).
- No ‘signature’ walk which is a ‘must do’ for bushwalkers.
- There are no guided bushwalks in the Shire, nor a transfer / shuttle service for walkers.
- Very few of the walks have sealed road access, with unsealed roads being a deterrent for some travellers, including those in rental vehicles.
- Limited signage in parts of both the National Parks and State Forests.
- The Girrawa Walking Track is the only bushwalking track that can be access by travellers arriving by train. There is no information on ‘what to do’ in Dungog at the Station and no directional signage to the Common from the railway station or town centre.
- Pilchers Reserve has vehicle and pedestrian access issues (being addressed by Council).

## Opportunities

- Provide additional walking trails in the Chichester State Forest – supporting Forestry Corporation’s proposals to make the Allyn River Rainforest Walk fully accessible and develop new walks.
- To ‘package’ the network of trails in the Columbey National Park – Uffington Forest and Wallaroo National Park – State Forests and identify key trails / loops – naming the trails and developing trail notes.
- To identify and promote a signature walk (or walks) for the area – a ‘must-do’ for visitors.
- To package (single and multi-day) and promote the Dungog and Paterson heritage walks and the Girrawa Loop in Dungog to walking groups (eg Probus Club) within the Hunter and Central Coast Regions, encouraging them to access the Shire by train. For day trips, these groups are typically looking for a 3-5km easy walk plus somewhere to have lunch.
- To develop and promote Pilchers Reserve as a visitor attraction. The draft Plan of Management recognises the environmental and cultural significance of the Reserve and identifies issues with access. The Plan looks to retain limited access and not provide visitor facilities. Given the unique features of the Reserve, consideration should be given to developing a commercial, bookable guided walk / eco-tourism experience, abseiling and/or caving experiences (small groups). Pilchers Reserve would provide a very strong point of difference to other bushwalking destinations within the surrounding region. ‘Virtual access’ could also be provided using virtual reality technology.





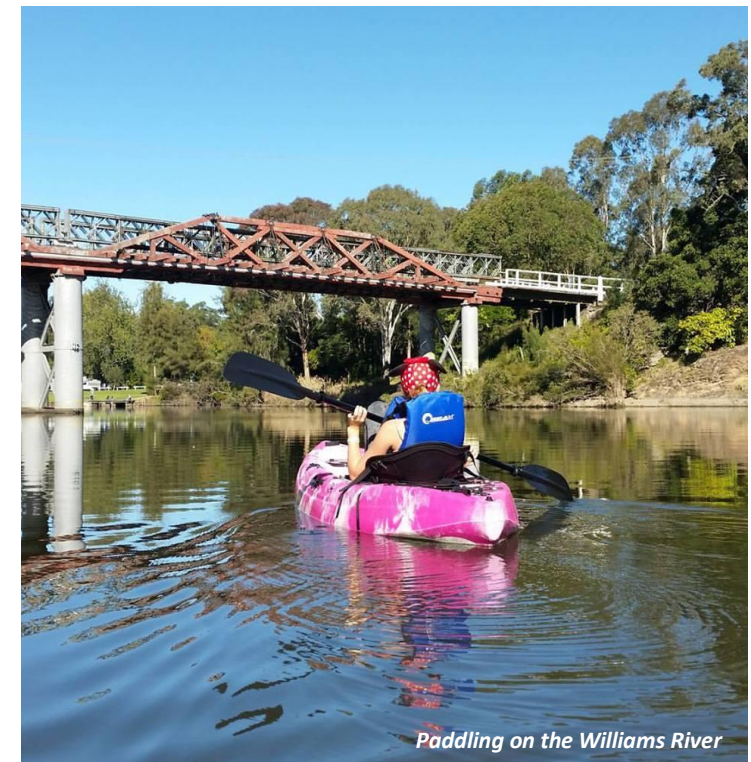
## 12.3 Paddling

### Overview

Over the past two decades, paddling has been the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest growth sport in Australia<sup>21</sup>. Growth is attributable to a combination of factors including entry level craft being highly affordable; there is an abundance of places to paddle; paddling can be enjoyed by all age groups; paddling delivers significant health benefits (low impact cardio and strength workout) and it is physically and mentally stimulating. Most of the growth in paddling has been driven by Gen X and Baby Boomers taking up recreational paddling. In 2019/20, 66.9% of paddlers were aged 45+ years<sup>22</sup>. Road trippers (including families and the touring caravan and RV markets) are increasingly travelling with canoes / kayaks / stand-up paddleboards (SUPs). There has also been strong growth in canoe and SUP hire outlets and canoe, kayaking and SUP tour operators. Dungog Shire is seeing an increasing number of visitors arriving in the Shire with canoes / kayaks and looking for places to paddle.

### Attributes and assets to work with

- Allyn, Williams and Paterson Rivers: The upper valleys having accessible large waterholes which are suitable for having 'fun' with the upper sections also suitable for white water canoeing under certain river conditions. The middle reaches of the Williams River, from Fosterton to around Glen William Bridge, is mostly navigable (water height dependent) and suitable for intermediate and experienced paddlers, while the lower section (Glen Williams Bridge to Seaham) is suitable for beginners. Below the weir at Seaham, the river is navigable to its confluence with the Hunter. The navigability of the Allyn River and the Paterson River (upstream of Paterson) are dependent on water levels, with sections of the rivers having large waterholes under low flow conditions. The Paterson River, downstream of Paterson, is generally navigable and it is possible to paddle between Paterson and Clarence (via the Paterson, Hunter and Williams Rivers), with the weir at Seaham providing the only obstacle. It is also possible to paddle from Raymond Terrace, Newcastle and Maitland to Paterson and Clarence Town. All three Rivers are listed on the Waterways Paddling Guide website, however details of the sections are very limited and no images have been posted. The Williams River at Clarence Town is promoted on the Global Paddler directory.
- Lostock Dam: An enclosed, safe water body, suitable for beginners, particularly the family market and individuals and couples.
- Riverside accommodation along each of the Rivers, with the Williams River Holiday Park and Lostock Caravan Park having access to navigable water year-round.
- Proposals by Maitland LGA to establish a beach and canoe launching area at Queens Wharf at Morpeth and to encourage canoe hire and canoe tours between Morpeth and Maitland.



<sup>21</sup> AusPlay Participation Trends in Australian Sport 2001 - 2020

<sup>22</sup> AusPlay Participation Trends in Australian Sport 2001 - 2020

- Paddling group in Seaham with a canoe launching facilities on the Williams River. The group is looking to develop a canoe trail along the Williams River.

## Opportunities

- To produce information on paddling in Dungog Shire – targeted primarily to the recreational market and including ‘water holes’ and readily accessible still water where people can easily launch a canoe / SUP as well as places where people can stay on the river that provide opportunities for canoeing. Strategically the Williams River Holiday Park / Clarence Town in the east and Lostock Dam in the west should be used as ‘anchors’ to encourage visitors with canoes, kayaks and SUPs to move between these two locations, trying out other locations on the way. Currently, visitors staying in Clarence Town are looking to the MidCoast and Port Stephens LGAs for complementary paddling experiences.
- To work with Port Stephens and Maitland LGAs to develop a paddling route / canoe trail, incorporating the Paterson, Hunter and Williams Rivers (Paterson to Clarence Town) and develop marathon paddling events. The Murrumbidgee River Canoe and Kayak Trail (NSW Department of Lands) provides a good example of a canoe trail.
- Introduce / attract paddling and multi-sports events – utilising the riverside reserves in Clarence Town, Lostock Dam and possibly Tocal / Webbers Creek Reserve and/or John Tucker Park as event staging areas.
- Provide facilities to support ‘all ability’ paddling.
- Canoe / kayak / SUP hire – possibly modelled on Kangaroo Valley operators who have a hire site in town and also deliver canoes to camping sites and accommodation properties throughout the Valley.
- Canoe / kayaking / SUP tours – established locally or approaching tour operators within the surrounding region to include tours in Dungog Shire in their programs.
- When water levels are suitable – target (through email alerts) the white-water paddling market.

## Challenges to realising these opportunities

- Variable river heights and conditions with sections in the mid and upper river valleys not navigable during low flow periods and dangerous conditions during high flow periods.
- Limited river access points – with two boat ramps with jetties at Clarence Town, a boat ramps at Lostock Dam and on the Paterson River at Tocal. In other localities, eg Frank Robinson Park Dungog, Gresford Reserve, Kings Wharf at Paterson, the access pathways to the river are steep with the riverbanks not being ideal for launching canoes.
- Relatively long stretches without public access points.
- Extensive weed infestation along sections of each of the rivers, with this detracting from the experience.



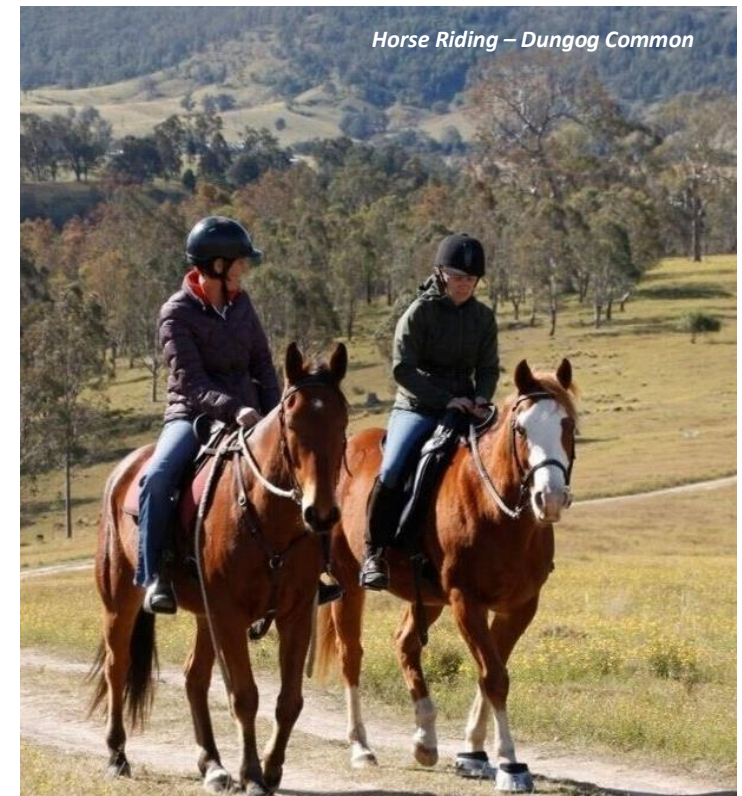
## 12.4 Horse Riding

### Overview

Population growth in the Hunter Valley is resulting in an increase in horse ownership and riding for pleasure. The proposed increase in small rural holdings in Dungog Shire and other LGAs within the Hunter Region and MidCoast LGA is likely to result in further growth in horse ownership. The proposal by MidCoast Council to develop a large equestrian precinct may also stimulate growth in ownership. People are looking for places to take their horses to ride, with Dungog Shire seeing growth in this market. Across NSW, interest and participation in organised trail riding events (eg Weddin Mountains Muster) has been growing with most events having capped numbers and booking out very quickly. Dungog Shire has facilities and trails suitable for trail riding and horse events and is well positioned to attract the equine market.

### Attributes and assets to work with

- **Dungog Showground:** Stalls, main arena, rodeo ground and pony club facilities, with the Showground used for Dungog Show, pony club, team penning (5 events per year), rodeos (2 events per year) and camp drafting. The Showground is being progressively upgraded with additional horse stalls proposed adjacent to the pony club ground and new caravan and camping sites being developed.
- **Dungog Common:** Network of trails that are used for horse riding. The Common is fenced, providing a safe area to ride.
- **Dungog Saleyards:** The saleyards have access to Dungog Common, an off-street car park and adjoining paddocks. This area could become a float parking area and access point for horse riding on Dungog Common.
- **Wirragulla Polo Club and Tabbil Creek Polo Ground + Barrington Polo in Dungog.** Each year the Club hosts the Hunter Valley Polo Challenge and a range of polo clinics. Barrington Polo provides accommodation (play and stay packages), private polo lessons and polo pony hire.
- **East Gresford Recreation Reserve and Showground:** Stalls and main arena. The Showground hosts a range of equine events including pony club, dressage, rodeo, team penning, Gresford Show and the Annual Eastern Zone Stock Horse Show.
- **National Parks and State Conservation Areas:** The NPWS has identified the Central Coast – Hunter Region as a priority area for allowing horse riding in National Parks<sup>23</sup>. Horse riding is permitted in the Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks and the nearby Medowie National Park and Karuah National Park and SCA, with horse float turning and parking areas located in the Wallaroo National Park adjacent to Limeburners Creek Road and in the Karuah SCA.



<sup>23</sup> Office of Environment and Heritage (2012) Strategic Directions for Horse Riding in NSW National Parks.

- State Forests: Horse riding is permitted in State Forest and occurs in the Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests in the Clarence Town area and occasionally in the Chichester State Forest.
- Active trail riding and endurance clubs in the Hunter Region, with these Clubs organising rides in Dungog Shire. Popular locations include the forests and National Parks around Clarence Town, Lostock Dam area (camping at the Scout Camp), Glen William (starting at the Scout Hall), Glen Martin, Main Creek, Torryburn and Webbers Creeks. Lostock Scout Camp has dormitory accommodation for 60 people plus a camping area.

## Opportunities

- Identify and promote horse-riding facilities and trails within Dungog Shire, similar in concept to the Local Rides (cycling routes) promoted by Ride Dungog. As part of this:
  - Explore with State Water opportunities for horse riding in the Lostock Dam area.
  - Direct market to horse riding clubs and associations and post information on relevant horse-riding websites.
- Holiday with your horse: Promote opportunities for horse-owners to have a short-break / holiday with their horse in Dungog Shire. Dungog provides the opportunity for camping and stabling at the Showground and riding at the Dungog Common and Chichester State Forest. Lostock Scout Camp and some farm stay and rural retreat operators may also be prepared to accommodate visitors and their horses.
- Provide an area where people can camp with their horses at Clarence Town. This could be on private property or in designated areas within Bridge and/or Wharf reserve (outside of peak camping times). Horse riders are generally self-sufficient, travelling with electric fences.
- Build the horse events market – working with the Common and Showground Trusts, pony clubs and horse-sports groups to grow existing events and to attract additional events to the Shire.
- Provide additional facilities – eg: a covered arena, cross country course to support and stimulate growth in equine events.
- Develop a multi-day trail riding event, similar in concept to the Weddin Mountains Muster.



## Challenges to realising these opportunities

- Potential for conflict between horse riders, mountain bikers and other users of Dungog Common, particularly along Common Road with loading and off-loading horses from floats. This could be addressed by providing a separate entry point and car park for horses, with the Saleyards area being a possible location for this use. Consideration should also be given to using stock routes and road easements to provide a safe riding trail between the Common and the Showground.

- While there is a network of horse-riding trails in the National Parks and State Forests around Clarence Town, there is nowhere for riders to stay with their horses.
- Irresponsible / anti-social behaviour from 4WD and trail bike enthusiasts in the National Parks and State Forests, and the increasing use of the forests by people with dogs (eg pit bulls) poses a safety threat to horses and riders.
- Lack of areas to ride around Gresford – limiting the potential to leverage the stabling facilities at Gresford Showground.
- Gaining permission from State Water to ride in the Lostock Dam area.
- Lack of an equine organisation representing horse enthusiasts and horse-sports within the Shire. There is no organisation (similar to Ride Dungog) to coordinate and drive the sector.

## 12.5 Golf

The Shire has two golf clubs, Dungog and Paterson. Both are 9 hole, public courses, which can be played in 9 or 18 hole configurations. Both courses have picturesque settings and basic club houses. In comparison to most of the golf courses in the Lower Hunter region, green fees are low and there is generally no difficulty for visitors to access the courses.

Dungog Golf Course is popular with social golfers, including small groups, with most of the golfers coming from the Lower Hunter and MidCoast areas. COVID-19 has resulted in an increase in social golfers with some of these visitors combining a round of golf with mountain biking on the Common. Each year Doug Walters brings two groups (around 36 players per group) to Dungog for a golf weekend, with a group also coming from the Belmont Golf Club. The Club hosts several tournaments which attract golfers primarily from the Hunter Region. The club house can be hired for self-catered functions up to 120 people. The Golf Club is looking for opportunities to grow both the social golf and functions markets. The Club is also developing a website and looking to boost its on-line presence and marketing.

The Paterson Golf Club is part of the Paterson Sportsground Precinct and located adjacent to the proposed camping area. The Club is known as for the King Parrots that can generally be seen around the course. The Club hosts several events each year including a round of the Volkswagen Scramble. The Club is interested in growing the social golf market.

### Opportunities

Golf is a significant market for the Lower Hunter Region with people coming in to play the resort and championship courses in Newcastle, Cessnock and Port Stephens LGAs. Golf has also been packaged for the corporate and conference markets. Green fees at these courses are high and at popular times it can be difficult to secure a booking. While the Dungog and Paterson courses do not have the prestige of the resort and championship courses, they are great for social golf and offer good value for money. There is opportunity to for the Clubs, both independently and together, to develop play and stay packages with local accommodation providers and target the social golf clubs, possibly concentrating on those not affiliated with a course (eg sub-clubs of licensed clubs). Women's golf groups are also a good market to target as they travel and play mid-week.



## 12.6 4WD and Trail Bikes

Dungog Shire is a popular destination for 4WD enthusiasts and trail bikers with the Shire seeing increasing numbers of these visitors. Both activities are permitted in the State Forests and on designated access tracks within the National Parks. While most visitors are responsible, obey the road rules, stay on the designated tracks and respect the environment and other users, there is a minority who engage in irresponsible and/or anti-social behaviour. This behaviour is resulting in environmental damage, conflict with and increased risk for local road and park / forest users and damage to the Shire's reputation. In peak periods the Forestry Corporation and the NPWS have increased their presence in the Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park, with the Forestry Corporation also paying the Police to patrol. While this has reduced anti-social behaviour during peak times, it remains an issue, and is likely to escalate with increased use of the national parks and forests resulting primarily from increased population growth in the Hunter, Central Coast and Greater Sydney Regions.

### Directions Forward

The focus needs to be on creating an environment that deters irresponsible and anti-social behaviour. Possible initiatives include:

- Providing mobile phone coverage in the upper river valleys including coverage in the Chichester State Forest and Barrington Tops National Park, and if needed, extending coverage to the National Parks and State Forests in the Clarence Town area. This could be accompanied by signage in the area encouraging visitors to report irresponsible and anti-social behaviour. Providing mobile phone coverage would be a game-changer for the area.
- For Forestry Corporation, NPWS and NSW Police to continue having a strong presence during peak times, and to undertake 'random' patrols at other times. This is likely to require access to additional funds and resources. Council and the Dungog Shire community should consider lobbying the Government for funding for additional patrols.
- Introducing online and/or QR Code registration for campers using Forestry campgrounds. As part of their COVID-Safe plan, NPWS has introduced this for all NPWS campgrounds.
- Changing the market mix – with an emphasis on attracting families, nature-based visitors and 4WD Clubs that are affiliated with State / National 4WD associations (Codes of Conduct in place).
- Application of technology. This could include fixed speed cameras on key access roads, number plate recognition technology and/or security cameras on the Forest and National Park access roads and in strategic locations (eg camping areas).
- Targeted media campaigns (Lower Hunter and Central Coast areas) to raise awareness of the patrols and the penalties that are in place.
- Provide alternative areas to drive / ride. Explore opportunities (eg former quarries, coal mining areas) for dedicated 4WD and trail bike parks within the Lower Hunter Region, to provide opportunities for enthusiasts who are looking to 'test' their vehicles against the environment.



## 13. ARTS – CULTURAL TOURISM

### 13.1 Overview

Dungog is becoming known as a creative community. The Dungog Place Making Strategy identifies the ‘creative subculture’ as one of the town’s unique qualities and one of the factors driving change<sup>24</sup>. Growing and leveraging the creative sector is a strategic priority for growing the visitor economy with the sector playing a role in building the identity and profile of the Shire; providing attractions, activities and events that attract visitation; value-adding to other sectors and activities; stimulating business investment; attracting grant funding; and contributing to population retention and growth.

The Dungog Arts Foundation has recently completed a resource audit as part of its ‘People / Spaces Creative Activation Strategic Plan’, with the audit identifying creative talent, local ideas and initiatives and the cultural resources available in Dungog. This provides a platform for building communication and collaboration within the arts community and between the arts community, Council and other organisations and activities. Key findings of the audit include the:

- Relatively untapped potential to better showcase the cultural richness of the Dungog area.
- Inspiringly fertile groundswell of local ‘ready to go’ initiatives, support, sweat equity, assets.
- Need to stress the unique points of difference in the current cultural calendar that ‘raise the bar’ and set Dungog apart.

Within the surrounding region, Maitland and Singleton LGAs are focusing on growing the arts-creative sectors as core product themes and are looking to leverage existing cultural assets (eg galleries), develop new products, experiences and events (eg trails, open studio events) and better integrate the arts with other sectors (eg food and wine experiences). Newcastle City is fostering specialisation in film making and digital media. Arts Upper Hunter, of which Dungog Shire is a member, is focused on supporting and driving growth in the arts-creative sector.

***Australians are turning to the arts when they are exploring new places and seeking out authentic experiences of the many and varied parts of the country. The stories and perspectives brought to life through the arts provide unique conduits for visitors to understand the place they are visiting, its people, landscape and history.***

*Australia Council for the Arts 2020, Domestic Arts Tourism: Connecting the Country*



<sup>24</sup> Dungog Shire Council / JOC (2017) Dungog Place Making Strategy

## 13.2 Attributes and assets to work with

Attributes and assets to work with include:

- **Organisations:** Arts Upper Hunter, Dungog Arts Foundation, Dungog Arts Society, Dungog by Design, Performing Artists Dungog, seeDUNGOG, Friends of the James Theatre, local historical societies.
- **Arts / music / creative events:** Dungog Festival, Sculpture on the Farm, Dungog Tea Party, Dungog Art Show and Dungog Archies, Clarence Town River Country Hoe Down.
- **Galleries and arts outlets:** Dungog Arts Society, Dungog by Design and Gallery on Dowling in Dungog, the Vacy Community Arts Centre at Vacy and local markets including the Little Artisan Market in Dungog.
- **Workshops:** Organisations / businesses offering workshops, master classes and/or talks including the Dungog Arts Foundation, Dungog Arts Society, Dungog by Design, Hive and Gobler, accommodation properties including the Bower, Wangat Lodge and Camry Allyn Homestead, and individual artists and artisans.
- **Lifestyle shops and boutiques** with a strong hand-made, artisan focus. The quality presentation of these businesses also adds to the 'creative' vibe.
- **Venues:** including the James Theatre, Royal Hotel Dungog, School of Arts buildings in each of the village, historic hotels and licensed clubs (music venues), historic churches.
- **Local history museums** and the Paterson Rail Motor Museum.
- **Rail access** to Dungog and Paterson for large music events and creative festivals.





### 13.3 Opportunities

- Work collaboratively with and leverage opportunities provided by Arts Upper Hunter and surrounding LGAs to build arts-creative based tourism.
- Incorporate a strong arts-focus in place-making throughout the Shire, with this to include temporary and permanent art installations that reinforce key assets and themes (see Chapter 10) – this includes the mooted art projects for the Dungog Common.
- Local and regional arts trails. This could include an ‘open studio’ trail / event as part of the annual Dungog Art Show or other events.
- Re-build film-based events and activities, leveraging Dungog’s reputation for the former Dungog Film Festival with a new event or series of events. The James Theatre is looking to develop a Film Museum, and there are also proposals for mini themed film events and a ‘guerrilla’ styled film making weekend<sup>25</sup>. There is also opportunity to promote the James Theatre as a hire-venue for film societies and other groups looking to run film events and activities. Opportunities to work with film and digital media groups in Newcastle should also be explored. Build the arts workshops and activity markets – by encouraging and supporting local groups / organisers / artists to grow their programs; packaging and promoting Shire accommodation properties and venues suitable for artistic (and lifestyle) workshops to arts groups and workshop organisers inviting them to include workshops in Dungog Shire in their programs; working with the arts community to secure grant funding to run workshops and activities; leveraging opportunities through Arts Upper Hunter and other regional arts organisations; and run workshops and activities as value-added products for events and other activities in the Shire.
- Artist in Residence programs.
- Develop the music and live entertainment scene including promoting the Dungog and Gresford Showgrounds and Paterson Sportsground to commercial tour promoters as venues for large events.
- As part of building the Shire’s profile, leverage opportunities to promote and generate media coverage of local artists, artisans, events and activities.
- Aboriginal products and experiences.
- To harness digital technologies to better showcase the Shire’s post-contact history and to tell its stories



<sup>25</sup> Dungog Arts Foundation (2020) People / Spaces Creative Activation Strategic Plan Resource Audit

### 13.4 Challenges to realising these opportunities

- Lack of a Shire-wide arts-creative sector and/or cultural plan. There is no shared vision or framework to coordinate and drive growth and encourage individuals and groups to work together.
- Accommodation capacity constraints – limiting the potential to grow events.
- Venue limitations and/or management issues.
- Lack of a cooperative workspace.
- Limited resources and high dependence on volunteers to organise and run events / volunteer burn-out.

### 13.5 Directions Forward

As highlighted in the Dungog Arts Foundation 'People / Spaces Creative Activation Strategic Plan' there is a lot of energy, enthusiasm and innovative ideas within the Shire's arts community. Council and DRT need to encourage, support and work with the arts community to harness this energy, realise the opportunities and the innovative ideas and address the challenges. Council and DRT also need to encourage and support initiatives from the Aboriginal community to deliver Aboriginal cultural experiences and to support endeavours to tell the Shire's 'stories'. As a first step, it would be desirable to prepare a Creative Strategy / Cultural Plan.



Clarence Town Court House Museum



Dungog Festival



Art & Sio at the Hive and Gobler

## 14. EVENTS

### 14.1 Overview

Events are one of the key drivers of visitation to Dungog Shire and, going forward, have a key role to play in growing the visitor economy. Strategically, events can be used to strengthen key themes, showcase and celebrate the Shire and its communities, and enhance lifestyle. Events are part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring visitors and residents together, 'tell the stories', and create memorable experiences. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a 'call to action', encouraging people to 'visit now'. Events also generate publicity and focus attention on the area, and can be a key driver in the economic, social and cultural development and play a role in the 'tree change' process.

Dungog Shire has a diverse program of events (see Appendix 3) with the higher profile events being:

- Tocal Field Days – over 30,000 visitors
- Dungog Festival
- Sculpture on the Farm
- Dungog Tea Party
- Pedal Fest
- Gresford Billy Kart Derby

The Shire is seeing an increase in mountain biking, trail running and equine / horse sports events. In the past Dungog has successfully hosted a large music festival (Mumford and Sons) which attracted over 14,000 visitors and the Dungog Film Festival (9,000 attendees).

Dungog Shire does not have a coordinated or strategic approach to events. Most events are organised by community groups and run by volunteers, with volunteer burn-out being an issue. Very few of the organising groups are incorporated and most of the events do not have a business plan, growth strategy and/or marketing plan. While Council does provide support for some events, it does not have an Events Officer, event policy or funding program. The Dungog VIC maintains an events calendar, lists relevant events on NSW connect data base (visitnsw website) and promotes events through the VIC, visitdungog website and social media channels.

The Shire has an incorporated events committee (Dungog Events Incorporated Inc) which is run by volunteers. Its primary objective is to support and facilitate the development and growth of events in the Shire. It carries an 'umbrella' insurance policy which community groups can access for start-up events; provides advice on event organisation, the approval process and risk management; provides and/or helps source volunteers to assist with the event; has members with traffic management accreditation and has equipment that groups can hire at a nominal rate. The committee is struggling to attract members and is reviewing its role and responsibilities.

There is no coordinated marketing of the event venues available in Dungog Shire, with Tocal Homestead being the only venue in the Shire listed on the DNSW Conference and Business Events Venue Directory



## 14.2 Attributes and assets to work with

- Existing events – some of which have the potential to be grown.
- Reputation for delivering quality events, including large events.
- Large regional population – providing a ready market for events and activities.
- Rail access to Dungog and Paterson which can be used to access events. It also provides opportunities for specialist event trains.
- Recognition that events are drivers of visitation to the Shire, with events having relatively widespread support.
- Great venues for outdoor events – Tocal College and Homestead, Dungog Common, Dungog and Gresford Showgrounds, Paterson Sportsground and John Tucker Park, Bridge Reserve and the Williams River in Clarence Town, State Forests and potentially Lostock Dam, National Parks and rural properties.
- James Theatre.
- Venues suitable for small arts, creative and lifestyle events, and functions and meetings. These venues include the historic school of arts buildings, accommodation properties, historic hotels and licensed clubs.



## 14.3 Opportunities

Opportunities to build both the events sector and events-based visitation include:

- **Grow participation in and/or attendance at existing events:** In addition to the support currently provided by the Dungog VIC, there may also be opportunities to:
  - Raise the profile of Shire events within the surrounding region.
  - Build event attendee data bases and direct market and cross-promote to these attendees. For example, families attending the Gresford Billy Kart Derby may be interested in attending the Tocal Old Fashioned Picnic Day or events at the Rail Motor Museum.
  - Direct market to special interest groups: eg garden events to gardening clubs.
  - Package events with accommodation and/or other activities in the Shire.
  - Package and direct market the event to coach wholesalers and/or coach companies that organise tours.
- **Organise / attract events that leverage the Shire's outdoor natural assets** – while MTB and trail running events are already being held at the Common, there is opportunity to organise and/or attract other events including road cycling, gravel grinding, AUDAX, running and paddling marathons, dirty-tri, adventure racing, orienteering, rogaining, a birding conference etc. The Lostock Dam and the combination of the Williams River, Bridge Reserve and the surrounding National Parks and State Forests render both the Dam and Clarence Town ideal for multidisciplinary sports, such as triathlons and dirty tris, that require access to water.

- **Grow the horse events market:** Work with the horse events organisers and Showground Trusts to grow existing events and attract new events. As discussed in Section 12.4 there may be opportunity to develop a large trail ride event, similar in concept to the Weddin Mountains Muster.
- **Target caravan and RV club chapter rallies and events:** Promoting the Dungog and Gresford Showgrounds, Paterson Sportsground, Lostock Dam and Bridge Reserve in Clarence Town as potential locations.
- **Identify and target footloose events that could be held in Dungog Shire:** bidding for events, as well as direct marketing the Shire’s venues to event organisers and promoters.
- **Leverage major events in surrounding Shires:** positioning Dungog Shire to attract ‘overflow’ accommodation bookings during major events in surrounding LGAs.



## 14.4 Challenges Faced

The challenges faced by Dungog Shire in growing its event sector include:

- Accommodation capacity constraints. This results in event attendees staying in surrounding towns and is a deterrent for commercial event organisers holding events in Dungog Shire. This can be addressed by:
  - Working co-operatively with surrounding towns so that everyone benefits. The event program can be designed to focus non-accommodation spending in Dungog Shire and quid pro quo arrangements put in place for overflow bookings to be referred to surrounding towns on the proviso that surrounding towns refer overflow bookings to Dungog Shire during their major events.
  - Focusing on events and activities where participants are happy to camp – eg horse events, caravan and RV rallies, music festivals.
  - Organising / hosting day events that target participants from the surrounding region.
  - Focusing on smaller events – it is far more beneficial for the local economy to have multiple smaller events spread throughout the year rather than one large event.
- Most local events are run by volunteers. Volunteer numbers are declining and the Shire does not have large service clubs to assist. In addition, meeting increased regulatory requirements (including obtaining development approval, the need to submit traffic management plans and have accredited traffic controllers) and marketing and promoting the event can be daunting. Volunteers, while often very enthusiastic, do not always have the skills and expertise needed to develop and sustain their events.
- Very few of the events held in the Shire have a business plan or framework for growing the event. The Shire has a history of events only surviving for a few years.
- Dungog Shire Council does not have the resources and protocols in place that make it easy for event organisers to stage an event in the Shire. Most Council in LGAs with strong event sectors, have an event manual or guidelines in place and a nominated events officer to advise and assist organisers to negotiate the regulatory process and coordinate Council’s support and involvement.
- Planning regulations and the planning approval process are perceived as being difficult, time consuming and costly.

- Dungog Events Incorporated is at a cross roads – it is struggling to fill committee positions, has limited funds and resources, is experiencing problems with storing and managing its equipment, and is experiencing difficulties and costs to meet the accreditation requirements for traffic controllers.

## 14.5 Directions Forward

- Council to consider employing an experienced tourism and events officer.
- Ideally, Council needs to put in place the framework, resources and protocols to facilitate and support events within the Shire. This includes reviewing planning regulations and policies (which is already underway), producing event guidelines and/or an event manual, appointing a point of contact withing Council for all event inquiries, defining internal communication channels and process protocols and formulating a policy in relation to Council funding and in-kind support.
- Identify the events that have the potential to grow and work with event organisers to develop and implement a business / action plan.
- Explore options to leverage the Shire’s indoor and outdoor venues and assets to hold / attract events and, where needed, work with venue managers to secure funding to upgrade venue infrastructure and facilities and market and promote their venues. As part of this, discussions need to be held with the land and water management agencies to identify the type and characteristic of events that are likely to be suitable and the approval process.
- Identify and target footloose events (eg music and arts festivals, cycling and other outdoor events) that could potentially be held in the Shire.
- Explore options to target caravan and RV club rallies and horse events.
- Leverage major events within the surrounding region to generate bookings for accommodation properties in Dungog Shire.



## 15. EMERGING MARKETS

Dungog Shire needs to leverage its product base and invest in infrastructure to grow and sustain emerging markets, in particular:

- Touring caravan and RVs
- Touring motorcycles
- Agri tourism
- Accessible tourism

### 15.1 Touring Caravans and RVs



As discussed in Section 8.2, the touring caravan and RV market is a significant growth market Australia-wide, with a surge in travellers expected as the State border re-open and international travel remains restricted. Dungog Shire is seeing an increase in the touring caravan market, particularly travellers aged 55+ years. While some travellers with 4WD vehicles and vans are camping in the Chichester State Forest, this market is showing a preference for town sites, with the Williams River Holiday Park, Gresford Showground and Camp on Allyn being popular. Travellers are also looking for sites in Dungog and Paterson. Both Maitland and Singleton LGAs are looking to grow this market, which will increase the number of travellers around the southern and western borders of Dungog Shire, providing opportunities to ‘pull’ them into and the through the Shire.

In terms of activities, caravanners and RVs are increasingly travelling with bicycles (generally hybrid or MTB) and canoes as part of their rigs and looking for places to ride and paddle. There are also an increasing number of people travelling with dogs and looking for dog-friendly caravan parks and camping sites and places to exercise, including dog off-the-leash areas. Other facilities and infrastructure sought by caravanners and RVs include dump points, access to a laundry, long rig parking within town centres preferably close to supermarkets, free Wi Fi access and charging facilities, access to potable water and a safe place to leave their van so that they can explore the area. Some travellers also look for RV Friendly Town (RVFT), RV Friendly Localities (RVFL – usually villages) and RV Friendly Destinations (RVFD – usually rural and bushland properties). While Dungog is an accredited RVFT, the villages and the commercial caravan parks (eg Lostock, Ferndale, Camp on Allyn) are not. There are very few RV friendly locations in the Hunter Region.

The touring caravan and RV market is an ideal ‘fit’ for the towns and villages in Dungog Shire. This market is more likely to stay in Dungog and the villages, visit mid-week and have flexible itineraries.

### Opportunities

- To position and promote Dungog and the villages as ‘hubs’, encouraging caravanners to use the town as a base, a safe place to leave their van while they explore the National Parks and State Forests. Older travellers often avoid National Parks as they perceive the walks as too difficult. The ready access to the rainforests and the creeks in both the Williams River Picnic Area and along the Allyn River area should be promoted to these travellers.

- To increase the supply of caravan and RV sites – developing the proposed sites at the Dungog Showground and Paterson Sportsground; encouraging the development of commercial caravan and camping sites, with the priority being sites in Dungog; enabling hotels and licenced clubs to provide powered and unpowered sites for self-contained rigs; and possibly using the hardstand area adjacent to the former Dungog bus depot for overnight parking for self-contained rigs.
- To target / bid for the smaller caravan club and RV rallies.
- To encourage the Maitland VIC to recommend the Paterson Sportsground camping area as one of the places to camp around Maitland.
- To develop packages and itineraries for the RV / campervan hire companies that are expected to establish at Newcastle Airport.

### Challenges / Issues

- Poor condition of many of the roads in the Shire, including the main access roads, with the roads not ideal for caravans and RVs. The poor condition of the Paterson River Road is a deterrent to visiting Lostock Dam.
- Dungog does not have a caravan park and currently there are no powered sites.
- Williams River Holiday Park is run-down and has limited powered sites.
- Not all caravan and camping areas within the Shire are listed on the visitdungog website nor on the caravan and camping brochure. In addition, there is very limited information available on the capacity and type of sites, services etc, nor the services available in Dungog and the villages. None of the properties / sites offer online, real time bookings.
- There is no modern fuel outlet in the Shire. The kerb-side outlets are not ideal for the long rigs.
- Limited long-rig parking in Dungog. While there is long vehicle parking signage on the corner of Dowling and Brown Streets directing rigs to turn into Brown Street, there is no further signage in Brown Street and limited signage at the Station. Travellers (if they saw the sign) would be expecting to park in Brown Street which has ready access to the main street and the VIC, not at the station. The railway station car park is not ideal for long vehicle parking.
- There is no designated caravan parking area in the town. In places where it is not permissible or desirable for travellers to take vans into National Parks or to attractions with access restrictions, there is generally a place where vans can be parked (often at the VIC) for the day.
- Some of the camping and caravan websites, including the CMCA RV Friendly Map, show Frank Robinson Reserve at Dungog as the Dungog Caravan Park.

### Directions Forward

- To provide the proposed sites at the Dungog Showground and Paterson Sportsground as quickly as possible, ensuring that they are well signposted and listed on the visitdungog, visitnsw and key caravan and camping websites and directories.



- Work with licensed clubs and hotels in the Shire that are interested in providing a few powered sites or parking for self-contained vehicles to gain the necessary approvals. Provision of caravan and RV sites adjacent to hotels and licensed clubs is becoming increasingly popular in small towns and villages across regional NSW.
- Continue to explore options to establish a caravan park or additional sites in Dungog. While the Showground sites are a short-term solution, the site and location are not ideal. Land owned by Council at the end of Abelard Street would be a more suitable location.
- Review options for caravan parking within the Dungog Town Centre – locations suitable for visitors to park and explore the town centre (not too far to carry grocery bags) and those who wish to leave their van for the day while they explore the National Parks and Forests. The hardstand area at the former bus depot could be an option provided it was linked directly to the town centre (eg footpath). Another option could be Brown Street between Dowling Street and Jubilee Park or down the centre of this section of Brown Street.
- Seek to have Clarence Town, East Gresford (Showground + Camp on Allyn) and Paterson accredited as RV Friendly Localities and Lostock Dam and the commercial camping grounds as RV Friendly destinations.
- Update the caravan and camping information on the Dungog website and in the Caravan and Camping brochure. In addition to including all caravan and camping grounds within the Shire, provide more information on the site access and facilities (eg maximum site size, ability to drive through, pet friendly etc), fuel outlets suitable for long rigs and automotive services available, as well as things to do in the area, including cycle routes and places to canoe.
- When the camping area is established at Paterson Showground, consider inviting staff from the Maitland and Singleton VICs on a famil of caravan and camping sites along the Allyn River corridor.

## 15.2 Touring Motorcycles

Dungog Shire is seeing an increasing number of touring motorcycles – both road bikes and trail bikes. Both are relatively high yield markets as motorcyclists use commercial accommodation (often pub hotels or budget to mid-range motels) and purchase all meals. The road bikers are more likely to be day visitors, coming out of Newcastle and the Central Coast and heading north or across to Singleton area, or from Sydney. Most riders from Sydney arrive via the Putty Road to Singleton and are heading north to Gloucester and the New England Region. Over the past 6 years the New England Region, with sponsorship from BMW Australia and Hema Maps, have invested significantly in developing motorbike touring leveraging the steep, winding, highly scenic routes (eg Thunderbolts Way) linking the coast and the New England. To the south, Singleton Shire has been marketing the Putty Road as an iconic motorbike touring route with the route also featured on the NSW Government ‘Live to Ride’ website. Dungog Shire sits between the end of the Putty Road ride and Gloucester which forms the start of Thunderbolts Way motorcycle touring route to the New England region.

Trail bikers appear to have a higher propensity to overnight in the Shire. These riders appear to be coming mainly from the surrounding region to explore the Barrington Tops National Park (gravel access roads used for trail bike touring) and the Chichester State Forest and are primarily staying at the Beatty Hotel in Gresford and in the pubs and motel in Dungog.

### Opportunities and directions forward

The road touring motorbike market should be encouraged. There is potential to work with both Singleton and the New England Region to develop a ‘Putty Road and Beyond’ promotion that ‘formalises’ and promotes the touring route from Sydney to the New England Region via Dungog Shire. A second route could also have a starting point in the east, to channel

riders from Newcastle and the Central Coast through Dungog and north to the New England Region. A Hunter Valley touring loop, which includes Dungog Shire, could also be developed as part of the promotion.

### 15.3 Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism is becoming a 'driver' of visitation. Visitors are increasingly looking to for 'country' holidays – to stay on rural properties, explore farming life, visit farm gates outlets, pick fruit, visit farmers markets and sample artisan food and beverage. Currently Dungog Shire has a nucleus of agri tourism products and experiences including farm stay properties, Tocal Agricultural College (short courses, workshops and field days), Farm Visit (a dairy farm near Dungog), the Tin Shed Brewery, Westwood Dungog Providores, Pete's Country Cuts, 'Just been laid' free range eggs, and the Dungog Local Growers Farmers Market. Development approval has also been given for an agricultural – eco tourism project at Munni which will include an Education Centre focusing on ecologically sustainable farming practices, an artisan cheese factory, accommodation and restaurant. The Dungog Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement and the Rural Lands Study are looking to encourage innovative and sustainable agriculture within the Shire, with agri-tourism being part of the mix.

Within the surrounding region, the Maitland LGA identifies agri-tourism as a significant opportunity and is looking to develop Tocal as an agri-tourism hub, as well as farm gate trails and fresh produce and dining experiences. Port Stephens Shire is allowing the establishment of farm gate outlets, while MidCoast Council has as one of its core experiences 'Nature's Bounty' which focuses on local produce and agricultural, food and beverage experiences.

#### Opportunities and directions forward

- To continue to encourage and support the development of agri tourism ventures within the Shire.
- Explore opportunities to work with Maitland LGA (and potentially Port Stephens and MidCoast Councils) to develop and promote agri tourism experiences, including farm gate trails.
- As product develops, consider producing a 'Grown in Dungog' – a guide to local producers and providores.

### 15.4 Accessible Tourism

The introduction of the NDIS, the increased focus by the NSW Government on Disability Inclusion Action Plans and the emergence of travel companies specialising in travel for people with disabilities and their carers, is stimulating growth in the accessible tourism market. This is a high yield market that both LGAs and individual operators are starting to target. To the east, developing accessible tourism products and infrastructure is a priority of Port Stephens Council and there may be potential to work collaboratively.

#### Opportunities and directions forward

There is possibly a niche market opportunity for Dungog Shire to target the 'adaptive' outdoor tourism market. Some of the camping and picnic areas in the Chichester State Forest are inclusive. Additional product development could include:

- Establishment of trails in the Dungog Common suitable for adaptive mountain biking.

- Modifying the jetty / or developing a new facility at Clarence Town that enables people with disabilities to access canoes and boats (for disabled water skiing). The ‘all ability’ canoe launcher on the Edwards River in the Murray Valley National Park and the facilities at the Moree Water Park for disabled water skiing provide examples.
- An accessible bushwalk/s – this is currently being proposed by Forestry Corporation in the Chichester State Forest and there may be opportunity to extend the accessible section of the Blue Gum loop.
- Identifying suitable accommodation.
- Ensuring facilities (eg toilet blocks) are accessible.

### Examples of Adaptive Outdoor Activities



## 16. INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Dungog Shire needs to ensure that its infrastructure, facilities and services have the capacity to facilitate and support growth in the visitor economy and meet the needs and expectations of travellers.

### 16.1 Accommodation

Dungog Shire offers a diverse range of accommodation from quality, boutique properties to primitive camping areas. The Shire is under-supplied with accommodation in the towns and villages. It also has capacity constraints across the entire sector during peak periods and major events.

While the Shire has a concentration of rural and bushland properties, the capacity of most of these properties is limited (1-2 cabins) and the quality of the service and level of professionalism is variable. Some of these properties are operated as a sideline with their availability changing. The small scale also limits the ability and/or willingness to invest in marketing and promotion, relying on DRT (which they are often not a member of) and the visitdungog website to sell the Shire as a destination and their own website and on-line directories such as Air BnB to generate bookings.

#### Opportunities / Directions Forward

- To continue to improve and increase sites for caravans, RVs and camping across the Shire:
  - Upgrade the Williams River Holiday Park and explore opportunities for overflow camping during peak times.
  - Provide sites at the Dungog Showground and the Paterson Sportsground.
  - Encourage and support the ongoing upgrading of the Lostock Dam Caravan Park.
  - Work with licensed clubs and pub hotels to provide caravan sites and/or cabins as ancillary uses.
  - Develop a caravan park / camping ground in Dungog.
  - Investigate possible sites in Dungog and the villages for over-night camping for self-contained rigs.
  - Encourage and support the development of caravan parks and camping grounds on suitable rural sites, with the preference being to locate caravan sites close to Dungog and the villages.
  - Identify and approve suitable areas as temporary campgrounds for use during major events and as overflow areas during peak times.
- Encourage and support the development of additional rooms in Dungog and the villages and eco-friendly accommodation in suitable locations in the rural areas of the Shire.
- Encourage all accommodation operators to improve their on-line presence, including having a contemporary website with on-line booking facilities and links to the Shire event calendar, visitor guide and maps and brochures on the visitdungog website.



- Ensure that caravan and camping sites are listed on popular third party websites (eg Wiki Camps) and encourage all accommodation operators to list on relevant third party sites (eg travelling with kids, dog friendly accommodation, wedding venue sites etc).

## 16.2 Venues

Growing and capitalising on regional events and building the regional conference market are priorities of Destination NSW and the Destination Network. DNSW has in place regional conferencing and regional event strategies which are looking to build capacity and infrastructure in regional NSW. The SSN DMP has identified the need to develop new venues for larger events and weddings and to upgrade facilities at existing venues.

As discussed in Chapter 14, events can be used to drive growth in visitation, with the Shire having the potential to grow small business events (eg corporate retreats), sporting events (eg MTB, cycling, adventure racing), entertainment (eg film festivals, music festivals) and weddings and functions. Growing the events sector is dependent in part on upgrading existing venues and leveraging assets, such as the Williams River, Dungog Common and State Forests, to host events.

### Opportunities / Directions Forward

- Explore options to leverage the Shire’s indoor and outdoor venues and assets to hold / attract events and, where needed, work with venue managers to secure funding to upgrade venue infrastructure and facilities and market and promote their venues. As part of this, liaise with the land and water management agencies to identify the type and characteristic of events that are likely to be suitable within their holdings and the approval process involved.
- Identify locations and venues suitable for weddings and functions, develop a wedding and functions directory / brochure and endeavour to list venues on suitable websites such as WedShed – Hunter Valley Venues.
- Leverage the opening of refurbished function room at the Royal Hotel to generate publicity regionally for this and other local venues (eg James Theatre).
- Include a venue guide webpage on the visitdungog website – listing all outdoor and indoor venues with links to venue websites and specifications.



## 16.3 Information Services

Information services are integral in supporting visitation. These services are an important link between local businesses and visitors, support the Shire's marketing and promotion, and, most importantly, make a visitor feel welcome. Information needs to be available and readily accessible from a range of touch points and devices at all stages in the path to purchase, during the journey and at the destination (see Figure 16.1). Information services extend well beyond the visitor, with services provided to tourism and business operators, the travel trade, government agencies, tourism organisations and the local community.

### Sourcing Information

Web and digital technology have and are continuing to change the way in which consumers access and share information, select destinations and products, and book travel. Travellers now have access to an exponentially increasing range of information sources through an expanding number of touch points. To remain competitive, Dungog Shire needs to continue to expand its multiple channel use (traditional and online) to communicate targeted messages to consumers at each stage of the decision-making process.

On the downside, consumers have access to too much information creating a 'data surplus' and an 'insight deficit'. Consumers are increasingly relying on Visitor Information Centres to provide the 'insight'. The challenge for the Shire is to provide a range of information services that are authoritative, contemporary, comprehensive and unbiased, in a diverse range of formats that are responsive to individual needs.

Travellers are using multiple devices (referred to as 'cross platform') to research travel, with 89% of searches started on one device (frequently a smart phone and/or tablet) and completed on another. Most of the searches undertaken on mobile devices are 'micro minute' - short searches while people are waiting around (eg at the bus stop, on the train, in a cafe etc) with searchers primarily looking for 'inspiration'. At this stage, there is a very high propensity to view images, short videos (YouTube) and deals and offers.

94% of people are now travelling with one or more mobile devices<sup>26</sup> (90% with smartphones, 42% with tablets and 26% with laptops/notebooks). Amongst those travelling with mobile devices, nearly three-quarters (71%) used them to navigate, source travel information, and/or to make bookings during their stay. VICs (42%) and word-of-mouth referrals are leading sources of information while in-region.

Videos have become one of the most important promotional tools. Destination videos are primarily used during the 'Dreaming' stage when travellers are searching for ideas and destinations. 85% of travel-related searches on YouTube focus on destinations, attractions, points of interest and general travel ideas<sup>27</sup>. Product (including accommodation) videos are more likely to be viewed during the planning stage when travellers are comparing products and prices. Travellers watch a mix of user generated and professionally made video clips. 58% of leisure travellers and 64% of business travellers advised that watching on-line videos influenced their choice of destination and/or products (eg accommodation, activities, tours) selected.

User Generated Content (USG), both as a communication tool and to share travel experiences, continues to increase. User generated content is broadly defined as any content (text, images, videos) posted on the web that is not published by a brand. It includes content such as blogs, comments, posts, forums, reviews, podcasts, videos and images, posted via on-line services, social media and content sharing sites. UGC provides another source of information, from a user perspective, with potential travellers interested in what other travellers have to say about a destination.

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<sup>26</sup> Mytravelresearch.com

<sup>27</sup> Travel Content Takes off on YouTube [www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com.au)

Figure 16.1 Information Sources used in the Path to Purchase and during the Journey



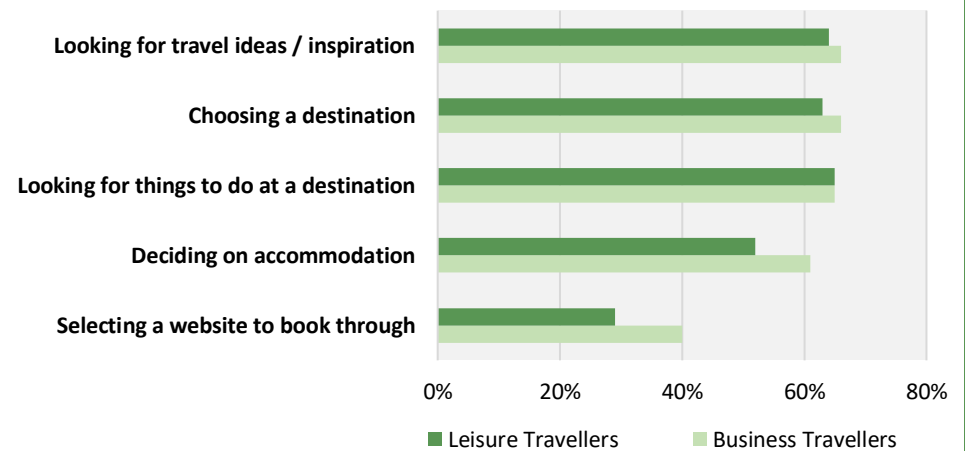
## Changing Nature of Information Services

As a result of the changing technology, the 'back room' activities for information service providers have increased significantly. Tourism organisations / VICs are increasingly employing people with strong digital and graphic design skills to leverage the digital space.

Research within Australia and internationally, has concluded that:

- The tourism website is now the most important information and marketing tool. The website has to be cross-platform (mobile, tablet, computer and in the future – smart watch) and voice optimised, and semantic search responsive and supported by and fully integrated with social media, with social media being used to 'drive business' to the website.
  - Despite digital devices, travellers are still looking for contact with and recommendations from locals, as well as print-based information – maps, visitor guides, brochures, information sheets.
  - Visitor Information Centres are and will remain a significant in-region touch point for visitors, bringing visitors into contact with what the area has to offer – providing visitors with the information, advice and services needed to enhance their visit and encourage them to spend more time and money within the area. VICs are also an integral part of the marketing, distribution and sales process. The key attributes that VICs bring to this process is their ability to:
    - Inspire - to match visitor needs with local experiences in a friendly, professional manner and create a 'wow' factor for visitors.
    - Make sense of the vast amount of information that is available – removing uncertainty and confusion.
    - Deliver current, comprehensive and, most importantly, unbiased information.
- VIC's also have a significant role in keeping visitors 'safe', being the 'go to' places for information during natural disasters as well as providing information on road and weather conditions, travelling safely in remote areas and 'safe' places to leave vehicles or camp etc.
- **The 'next generation' of VICs<sup>28</sup> will:**
    - Continue to evolve to provide an extraordinary experience, including telling inspiring stories.
    - Continue to deliver a high level of customer service underpinned by a wealth of local knowledge.
    - Provide information at all stages of the trip planning, booking and travel phases – using a range of communication media, channels and touch points.
    - Deliver their visitor guide, maps and other key information in both print and digital format.
    - Provide opportunities for booking accommodation and tours.

**Figure 16.2 Use of on-line video clips (eg You Tube) in researching and planning trips**



<sup>28</sup> Australia's Accredited VICs : A Strategic Directions Discussion Paper



- Offer free Wi-Fi and have information available digitally through a variety of mediums. This will be supported by spaces within VICs where visitors can sit and spend time using their own digital device.
- Provide information on a 24 hour basis through a number of touch points – eg static information displays, touch screens, web, Apps, QR codes etc.
- Integrate the use of technology (eg touch screens, tablets, augmented and virtual reality, soundscapes etc) into how information is displayed and presented. Tablets are proving very popular within VICs, allowing staff and visitors to search for information, communicate with non-English speaking visitors, book on-line and transfer information digitally to the consumer’s smart phone or tablet.

## Information Services in Dungog Shire

Information services in Dungog Shire are delivered by a range of organisations:

- Dungog Shire Council owns and operates the Dungog VIC, the information directories in Dungog and the villages, and maintains the visitdungog website and facebook and Instagram sites.
- Dungog Regional Tourism (DRT) produces a range of brochures.
- The Gloucester Advocate newspaper produces the Barrington Towns Visitor Guide which features towns, villages, attractions and businesses both Dungog Shire and the Gloucester area.
- NPWS and Forestry Corporation websites and apps provide information on the National Parks and State Forests in the Shire.
- Ride Dungog provides information on cycling and mountain biking.
- Dungog District Chamber of Commerce has a business directory of members.

## Visitor Information Centre

The Dungog VIC is centrally located in the Dungog town centre. Although well signed, the hedging along the Dowling Street frontage decreases visibility of the Centre. The Centre is relatively small and becomes crowded in peak times. It does not have public toilets nor on-site parking. Internally, the Centre has good displays of the Chichester State Forest, Chichester Dam and the Barrington Tops National Park which were the Shire’s main attractions when the Centre was developed. Maps of these localities plus the Dungog town centre are on display on the external front walls of the Centre, with these maps faded and becoming difficult to read.

Both the attraction and activity base of the Shire and the visitor mix has changed since the Centre was fitted out. As such, the internal and external displays need to be updated, preferably using a mix of static and digital displays. In addition to the current attractions featured, the Centre also needs to provide information and imagery on:

- Dungog and the villages
- Dungog Common
- The National Parks and State Forests in the Clarence Town area
- The rivers and riverside reserves
- Mountain-biking and cycling – featuring the Dungog Common and the bike ‘library’
- Activities that visitors can undertake in the area – bushwalking, paddling, cycling, picnicking, scenic drives etc
- Lifestyle shopping and dining including local producers and providers
- Accommodation options – featuring ‘aspirational’ images
- Upcoming events

In updating the Centre, consideration should be given to:

- Including of virtual reality to tell some of the Shire's stories and provide virtual' access to remote more inaccessible areas of the Shire (eg World Heritage areas, glow worms, the gullies and caves at Pilchers Mountain) should also be considered.
- Providing free WiFi access and access to a charging station for digital devices, including the ability to charge electric bike batteries.
- Using the exterior of the VIC as an arts space, regularly changing the artwork on the veranda posts, enabling temporary artworks to be hung on the corrugated iron wall and having temporary installations in the garden.

### Information and Promotional Collateral

Information and promotional collateral needs to be expanded with this to include:

- Dungog Shire Visitor Guide
- A tear off A3 map of the Shire
- Additional brochures / information sheets on the activities available in the Shire as well as on shopping and dining, produce and providers, and 'Made in Dungog' – a guide to local galleries, artists and artisans.

Information should be available in both print and digital format.

### Information Directories

The information directories in the villages are becoming difficult to read and need to be updated, with the content improved to better promote the villages and the Shire. The directories also need to include the visitdungog website address and possibly a QR code to provide additional information and be signposted using the 'i' sign.

### Directions Forward

- Refurbish to Dungog VIC – moving towards becoming a 'next generation centre' - focusing on enhancing and expanding the displays, increased use of digital technology to tell 'stories' and provide experiences.
- Continue to expand the range of information available, including producing a visitor guide.
- Update the information directories throughout the Shire and providing additional directories in strategic locations including Dungog and Paterson Railway Stations and at the Dungog Common.
- Update and expanding the image library – both photos and video clips.
- Continue to build the Shire's on-line presence, including implementing a social media strategy.



*Visitor information directories in the villages are becoming difficult to read and do not effectively promote the village or the Shire*

## 16.4 Access Infrastructure

### 16.4.1 Roads

Roads are critical infrastructure for tourism, providing access to and through the Shire. They also form part of the attraction (scenic drives) and activity (eg cycle tourism) base of the Shire and can be used to stage events. As such, the role that the road network plays in tourism needs to be taken into consideration in Council and RMS decision-making and funding. Within the Shire, roads that are significant for tourism include:

#### Roads Feeding into the Shire:

- Clarence Town Road
- Limeburners Creek Road
- Stroud Hill Road
- Glendonbrook Road
- Gresford – Tocal Road
- Peterson Road

#### Main visitor routes:

- Clarence Town Road – linking Dungog and Clarence Town to Raymond Terrace and the Pacific Highway.
- Bingleburra Road – the main route across the Shire linking Gresford and Dungog and the Allyn and Williams River Valleys. This is part of Tourist Drive 31.
- Dungog Road – linking Dungog and Paterson.
- Tocal – Gresford – Allyn River Road – providing access to the Allyn River precinct of Chichester State Forest and the Barrington National Park.
- Chichester Dam – Wangat Trig Roads – providing access to Chichester Dam and to the Telegherry precinct of the Chichester State Forest and Jerusalem Creek area of the Barrington Tops National Park.
- Main Creek Road – linking Dungog with the Telegherry precinct of the Chichester State Forest and Jerusalem Creek area of the Barrington Tops National Park.
- Chichester Dam – Salisbury Road – linking Dungog and the Williams River picnic area and the roads feeding into the Barrington Tops National Park and across to the Allyn River Road. The route can be used to evacuate the Allyn River area when the Allyn River Road is flooded.
- Paterson River Road – providing access to the Upper Paterson River, Lostock Dam and the southern edge of the Mount Royal National Park.
- Fosterton Loop – popular for scenic driving and for cycling.



Most of the roads in Dungog Shire area in poor condition and are a deterrent to some caravanners and RVs, motorcyclists and cyclists. The roads accessing many of the Barrington Tops National Park and Chichester State Forest visitors areas are unsealed, with some only suitable for 4WD vehicles following heavy rain. Several of the roads are also subject to flooding, with the Allyn River Road in particular, often cut after heavy rain. At peak times, the volume of visitor traffic (particularly 4WD and trail bikes) on the forest and national park access roads in the upper river valleys is excessive resulting in damage to unsealed sections, erosion and dust issues and increased risk of accidents.

## Priorities

From a tourism perspective the road improvement priorities are:

- Reducing the flood risk on the Allyn River Road, with the priority being the culvert (known as the dip) near the entrance to the Chichester State Forest. Rain in the catchment results in rapid rises in the river levels with the three culverts in the upper Allyn River valley going under water very quickly. While there are warning signs for visitors travelling north into the forest not to proceed if the first culvert is flooded, there are no warning signs for visitors already in the Forest advising them that they can exit via Salisbury Road. Fearing being 'trapped' motorists will often 'chance' the culvert. Ideally the dip culvert needs to be replaced with a higher culvert or a bridge. Turning areas (suitable for vehicles towing caravans and camper trailers) and warning signs also need to be provided on the northern and southern sides of the section of road subjected to flooding to enable vehicles to turn around safely, with signage as visitors come out of the forest advising them of an alternative route via Salisbury Road.
- Sealing the short section of road between Salisbury Road and the Williams River Picnic Area – Blue Gum Loop to provide all-weather access for all vehicles to one site at the southern end of the Barrington Ranges – all other picnic and camping areas and bush walking trails are accessed by unsealed roads.
- Improving and maintaining the pavement on the unsealed sections of the main forest access roads. As visitor traffic increased the Allyn River Road may need to be sealed.
- Resealing the main access route through Dungog: Clarence Town Road – Mary Street – Dowling Street – Hooke Street.

## 16.4.2 Rail

There is potential to leverage the passenger rail services to grow visitation to Dungog Shire. Both Paterson and Dungog are ideally suited for walking clubs and groups (eg Probus) – with the rail service providing an economical way of accessing the Shire. Rail access also supports:

- The events sector and provides opportunities for 'festival' services.
- Mountain biking and cycling enabling cyclists to access Dungog and providing opportunities to link mountain biking – gravel grinding activities in Dungog, Gloucester, Barrington Tops and the Scone area. Currently seats have to be booked on the train between Dungog and Gloucester and on the Xplorer/XPT service on the main north line (Scone), with a limit on the number of bicycles and bicycles needing to be boxed.

## Priority

To advocate for changes in rules relating to bookings and bicycles on rail services between Dungog and Gloucester and on Xplorer / XPT services on the main north line.

### 16.4.3 River Access

While the rivers are a significant part of the attraction base of Dungog Shire, the river access points are poorly defined and not well presented. New boat ramps and jetties have been installed at Bridge Reserve and Wharf Reserve in Clarence Town, with the Bridge Reserve area presenting well. Wharf Reserve needs directional signage to the boat ramp (dirt tracks lead off in different directions from the reserve entrance from Rifle Street). The amenities also need to be upgraded. There is also a boat ramp at Webbers Creek Reserve at Tocal, with this ramp being steep, with no jetty or pontoon and limited car parking. River access points in Dungog, East Gresford and Gresford and Kings Wharf Reserve Paterson are not well presented, with steep pathways to the river and weeds limiting access along the riverside. There is no defined public access way to the river at Vacy and, due to weeds, there is no access to the river adjacent to John Tucker Park in Paterson.

### Priorities

- Improve pedestrian access to the rivers in Dungog, Gresford and East Gresford.
- Investigate opportunities to provide public access to the river in Vacy.
- Improved access to the river at John Tucker Park and Kings Wharf at Paterson and investigate opportunities to include a small pontoon or jetty as well as facilities for launching and retrieving canoes.
- Improve Wharf Reserve at Clarence Town, including providing directional signage to the boat ramp.
- Investigate the potential for including an 'all ability' canoe launcher at Bridge Reserve in Clarence Town.
- Sign posting the river access points across the Shire.

## 16.5 Signage

Signage plays a significant role in how an area presents. It also forms part of the visitor information services infrastructure and is a significant marketing and promotional tool. Within the Shire, Council is responsible for signage on Council controlled roads and in the public domain, with the NPWS and Forestry Corporation of NSW responsible for signage in the areas they control.

To be effective, the signage needs to be comprehensive and integrated at all levels, namely:

- **Motivational and promotional signage** – to raise the profile of the area, develop brand / image recognition and to make travellers aware of the area and the attractions and facilities on offer. There may be opportunity to rent a billboard on the Pacific Highway corridor in the Heatherbrae area. The World Heritage logo/brand should also be included on the directional signs to the National Parks.
- **Gateway signs** – these signs are important in creating a sense of arrival, making a visitor feel welcome and reinforcing the Shire's brand. The gateway entry signs for Dungog and the Villages are looking tired and appear due for replacement / reskinning. As part of the gateway signage for the villages, consideration should be given to including facility signage with icons promoting the facilities available (eg petrol, caravan sites, toilets etc).
- **Information signs / directories** – on arrival in a new area, visitors tend to look for the Visitor Information Centre 'i' signs and roadside information directories. The directories in the villages are faded and becoming difficult to read and do not effectively promote either the village or the Shire. In Dungog, a vehicle layby/ pull-off area needs to be provided

on the northern side of Clarence Town Road opposite the information board to enable travellers, particularly caravanners) to pull over safely to view the board. Consideration should also be given to erecting information boards at strategic location including at the Dungog and Paterson Railway Stations and Dungog Common. All information boards should be signposted.

- **Directional signage** – the primary purpose is to ensure that travellers can find their way easily. Directional signage also provides re-assurance and reinforces the motivational signage by creating the perception that the area has ‘a lot to offer’. There is a need to update directional signage to and throughout the Shire, including in the State Forests and National Parks. The directional signage needs to include advance warning signs, so that travellers, particularly caravanners, have time to process the information and make decisions.
- **Service & facility signs** – international symbols for public toilets, accommodation, camping areas, car and caravan parking etc. Fingerboard signs are not as effective as the symbols. There needs to be a program in place to progressively replace fingerboard signs with international symbols and to ensure that all facilities are signposted. Signage on the entry corridors to the villages should include symbols of the facilities and services available. With caravanners and RVs being a growing market for the Shire, it is important that the caravan parks, camping areas, dump points and caravan parking areas are well signposted.
- **Interpretive signage / information** – this is particularly important at attractions that are not staffed.
- **Event signage** – frames / hanging points, where event organisers can advertise their events, with this infrastructure strategically located so that it is visible to both local residents and passing travellers.
- **Warning and advisory signs** – in addition to the general ‘suite’ of signs, Dungog Shire also needs good advisory and warning signage advising about flooding and bushfire risks and alternative routes for evacuation. In the north of the Shire it would also be desirable to include information / signage on localities with mobile phone coverage.

## Priorities

- To undertake a comprehensive signage audit to identify signage gaps and signs that need to be updated and determine priorities.
- Seek funding to improve signage throughout the Shire.
- To improve signage to and within the National Parks and State Forests within the Shire.
- Update and signpost the information boards in the villages and provide boards at the Dungog and Paterson railway stations and Dungog Common.

## 16.6 Visitor Amenities

Visitors look for a range of amenities including parks, playgrounds, picnic areas and public toilets. Dungog and each of the villages have attractive parks and reserves. Public toilets are available, however most of the toilet blocks are at or approaching the end of their design life.

### Improvements needed:

- More effective signposting of Jubilee and Frank Robinson Park and Dungog Common from the Dungog Town Centre.

- Upgrading or removing the picnic tables at Lioness Park (Hollywood Hill) in Dungog.
- Replacing the public toilet block in the Dungog Town Centre with a contemporary amenities block which includes accessible toilets and a parent room / baby changing facilities.
- Upgrading / refurbishing the older toilet blocks in the villages.
- Upgrading facilities and signage at Wharf Reserve, Clarence Town and signposting both Wharf and Bridge Reserves from Clarence Town Road.

## 16.7 Telecommunications

Most visitors are now travelling with a smart phone and generally with a Tablet and/or lap-top computer. There is also increasing use of ‘wearable’ technology (eg smart watches) which are being used to access information. Visitors are highly dependent on access to the mobile telephone network and are increasingly expecting free WiFi to be offered by the VIC, accommodation properties, cafes and other businesses. The NBN (fibre to the node) is available in Dungog and the villages but not in most of the rural areas.

Dungog and the villages have 4G mobile phone coverage on both the Telstra and Optus networks, with the coverage extending south along the main access road corridors. Coverage in the central areas of the Shire, upper river valleys, Barrington Tops National Park and Chichester State Forest is very localised with services available at some high points along the ridge lines, with no services in the valleys. The upper river valleys attract significant numbers of visitors. The valleys are also subject to flash flooding and bushfires. Poor signage, narrow, unsealed roads and the adventure-based activities undertaken in the area also increase the risk of misadventure. For safety purposes, mobile coverage in the northern part of the Shire needs to be significantly expanded.

### Directions Forward

- Advocate for the extension of mobile phone coverage in the north of the Shire to improve safety for residents and visitors as well NPWS, Forestry and Emergency personnel.

## 16.8 Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

The take-up of electric vehicles is generating demand for access to charging stations. Over the next decade, the number of electric vehicles in Australia is forecast to grow at 28% per annum and reach 20% of new car sales by 2030<sup>29</sup>. The nearest public charging stations to Dungog Shire are located at Heatherbrae, Maitland, Pokolbin and Newcastle. Several accommodation properties in the Lower Hunter, including Cabin in the Clouds near Vacy, provide charging stations for guests. With the growth in cycling, Dungog will also see an increase in electric bikes, with cyclists likely to require access to outlets to charge bike batteries (could be provided at the new bike shop and/or VIC).

### Directions Forward

- Investigate options for an electric vehicle charging station within Dungog Shire.
- Identify places where cyclists can charge e.bike batteries.

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<sup>29</sup> ENERGEIA (2018) Australian Electric Vehicle Study

## 17. MARKET DEVELOPMENT - MARKETING AND PROMOTION

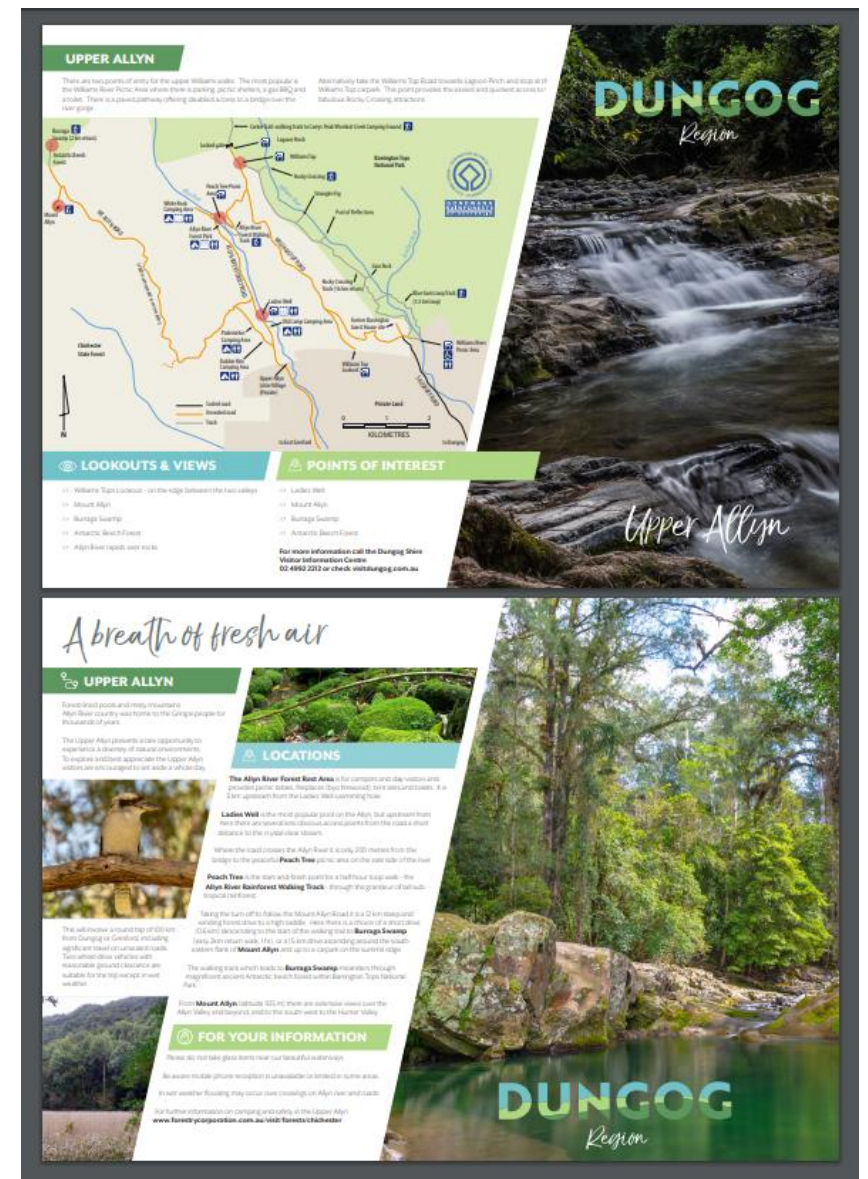
Destination development needs to be supported by market development and effective destination marketing.

### 17.1 Marketing undertaken by Dungog Shire

The destination marketing of Dungog Shire is undertaken by both Dungog Shire Council through the VIC and Dungog Regional Tourism. As the marketing budget is very small, the focus has been on co-operative activities with Destination NSW and other partners, leveraging opportunities as they arise. Marketing includes:

- Producing and distributing information and promotional collateral. DRT produces several brochures and is seeking grant funding to develop a Visitor Guide and additional promotional collateral.
- On-line marketing through the visitdungog tourism website and social media (facebook and instagram). This is undertaken by Council through the VIC.
- Listing and updating DRT member products as well as attractions, experiences and events on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse / NSW Get Connected data bases which under-pin the Destination NSW – visitnsw and regional conferences and websites. Not all accommodation properties or tourism businesses in the Shire are included on this data base.
- Supporting local events, including marketing and promoting these events on-line and through local and regional media channels.
- Public relations marketing - endeavouring to generate media and industry exposure for the Shire – press releases and media interviews, capitalising on events and activities.
- Feature articles accompanied by advertising in key publications – eg the Open Road; CMCA's Wanderer magazine; regional Lifestyle magazines. This is a challenge to secure as most of the publications are looking for local businesses to take out paid advertisements to support the feature article.
- Hosting familiarisation tours for journalists and social media 'influencers', with the activities generally organised through Destination NSW.

Council is marketing the Shire as 'Life as it should be' while DRT is using 'A breath of fresh air'.





## 17.2 Marketing Directions

Market development needs to concentrate on building the markets that are a natural fit with the attractions, activities and experiences that are available in the Shire and surrounding region; can be accommodated with the infrastructure, facilities and services that are available; and are cost and resource efficient to target. The focus should be on:

- Building special interest and activity-based markets, primarily:
  - MTB / Cyclists
  - Birdwatchers
  - Bushwalkers
  - Horse riders
  - Paddlers
  - Touring motorcyclists
- Growing the touring caravan and RV market and encouraging these travellers to stay longer in the Shire.
- Building the regional market – encouraging residents and their visiting friends and relatives to take day trips and short breaks in Dungog Shire and to attend the Shire’s events.
- Building the group markets – targeting social groups, activity-based clubs and associations, and caravan and motorhome clubs,
- Growing the events market

With limited marketing dollars:

- Council, DRT and DDCC need to collaborate in marketing the region/shire/LGA through sharing information, images, video resources and the timing of initiatives.
- Continue to work cooperatively with DNSW and other partners and leverage opportunities to work with adjoining LGAs to develop specific markets (eg Singleton LGA and the New England Region to develop the touring motorcycle market).
- Focus on-line marketing activities to build destination awareness, communicate directly with key target markets and to harness user-generated content.
- Leverage opportunities provided by NPWS and Forestry Corporation websites, social media channels and marketing initiatives.
- Continually improve and update Dungog Shire content on third party websites (eg Wiki Camps, travelling with children, travelling with pets).
- Undertake direct, targeted marketing to activity-based enthusiasts, clubs and association, leveraging relevant websites, magazines, you-tube content etc.
- Encourage tourism and business operators, community organisations and event organisers to develop /update their websites, embrace social media and to list on relevant free directories and third party websites. Accommodation operators should be encouraged to include a link to the visitdungog website on their website and social media channels.
- Increase marketing and PR activities within the surrounding region to raise awareness of Dungog and grow the regional day trip, VFR and short-breaks markets.
- Endeavour to ensure that Dungog Shire is represented at key travel, caravan and camping and lifestyle shows in Sydney, the Hunter – Central Coast and regional NSW.
- Explore opportunities to purchase editorial content in the Visitor Guides from surrounding LGAs. Dungog Shire may need to buy space in these Guides or enter into a quid-pro-quo arrangement to feature these towns in the Dungog Visitor’s Guide.



## 18. INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

The marketplace is evolving, and tourism and business operators need to keep abreast of changes. In particular, tourism and business operators need to be highly active in the digital space, with this space used to communicate, build relationships, market and promote, and 'make the sale'. Tourism operators need to be responsive to changing needs and expectations, recognising that customers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of inferior customer service. The retail community needs to recognise the importance of the presentation of both their shop front and merchandise. It is also essential that retailers and service providers have a strong online presence as travellers looking for goods and services are increasingly searching on-line. Trading hours are also issue, businesses needing to be open when visitors are in the area.

There are a diverse range of resources including on-line training programs available from Government agencies to assist business operators.

### Directions Forward

- For Council (Economic Development), DRT and the Chamber to endeavour to keep local businesses and tourism operators informed of the training and resources available as well as relevant grant programs.
- To encourage all businesses to claim their Google business listing and have a website (preferred) and/or facebook page.
- Endeavour to showcase local innovative businesses and business operators, as a way of stimulating business evolution and growth.
- To explore options for ensuring visitors have access to services, 7 days per week. This could include some form of rota system between operators – eg businesses agreeing to open on certain days, or staggering opening hours.



# PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, ACTIONS



## 19. PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES, ACTIONS

### 19.1 Vision

Our Shire community will work together to build a strong and sustainable visitor economy; one which enhances our lifestyle, respects our environment, and generates significant social and economic benefits for our community. Leveraging our natural environment, picturesque setting and contemporary country lifestyle, Dungog Shire will be a destination of choice for outdoor, soft adventure and nature-based activities – a place to escape to; a place to explore.

### 19.2 Objective

The primary objectives of the Dungog Shire DMP are to increase visitor expenditure within Dungog Shire and build resilience, with resultant economic and social benefits for the Shire community.

### 19.3 Strategic Priorities

Strategic priorities are:

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Priority 1 | Ensure that the framework and resources needed to coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy are in place    |
| Priority 2 | Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres                                  |
| Priority 3 | Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities                         |
| Priority 4 | Foster arts and cultural tourism   |
| Priority 5 | Grow the events sector   |
| Priority 6 | Leverage emerging markets  |
| Priority 7 | Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place |
| Priority 8 | Continue to build industry capacity  |
| Priority 9 | Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion   |



## 19.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The DMP has been prepared by DRT in consultation with Dungog Shire Council. Both organisations are committed to growing the visitor economy.

### Dungog Regional Tourism

Dungog Regional Tourism (DRT) will work collaboratively with Dungog Shire Council, DDCC, tourism and business operators, local organisations and community groups and external tourism organisations to implement the Destination Management Plan, build visitation and market and promote the Shire. It will endeavour to:

- Provide strong leadership for the Shire's tourism industry and tourism stakeholders.
- Increase visitation to the Shire, encouraging more people to visit, explore, stay longer and spend money in the area.
- Encourage sustainable tourism - protecting and enhancing the tourism, lifestyle, environmental and cultural values and attributes of the Shire.
- Produce information and marketing and promotional collateral.
- Effectively market and promote the Shire, its products, events and services.
- Encourage and facilitate industry development.
- Maintain strong relationships with tourism stakeholders within and outside the Shire.

### Dungog Shire Council

Council will continue to be a key stakeholder in visitor economy and be responsible for:

- The ongoing improvement and development of Council owned and/or managed attractions, assets, facilities and infrastructure to support the growth of the visitor economy.
- Delivering information services, including the operation of the Dungog VIC.
- Encouraging and facilitating Government and private sector investment in tourism attractions, facilities and infrastructure in the Shire.
- Supporting events and activities within the Shire.



## Strategic Priority 1: Ensure that the framework and resources needed to coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy are in place

Growing the visitation to and expenditure within Dungog Shire is dependent on enhancing and expanding the product base of the Shire; improving infrastructure, facilities and services; and effective marketing and promotion. Achieving this will require investment in assets and infrastructure, as well as resources to coordinate and drive projects. With limited funds and resources it is essential for Council and DRT to work collaboratively. As the regulatory authority it is essential that Council adopts a ‘whole-of-Council’ approach to developing and managing Dungog Shire as a tourist destination. It is also important that strong relationships are forged with key community groups, Reserve Trusts, land and water management agencies and surrounding Councils.

### Goal

A collaborative approach to coordinating and driving growth in the Shire’s visitor economy.

### Outcomes sought

- Key players to be working collaboratively to implement the DMP and coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy.
- Strong leadership and direction from Council, with a whole-of-Council approach to developing and managing Dungog Shire as a tourism destination.
- Strong alliances and/or partnerships with key stakeholders.

| Strategic Priority 1: Ensure that the framework and resources needed to coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy are in place |  |         |  |
|---|--|---------|--|
| Strategies  |  | Actions |  |
| <b>Strategy 1: A collaborative approach to implementing the DMP and growing the visitor economy</b>                                     |  |         |  |
| 1.1   | Adopt a collaborative approach to implementing the DMP and growing the visitor economy   | 1.1.1   | Define priorities and time frames and allocate roles and responsibilities.   |
|   |  | 1.1.2   | In marketing and promoting the Shire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the key messages and how they will be communicated (words to be used and images) clearly and consistently.</li> <li>• Ensure that the branding is consistent across all DRT and Council information and promotional collateral, display materials and web and social media sites.</li> </ul> |
|   |  | 1.1.3   | Develop a shared image library, including photographs, video clips and drone footage.  |
| <b>Strategy 2: Adopt a whole-of-Council approach to developing and managing Dungog Shire as a tourism destination</b>                   |  |         |  |
| 2.1   | Put in place the framework and protocols needed to deliver a ‘whole-of-Council’ approach to developing and managing Dungog Shire as a tourism destination. | 2.2.1   | Endeavour to employ an experienced Tourism and Events Officer.   |
|   |  | 2.2.2   | Ensure that Council’s culture, structure, roles and responsibilities and internal communication channels support growth in the visitor economy. This includes taking tourism needs and opportunities into account in the development and management of assets, facilities and infrastructure.  |
|   |  | 2.2.3   | Progressively incorporate the Destination Management Plan (DMP) directions, strategies and actions relevant to Council, into the Delivery and Operational Plans, Long Term Financial Plan and Operational Budget.  |
|   |  | 2.2.4   | Revise relevant Council strategies and policies to recognise the significance of the visitor economy and to incorporate relevant DMP strategies and actions. Ensure that the DMP is taken into consideration in formulating new strategies and policies.   |

## Strategic Priority 1: Ensure that the framework and resources needed to coordinate and drive growth in the visitor economy are in place

| Strategies   |  | Actions |   |
|--|--|---------|---|
|  |  | 2.2.5   | Ensure that the Local Environmental Plan, Plans of Management and other regulatory documents supports tourism development and activities, recognising that the rise in the 'share economy' and changing technology requires a flexible approach to planning.    |
|  |  | 2.2.6   | Formulate a framework that facilitates and supports events (see Strategy 13).   |
|  |  | 2.2.7   | Ensure that the VIC is adequately funded and resourced.   |
| <b>Strategy 3: Build strategic alliances and strong partnerships</b> |  |         |   |
| 3.1  | Engage with key stakeholders   | 3.1.1   | Identify the organisations (including village communities) that DRT and Council need to work with to implement the DMP actions, the roles that these organisations will play, and the activities / projects that need to be undertaken.                         |
|  |  | 3.1.2   | Brief each of the organisations on the DMP and discuss how they can contribute. Endeavour to gain support for the DMP and commitment to working with DRT and Council and taking responsibility for relevant activities and projects.                            |
| 3.2  | Engage with Members of Parliament.   | 3.2.1   | Ensure that Members of Parliament representing the Shire are briefed on the Shire's priority tourism projects and the funding required.   |
| 3.3  | Strengthen relationships with Government Agencies, Regional Organisations, infrastructure and service providers.         | 3.3.1   | Maintain strong relationships with key Government Agencies, regional and infrastructure and service providers.  |
|  |  | 3.3.2   | Brief and continue to update the regional Government offices on the key priorities and projects for Dungog Shire. Endeavour to ensure that the Shire's tourism priorities and projects are recognised in regional strategies, plans and priority project lists. |
|  |  | 3.3.3   | Actively participate in forums and workshops run by relevant Agencies and respond to invitations to comment on draft plans and strategies.  |
|  |  | 3.3.4   | Advocate to host regional meetings in the Shire.  |
|  |  | 3.3.5   | When needed, advocate strongly for improved infrastructure and services.  |
|  |  | 3.3.6   | Seek support to secure funding and investment.  |
|  |  | 3.3.7   | Support land and water management agencies in seeking funds and resources for developing and maintaining visitor facilities and infrastructure, managing visitation and marketing and promotion.  |
| 3.4  | Build and strengthen strategic alliances with Councils within the surrounding region and along strategic road corridors. | 3.4.1   | Build / strengthen alliances with neighbouring Councils to achieve regional and sub-regional product, infrastructure and market development outcomes.   |
|  |  | 3.4.2   | Participate in regional product development, marketing and promotional activities.  |
|  |  | 3.4.3   | Explore options for sharing data and resources.   |
| 3.5  | Harness the skills and experience available within the Shire and surrounding region.                                     | 3.5.1   | As needed, establish, encourage and support working parties, committees to address specific issues or pursue opportunities.   |

Clarence Town Post Office



St Annes, Gresford



Settlers Arms Dungog



Paterson Court House



## Strategic Priority 2 Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres

Localities play a very significant role in the visitor economy both as destinations and service centres, with presentation and first impressions playing a major role in the decision to stop in or visit a locality. From a visitor perspective, the key areas that make an impression are the gateway entry points, routes through the area, appearance and presentation of the town centre, and the parks and gardens. The presentation of businesses is also critical to encouraging travellers to stop, with businesses that present as clean and vibrant more likely to attract patronage than those that appear dated, tired and/or run down. Presentation is also important for the local community, building pride and confidence in the area, and is an attribute for people who are looking to relocate to and/or invest in the area, with tourism being an important driver of the ‘tree change’ process.

### Goal

- For all visitors to stop, explore and spend money in Dungog and the villages.

### Outcomes sought

For Dungog and the villages:

- Increased visitation to and money spent within Dungog and the villages – improving business performance, increasing resilience and providing jobs.
- To provide strong and favourable first impressions as well as memorable, lasting impressions – encouraging repeat visitation, referrals to others and positive on-line reviews.
- To have in place the infrastructure, facilities and services that visitors are seeking.

## Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres

| Strategies  |  | Actions |   |
|---|--|---------|---|
| <b>Strategy 4: Strengthen and consolidate Dungog’s position as small, vibrant, country town with a rich heritage and a strong creative, community; the gateway to the southern end of the Barrington Range; a centre for mountain biking and a hub for road cycling and gravel grinding</b> |  |         |   |
| 4.1   | Continue to improve the presentation of the gateway arrival points, entry corridors and key routes through Dungog. | 4.1.1   | Update the Dungog gateway entry signs and ensure that the area around the signs is well maintained.   |
|   |  | 4.1.2   | Provide the infrastructure for temporary signage for events in strategic locations within the entry corridors.  |
|   |  | 4.1.3   | Create a strong entry statement at Lioness Park that reinforces the town’s positioning and key attractions and upgrade visitor facilities within the Park.  |
|   |  | 4.1.4   | Investigate the feasibility of providing a safe area on Clarence Town Road opposite the information board in Lioness Park, for vehicles to pull over; and provide advanced warning signs so that travellers have time to make the decision to stop. |
|   |  | 4.1.5   | Update the directional and facility signage within the entry corridors and along the key routes through town.   |
|   |  | 4.1.6   | Advocate for funding to upgrade the road pavement on the key route through town (Clarence Town Road - Mary Street - Dowling Street – Hooke Street)  |
| 4.2   | Continue to upgrade the town centre  | 4.2.1   | Progressively implement the Place Making Strategy.  |
|   |  | 4.2.2   | Working with the arts community, investigate opportunities for temporary and permanent art installations along the main street.   |
|   |  | 4.2.3   | Provide facilities and infrastructure to cater for the growing caravan and RV markets.  |
|   |  | 4.2.4   | Install infrastructure to support cycle tourism – seek input from the arts community in the design of bicycle racks, signage and other infrastructure.  |



## Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres

| Strategies  |  | Actions |   |
|---|--|---------|---|
|   |  | 4.2.5   | Provide new public toilets.   |
|   |  | 4.2.6   | Signpost Jubilee Park, Frank Robinson Reserve and Dungog Common from the town centre.   |
| 4.3   | Continue to improve key visitor precincts and encourage movement between these areas   | 4.3.1   | Upgrade the Dungog Showground – progressively implementing the Plan of Management, and market and promote the facility as an event venue.   |
|   |  | 4.3.2   | Dungog Common: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the continued development of the Dungog Common for mountain biking, horse riding, bushwalking, events and other suitable activities.</li> <li>• Consider separating horses and MTB, possibly using the saleyard precinct as the preferred entry for horses.</li> <li>• Encourage creative initiatives such as temporary and permanent art installations.</li> </ul> |
|   |  | 4.3.3   | Improve access to the river at Frank Robinson Reserve.  |
|   |  | 4.3.4   | Link the town centre to the key visitor precincts, preferably by off-road, shared walking and cycling paths. Also provide safe routes between the Showground and the Common for horse riders and cyclists.  |
| <b>Strategy 5: Encourage travellers to stop, explore and spend in the villages.</b> |  |         |   |
| 5.1   | Continue to improve the presentation of the villages.  | 5.1.1   | In conjunction with the village communities, formulate and implement an improvement plan for each village, with the Plan addressing presentation and including both tourism and community / lifestyle initiatives.  |
| 5.2   | Promote the facilities and services available  | 5.2.1   | Erect blue and white facility (icon) signs on the approaches to each village.   |
| 5.3   | Improve signage and information services   | 5.3.1   | Update and signpost the information directories in each village.  |
|   |  | 5.3.2   | Update / improve attraction, directional and facility signage along the main routes into and through the villages.  |
| 5.4   | Promote village and Shire events   | 5.4.1   | In strategic locations, provide frames to hang signs promoting up-coming events.  |
| 5.5   | Strengthen and consolidate Clarence Town's position as a historic river town and destination for outdoor and adventure-based activities. | 5.5.1   | Improve the gateway arrival points on Clarence Town Road – with signage promoting the Williams River and the facilities and services available.   |
|   |  | 5.5.2   | Position and promote Clarence Town as the centre for paddling and water sports on the Williams River (see Strategy 8.1)   |
|   |  | 5.5.3   | Continue to upgrade the Williams River Holiday Park and explore options for overflow camping during peak times.   |
|   |  | 5.5.4   | Update the information directory adjacent to the School of Arts and provide a directory in the Bridge Reserve – Lions Park precinct.  |
|   |  | 5.5.5   | Upgrade directional signage to and within Wharf Reserve.  |
|   |  | 5.5.6   | Strengthen pedestrian and cycle links between and the village centre and the holiday park – Bridge Reserve and Constructed Wetlands and Wharf Reserve.  |
|   |  | 5.5.7   | Promote the surrounding National Parks and State Forests for a range of outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities (see Strategic Priority 3)   |
|   |  | 5.5.8   | Position and promote Clarence Town as a venue for a range of paddling, open water swimming and multi-sports events (eg Adventure racing, Triathlon / Dirty Tri)   |
| 5.6   | Leverage assets and infrastructure in Gresford – East Gresford to grow visitation  | 5.6.1   | Position and promote Gresford-East Gresford as an ideal destination for the touring caravan and RV markets and the family market – encouraging stay at the Showground and Camp on Allyn and use the village as a base to explore the Shire.   |
|   |  | 5.6.2   | Assess the need for a dump point at the Showground.   |
|   |  | 5.6.3   | Improve access to the Paterson and Allyn Rivers, improve the presentation of the access points and signpost these points from the main routes through the village.  |
|   |  | 5.6.4   | Explore opportunities for targeting small weddings, leveraging the historic churches in Gresford and Allynbrook, upmarket accommodation and local venues.   |

## Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen Dungog and the villages as both visitor destinations and service centres

| Strategies |                                      | Actions |   |
|------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---|
|            |                                      | 5.6.5   | Assess the potential for promoting 'drive the suspension bridge' as one of the 'must do' quirky attractions in the Shire – linking it with Boot Hill.             |
|            |                                      | 5.6.6   | Promote the Showground as a venue for a range of events and festivals.  |
| 5.7        | Enhance the attraction base of Vacy  | 5.7.1   | Investigate options to provide access to the Paterson River.  |
|            |                                      | 5.7.2   | Explore with Ride Dungog, the potential of incorporating the local roads surrounding Vacy into the 'Local Rides' routes on the ridedungog website.                |
| 5.8        | Strengthen Paterson as a destination | 5.8.1   | Position and promote Paterson as a day trip destination for regional residents – linking the village with other heritage towns and sites in the surrounding area. |
|            |                                      | 5.8.2   | Leverage the rail access to attract walking groups (eg Probus Clubs) and other visitors.  |
|            |                                      | 5.8.3   | Develop the proposed campground at Paterson Sportsground and link to the village centre by a shared pedestrian – cycleway.  |
|            |                                      | 5.8.4   | Explore opportunities to increase the supply of motel, hotel and/or self-contained accommodation.   |
|            |                                      | 5.8.5   | Work with Maitland LGA to realise and leverage Maitland DMP initiatives and to provide accommodation for visitors attending major events in Maitland.             |
|            |                                      | 5.8.6   | Improve access to the Paterson River at Kings Wharf and John Tucker Park, including providing a jetty / pontoon and area for launching canoes.                    |
|            |                                      | 5.8.7   | Install information directories in strategic locations within the village – including at the campground and railway station.                                      |
|            |                                      | 5.8.8   | Investigate the feasibility of establishing an interpretative boardwalk through the Pumby Brush remnant rainforest.   |

## Strategic Priority 3 Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

Dungog Shire is well-endowed with natural assets, with these assets supporting a range of outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities and providing one of the primary drivers of visitation to the Shire. There is opportunity to further develop core activities.

### Goals

- To establish Dungog as a destination for cycle tourism
- To deliver quality outdoor, adventure and nature-based products and experiences.

### Outcomes Sought

- To be a destination of choice for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities.
- To increase visitation year-round.
- To stimulate investment in outdoor and adventure-based activities and infrastructure.



### Strategic Priority 3: Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

| Strategies  |  | Actions |   |
|---|--|---------|---|
| <b>Strategy 6: Grow Dungog into a world class destination for cycle tourism</b> |  |         |   |
| 6.1   | Continue to grow mountain-biking as an anchor attraction for Dungog and the Shire        | 6.1.1   | Continue to develop MTB trails, infrastructure and visitor amenities at Dungog Common including additional flow tracks, tracks suitable for adaptive mountain biking for people with disabilities, a 'skills park' and temporary and permanent art installations; seeking Government support and funding to accelerate the development. |
|   |  | 6.1.2   | Assess the feasibility of establishing an IMBA EPICS MTB Trail in the Barrington Tops Region, and work towards Dungog becoming an IMBA designated 'Ride Centre'.  |
|   |  | 6.1.3   | Leverage the road and trail network to grow 'gravel grinding' / MTB touring – both within the Shire and in the broader Barrington Tops Region.  |
|   |  | 6.1.4   | Explore options for establishing additional cross country and downhill MTB trails, preferably located in close proximity to Dungog.   |
|   |  | 6.1.5   | Work with the NPWS and NSW Forestry Corporation to develop MTB trails in the National Parks and/or State Forests accessible from Dungog and Clarence Town in line with relevant Plans of Management and Agency policies.  |
|   |  | 6.1.6   | Identify and/or establish routes / trails suitable for hosting MTB events – eg enduro, XC marathon, cyclo-cross, trials.  |
|   |  | 6.1.7   | Package MTB adventure breaks – potentially working with Gloucester and/or Scone to offer longer multi-day packages.   |
|   |  | 6.1.8   | Develop a strong calendar of MTB events and activities (eg clinics), including inviting MTB NSW and MTB Australia, MTB Clubs and commercial promoters (Rocky Trail Entertainment) to bring their events to Dungog Shire.  |
|   |  | 6.1.9   | Work with DNSW to bring specialist international and Australian MTB journalists and influential bloggers to Dungog.   |
|   |  | 6.1.10  | Seek coverage on myMTB.TV and other specialist MTB television and You Tube channels.  |
| 6.2   | Progressively open-up cycling opportunities in other suitable areas throughout the Shire | 6.2.1   | Ride Clarence Town: Develop and promote MTB and road cycle activities in the Clarence Town area including MTB and gravel grinding routes in the surrounding National Parks and State Forests and road cycling loops that radiate from Clarence Town.  |
|   |  | 6.2.2   | Position and promote Clarence Town as a venue for multi-sports events that require access to open water – eg Triathlon / Dirty Tri, and Adventure Racing.   |
|   |  | 6.2.3   | Identify and promote road cycling routes in the Paterson – Allyn River Valley.  |
|   |  | 6.2.4   | Investigate the potential for establishing off-road cycle trails – possibly along all or part of the Hunter Water pipeline easement, in the road easements and/or a 'beside the rail trail' along the rail corridor.  |
| 6.3   | Grow the cycling events market   | 6.3.1   | Explore opportunities to grow PedalFest into one of NSW's premier cycling events.   |
|   |  | 6.3.2   | In addition to MTB events and activities (Action 6.1.8), explore options to attract / organise road cycling and gravel grinding events – eg criterion, Audax (on and off road), cycle marathon, enduros etc.  |
|   |  | 6.3.3   | Invite cycling clubs and associations and commercial promoters to bring their events to Dungog Shire.   |
| 6.4   | Ensure that Dungog and the Shire are 'cycle friendly'                                    | 6.4.1   | Establish a dedicated, preferably off-road, cycleway between the Dungog Common and the town centre, with links to the Showground and to the Williams River (Frank Robinson Reserve)   |
|   |  | 6.4.2   | Improve links between Dungog Common and cycle routes within the surrounding area – eg links to Bingleburra, Sugarloaf and/or Chichester Dam Roads.  |
|   |  | 6.4.3   | Explore the potential for MTB – cycling themed art installations in Dungog, including a gateway entry statement at Lioness Park.  |
|   |  | 6.4.4   | Install bicycle racks at strategic locations in the Dungog town centre, potentially working with the arts community to design these as art installations.   |
|   |  | 6.4.5   | Investigate the need for cycling infrastructure such a bike lockers and e.bike charging facilities.   |
|   |  | 6.4.6   | Provide directional signage to the Dungog Common MTB Park.  |

### Strategic Priority 3: Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

| Strategies |   | Actions |   |
|------------|---|---------|---|
|            |   | 6.4.7   | For road cycling loops – provide route infrastructure – including directional signage, route markers, warning / safety signs for cyclists and motorists and track heads (parking areas and directories) where needed.                                     |
|            |   | 6.4.8   | Encourage and facilitate the development of MTB – cycle related businesses – eg transport services (drop-off and pick-up), and supported and/or escorted MTB / Cycle tours.   |
|            |   | 6.4.9   | Develop MTB – cycle specific information and promotional collateral and install a MTB / cycle tourism display in the Dungog VIC.  |
| 6.5        | Improve rail access and connectivity for cyclists | 6.5.1   | Working with surrounding LGAs and through the Hunter JO, advocate for removing restrictions on cyclists on the Xplorer and XPT train services – enabling movement of cyclists between Dungog and Gloucester and Dungog and other Hunter Valley locations. |

#### Strategy 7: Continue to position and promote Dungog Shire as a walking / bushwalking destination

|     |   |       |   |
|-----|---|-------|---|
| 7.1 | Enhance and expand bushwalking trails and experiences within Dungog Shire | 7.1.1 | Encourage Forestry Corporation to provide additional walks in the Chichester State Forest, with preference being for loop walks.  |
|     |   | 7.1.2 | Explore with NPWS and Forestry Corporation the feasibility of establishing one or more fully accessible walks as well as walks suitable for adaptive wheelchairs.   |
|     |   | 7.1.3 | Identify and promote a network of walking trails / bushwalks in the National Parks and State Forests in the Clarence Town area.   |
|     |   | 7.1.4 | Review how the walks in the Shire are promoted – the ‘Our Favourite Walks’ brochure downloadable from the visitshoalhaven website provides a good example. It would also be desirable to identify and promote a signature walk (walks) – a must do for visitors or a signature walk (eg the Corker) that is on the ‘bucket-list’ for bushwalking enthusiasts and bushwalking clubs. Ensure that accommodation properties that offer on-site bushwalks are included in the promotional material. |
|     |   | 7.1.5 | Encourage the establishment of a guided walking (or adventure) tour operation – providing access to unique and/or relatively inaccessible sites – eg Pilchers Reserve, Carey’s Peak, Barrington Tops, Dundungurra waterfall glow worms.   |
| 7.2 | Leverage town walks to attract walking groups                             | 7.2.1 | Package (single and multi-day) and promote the Dungog and Paterson Heritage Walks and the Girrawa Loop on the Dungog Common to walking groups (eg Probus Clubs), encouraging them to use access the area by train.  |

#### Strategy 8: Establish Dungog Shire as a destination for paddling (canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards)

|     |  |       |  |
|-----|--|-------|--|
| 8.1 | Develop paddling experiences and support infrastructure and services | 8.1.1 | Position the Williams River at Clarence Town and Lostock Dam as key localities for paddling, with the Paterson River downstream of Paterson added to these localities once canoe launching infrastructure is in place.   |
|     |  | 8.1.2 | Investigate the feasibility of establishing ‘all ability’ canoe launching facilities adjacent to the jetty in Bridge Reserve at Clarence Town and a jetty / pontoon / canoe launcher on the Paterson River at Paterson.  |
|     |  | 8.1.3 | Identify reaches along the rivers that are suitable for white water paddling when water levels are suitable and post this information on the NSW waterways guide website.  |
|     |  | 8.1.4 | Identify localities suitable for recreational canoeing – for people looking for ‘waterholes’ to have fun in a canoe, and for beginners and more experienced paddlers. Add this information to the Allyn, Paterson and Williams River profiles on the NSW waterways guide website.  |
|     |  | 8.1.5 | Work with adjoining Councils and paddling groups to develop a canoe route linking Paterson and Clarence Town via the Paterson, Williams and Hunter Rivers, with this route also broken into smaller sections (eg Paterson – Morpeth and Clarence Town – Seaham). The Murrumbidgee and Murray canoe trails provide good examples. |
|     |  | 8.1.6 | Improve river access points at strategic locations throughout the Shire.   |
|     |  | 8.1.7 | Encourage the establishment of canoe / kayak hire business(es), possibly modelled on the Kangaroo Valley bike and canoe hire operators.  |
|     |  | 8.1.8 | Encourage the establishment of a canoe tour business and/or approach paddling tour operators from the surrounding region to bring groups to Dungog Shire.  |

### Strategic Priority 3: Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

| Strategies |  | Actions |   |
|------------|--|---------|---|
| 8.2        | Introduce paddling events                                | 8.2.1   | Introduce / attract paddling and multi-sports events with a paddling component – eg paddling marathons and ultra-marathons, iron man events, adventure racing. List these events with Paddle NSW.   |
| 8.3        | Market and promote paddling experiences within the Shire | 8.3.1   | Produce information on paddling opportunities within the Shire, both publicly accessible locations and accommodation properties which promote paddling as part of their activity base.  |
|            |  | 8.3.2   | Provide information on paddling opportunities and river access points on the visitdungog website and on information boards in strategic locations throughout the Shire (eg Bridge Reserve at Clarence Town, Lostock Dam, Gresford Reserve). |
|            |  | 8.3.3   | Work with local paddling enthusiasts to provide content and images on the Williams, Allyn and Paterson Rivers and Lostock Dam on the waterwaysguide.com.au website.   |
|            |  | 8.3.4   | Package and direct market Dungog Shire to paddling clubs, inviting them to organise trips to or hold an event in, Dungog Shire.   |

### Strategy 9: Grow the horse-riding market, capitalising on the growth in horse ownership in the Hunter and MidCoast areas

|     |  |       |   |
|-----|--|-------|---|
| 9.1 | Develop and promote products and experiences | 9.1.1 | Identify and assess existing horse riding trails within the Shire (eg Dungog Common, Columbey and Wallaroo National Parks, State Forests)   |
|     |  | 9.1.2 | Explore with State Water, opportunities for horse riding in the Lostock Dam area and if feasible, package with the Lostock Scout Camp.  |
|     |  | 9.1.3 | Strengthen / improve facilities and infrastructure in Dungog including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading and expanding horse infrastructure and facilities at Dungog Showground in accordance with the Plan of Management.</li> <li>• Provide safe access to Dungog Common – potentially using the Saleyards precinct as a horse float parking area and an entry point for horses.</li> <li>• Explore options for providing a safe, off-road or low traffic route between the Showground and the Common.</li> </ul> |
|     |  | 9.1.4 | Endeavour to provide an area where people can camp with their horses in the Clarence Town area.   |
|     |  | 9.1.5 | Develop ‘holiday with your horse’ products – promoting existing opportunities in Dungog and at the Lostock Scout camp and identify accommodation properties who are prepared to accommodate visitors and their horses.  |
|     |  | 9.1.6 | Investigate opportunities for horse owners to stay and ride in the Gresford area – utilising the stalls at the Gresford Showground.   |
|     |  | 9.1.7 | Investigate the need for / opportunities to develop, additional facilities and infrastructure – eg a covered arena, cross country course.   |
| 9.2 | Build the horse events market                | 9.2.1 | Work with the Common and Showground Trusts, pony clubs and horse-sports groups to grow existing events and to attract events to the Shire.  |
|     |  | 9.2.2 | Direct market riding and event opportunities to horse riding clubs and associations, inviting them to visit Dungog Shire / bring their events to the Shire.   |
|     |  | 9.2.3 | Explore options to develop a multi-day trail riding event, similar in concept to the Weddin Mountains Muster.   |

### Strategy 10: Grow the Golf Market

|      |   |        |   |
|------|---|--------|---|
| 10.1 | Promote Dungog Shire as a destination for social golf | 10.1.1 | Encourage initiatives by the Dungog and Paterson Golf Clubs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to upgrade their courses and facilities.</li> <li>• Grow the social golf market, including working collaboratively to introduce ‘stay and play’ packages – playing both courses.</li> <li>• Grow the golf events market.</li> </ul> |
|------|---|--------|---|

### Strategy 11: Manage the 4WD and trail bike markets to minimise impacts on the environment and other users

|      |   |        |  |
|------|---|--------|--|
| 11.1 | Work with NPWS, Forestry Corporation and Police to encouraging responsible use of the | 11.1.1 | Advocate for mobile phone coverage to be extended to include the upper river valleys, the Chichester State Forest and the visitor precincts and park roads in the Barrington Tops National Park. |
|------|---|--------|--|

### Strategic Priority 3: Consolidate Dungog Shire as a destination for outdoor, adventure and nature-based activities

| Strategies |   | Actions |  |
|------------|---|---------|--|
|            | Shire's assets and creating an environment that deters irresponsible and anti-social behaviour. | 11.1.2  | Lobby the NSW Government to provide additional funds and resources for Police, NPWS and Forestry Corporation to have a strong presence in the National Parks and State Forests during peak times and to undertake random patrols at other times. |
|            |   | 11.1.3  | Explore options for introducing registration for campers in State Forests – as part of a COVID-19 safety initiative and to increase 'surveillance'.  |
|            |   | 11.1.4  | Assess the feasibility of using technology (portable or fixed) to deter anti-social behaviour – eg speed cameras on the access roads, number plate recognition technology and/or security cameras.   |
|            |   | 11.1.5  | Endeavour to change the market mix – focusing on attracting families, nature-based visitors and 4WD Clubs that are affiliated with State / National 4WD associations and abide by the 4WD Australia Code of Ethics                               |
|            |   | 11.1.6  | Undertake targeted media campaigns within the surrounding region to raise awareness of the patrols and the penalties in place.   |
| 11.2       | Develop alternative locations for 4WD and trailbike activities                                  | 11.2.1  | Explore opportunities (eg former quarries, coal mining areas) in the Lower Hunter for dedicated 4WD and trail bike parks to provide opportunities for enthusiasts who are looking to 'test' their vehicles against the environment.              |

### Strategic Priority 4: Foster Arts and Cultural Tourism

The creative sector will play a key role in growing the visitor economy; helping to building the identify and profile of the Shire; providing attractions, activities and events that attract visitation; value-adding to other sectors and activities; stimulating business investment; attracting grant funding; and contributing to population retention and growth.

#### Goals

- Growth in the Shire's creative sector and in arts and cultural tourism.

#### Outcomes Sought

- Increased recognition of Dungog Shire as a vibrant, creative community.
- Diversification of the Shire's attraction base, with quality arts-based attractions, activities, experiences and events.



## Strategic Priority 4: Foster arts and cultural tourism

| Strategies   |  | Actions |   |
|--|--|---------|---|
| <b>Strategy 12: Encourage and support the development of arts and cultural tourism</b> |  |         |   |
| 12.1   | Develop a framework to facilitate and support the growth of the sector | 12.1.1  | Work with the arts community and build on the work undertaken by the Dungog Arts Foundation to prepare a Shire-wide creative sector strategic plan and/or cultural plan.              |
| 12.2   | Expand and grow the product and activity base                          | 12.2.1  | Incorporate a strong art focus in place-making throughout the Shire, with this to include temporary and permanent art installations that reinforce key assets and themes.             |
|  |  | 12.2.2  | Develop local and regional art trails, working with surrounding LGAs and Arts Upper Hunter.   |
|  |  | 12.2.3  | Investigate opportunities to re-build the film-based events and activities, including working with film and media groups in Newcastle and the surrounding region.                     |
|  |  | 12.2.4  | Encourage and facilitate growth in art and artisan workshops and activities including working with artists, artisans and arts organisations to secure grant funding to run workshops. |
|  |  | 12.2.5  | Develop the music and live entertainment scene.   |
|  |  | 12.2.6  | Explore opportunities for artist in residence programs.   |
|  |  | 12.2.7  | Leverage opportunities to value-add an arts component to other attractions, events and activities.  |
|  |  | 12.2.8  | Encourage and facilitate growth in arts and cultural events.  |
| 12.3   | Raise the profile of the arts sector                                   | 12.3.1  | Leverage opportunities to promote and generate media coverage of local artists, artisans, events and activities.  |
|  |  | 12.3.2  | Ensure that arts products, events and activities are included on the visitdungog website, featured on social media and listed on the Arts Upper Hunter and NSW connect data bases.    |
| 12.4   | Grow Aboriginal tourism  | 12.4.1  | Encourage and support initiatives by the Shire's Aboriginal community to tell their 'stories' and establish Aboriginal attractions and experiences.                                   |
| 12.5   | Leverage the Shire's history and heritage                              | 12.5.1  | Explores ways to showcase the Shire's heritage and tell its 'stories',  |

## Priority 5: Build the Events Sector

Events form part of the attraction and activity base of the Shire and are a significant generator of weekend visitation. Locally they are also part of the cultural and social fabric of the area, providing an opportunity to bring people together. For visitors, events provide a reason to visit – they are essentially a 'call to action'. Events also generate publicity and focus attention on the Shire, enhance the lifestyle and play a role in the 'tree change' process. Due to the Shire's capacity constraints, multiple small events spread throughout the year will deliver greater benefits to the Shire.

### Goal

A strong, vibrant events sector that brings visitors into the Shire.

### Outcomes Sought

- Increased visitation to and expenditure within the Shire.
- Increased media profile for the Shire.

## Strategic Priority 5: Build the events sector

| Strategies   |  | Actions |  |
|--|--|---------|--|
| <b>Strategy 13: For Council, DRT, DDCC and Dungog Events Inc to work together to develop a framework and infrastructure that facilitates and supports events</b> |  |         |  |
| 13.1   | Formulate a Dungog Shire Events Policy.  | 13.1.1  | Develop an events policy that sets the framework for Council sponsorship and support of events and sets parameters for the allocation of limited funds and resources. As part of this review role and funding of Dungog Events Inc.  |
| 13.2   | Provide a positive regulatory environment.   | 13.2.1  | Ensure that the provisions of the Dungog Shire LEP, Plans of Management and other planning instruments allow for events, particularly in recreational reserves and on rural properties, and permit temporary structures and event-related facilities and services.   |
| 13.3   | Formulate event guidelines for use by event organisers.  | 13.3.1  | Prepare an event manual / event guidelines, articulating the policies and procedures relating to the development approval process, road closures and traffic management, parking, signage, insurance, Council support etc  |
| 13.4   | Define coordination and communication protocols.   | 13.4.1  | Ensure that all event enquiries are directed to a nominated Council officer with this position supported by an internal communications protocol to 'streamline' the approval process.  |
| 13.5   | Assess the potential of the National Parks, State Forest, Lostock Dam and the Williams River to be used for events | 13.5.1  | Liaise with the NPWS, Forestry Corporation, RMS and State Water to identify the type and characteristics of events that could be held on their holdings and the approval process involved.   |
| 13.6   | Provide infrastructure for event signs.  | 13.6.1  | Provide signage infrastructure at strategic locations throughout the Shire to advertise up-coming events.  |
| 13.7   | Continue to provide marketing support for events.  | 13.7.1  | Continue to maintain the Shire Event calendar and encourage tourism and hospitality business operators to include a link to the calendar on their website and/or social media sites.   |
|  |  | 13.7.2  | Continue to list relevant events on the ATDW / NSW Connect data bases and relevant third party websites and regional event and 'what's on' guides and directories.   |
|  |  | 13.7.3  | Send out regular 'what's on' e.blasts to local and regional media, accommodation operators, VICs in the surrounding area and other interested parties.   |
|  |  | 13.7.4  | Promote events through social media channels.  |
|  |  | 13.7.5  | Explore opportunities to encourage and harness user generated content from events  |
|  |  | 13.7.6  | Include a 'what's on / events banner' on the Dungog Shire Council website and market events through Council's social media channels.   |
|  |  | 13.7.8  | Leverage opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct market events to special interest groups and coach and group tour organisers.</li> <li>• Develop event packages</li> <li>• Utilise train services to provide access for events, including 'event trains'.</li> </ul>  |
| 13.8   | Develop and promote an on-line venue directory   | 13.8.1  | Undertake a venue audit to identify and document venue capacity and the facilities and services available. The audit should include existing venues and assets that could potentially be used for events (eg riverside reserves, Showgrounds, State Forests). Information needs to be collated on the type of activities that the venue / asset that could be held, facilities available, capacity, power and water supply, lighting, fencing – security, any specific rules / regulations, contact details etc. |
|  |  | 13.8.2  | Develop a comprehensive venue data base and Venue Guide, with a summary included on the tourism website and the Guide downloadable from the visitdungog and possibly Council websites.   |
|  |  | 13.8.3  | List suitable venues on the NSW Regional Conference / Event venue data base.   |
| 13.9   | Continue to upgrade key venues (Showgrounds, Dungog Common, James  | 13.9.1  | Determine the improvements required and, if not already in place, encourage the venue / reserve manager to formulate a Plan of Management, with the Plan to include the improvements required.   |



## Strategic Priority 5: Build the events sector

| Strategies   |   | Actions |  |
|--|---|---------|--|
|  | Theatre, Lostock Dam and Council sports grounds and reserves) |         |  |
| <b>Strategy 14: Grow events-based visitation and visitor expenditure</b> |   |         |  |
| 14.1   | Grow participation in and/or attendance at existing events.   | 14.1.1  | Identify which local events have the potential to grow and attract visitors into the Shire and work with the event organisers to formulate and implement a growth strategy / business plan and a marketing plan. |
|  |   | 14.1.2  | Encourage event organisers to develop attendee data bases and possibly a newsletter for direct marketing of next year's events.  |
|  |   | 14.1.3  | Encourage event organisers to develop event websites and facebook pages as communication and marketing tools.  |
|  |   | 14.1.4  | Assist / support event organisers to secure grant funding.   |
|  |   | 14.1.5  | Direct market to special interest groups.  |
|  |   | 14.1.6  | Where suitable, develop event packages (eg event + accommodation + other value add offers).  |
| 14.2   | Organise / attract events that leverage the Shire's assets.   | 14.2.1  | Encourage and work with local organisations to bid for regional, state and possibly national events.   |
|  |   | 14.2.2  | Identify and target footloose events (eg car, caravan and motorcycle rallies, horse events, concerts etc) that could potentially be held in the Shire.   |
|  |   | 14.2.3  | Direct market the Shire's venues to clubs and organisations and commercial event organisers, inviting them to hold events in Dungog Shire.   |
|  |   | 14.2.4  | Ensure that Dungog Shire hosts its 'share' of regional agency and Council meetings.  |
|  |   | 14.2.5  | Target regional school events that the Shire has the capacity to host (eg Cross Country and MTB carnivals)   |
| 14.3   | Leverage major regional events                                | 14.3.1  | Position Dungog Shire to attract 'overflow' accommodation bookings for major events held in surrounding LGAs.  |
| 14.4   | Encourage event attendees to spend money within the Shire.    | 14.4.1  | Encourage event organisers to list accommodation available in the Shire and include a link to the visitdungog website on their event website and/or facebook page.   |
|  |   | 14.4.2  | Provide Visitor Guides (when printed) / town and village information for event organisers to distribute at the event and if possible, include promotional vouchers and value-add offers from local businesses.   |
|  |   | 14.4.3  | For large events, consider setting up a 'pop-up' information stand at the event, with the promotional collateral including 'deals' that encourage attendees to return to the Shire within the next 6 months.     |



## Strategic Priority 6: Leverage Emerging Markets

Dungog Shire can diversify its visitor mix and build visitation by leveraging its product base to attract emerging markets, in particular the touring caravan, RV and motorcycle markets, agri tourism and accessible tourism.

### Goal

To leverage opportunities provided by emerging markets to diversify and grow the market base of the Shire.

### Outcomes Sought

- A broader market-base that is not dependent on access to the Shire’s national parks and state forests.
- Year-round visitation to the Shire – increasing off-season and mid-week visitation.
- More visitors staying in an around, and moving between, Dungog and the villages, increasing the propensity for expenditure.



## Strategic Priority 6: Leverage emerging markets

| Strategies  |   | Actions |  |
|---|---|---------|--|
| <b>Strategy 14: Grow the touring caravan and RV markets</b> |   |         |  |
| 14.1  | Encourage caravaners to stay in and move between Dungog and the villages.       | 14.1.1  | Position and promote Dungog and the villages as ‘hubs’ encouraging caravaners to use Dungog / villages as a base, a safe place to leave their van while they explore the National Parks and State Forests.   |
|   |   | 14.1.2  | Seek to have Clarence Town, Gresford and Paterson accredited as RV Friendly Localities and Lostock Dam and the commercial camping grounds as RV Friendly Destinations.   |
|   |   | 14.1.3  | Liaise with NPWS and Forestry Corporation to identify the roads within the forests and national parks that are suitable for caravans and RVs and the maximum size of vans and RVs that should be taken on these roads under dry and wet conditions and provide this information on key websites, in the caravan and camping brochure and through the VIC. This information will assist in encouraging caravaners to leave their vans in town and take day trips to the national parks and state forests. |
|   |   | 14.1.4  | Designate an area in Dungog where caravans can be left safely, to enable visitors to explore the National Parks and forests.   |
|   |   | 14.1.5  | Promote localities that are ‘pet friendly’.  |
|   |   | 14.1.6  | Review and improve caravan, RV and trailer parking within the Dungog town centre.  |
| 14.2  | Improve existing caravan parks and increase the supply of caravan and RV sites. | 14.2.1  | Continue to upgrade the Williams River Holiday Park and explore options to use Wharf Reserve and other areas as temporary / overflow camping sites during peak time, with these sites managed by the Holiday Park (ie fees apply).   |
|   |   | 14.2.2  | Establish the proposed sites at the Dungog Showground and Paterson Sportsground.   |
|   |   | 14.2.3  | Enable and encourage licenced clubs and hotels to provide powered and unpowered sites for self-contained rigs.   |
|   |   | 14.2.4  | Encourage and facilitate the development of a caravan park in Dungog.  |

| Strategic Priority 6: Leverage emerging markets               |   |         |   |
|---|---|---------|---|
| Strategies  |   | Actions |   |
|   |   | 14.2.5  | Review planning regulation to enable suitable public and private land to be used for temporary camping during major events and overflow camping during peak times.  |
| 14.3  | Market and promote caravan and camping.   | 14.3.1  | Update and expand information on caravan and camping on the visitdungog website, in the caravan and camping brochure - include all sites within the Shire; information on capacity and access to these sites; and the facilities and services (eg long rig parking areas, fuel, automotive services, dump points) available in Dungog and the villages; and activities available including places to cycle, paddle, walk and exercise dogs. |
|   |   | 14.3.2  | Regularly update information on the NSW connect / ATDW data base and on third party websites and directories (eg Wiki Camps, travelling with dogs).   |
|   |   | 14.3.3  | When RV / Campervan rental companies establish at Newcastle Airport, explore options to develop and promote touring itineraries and packages. Also seek to be included in DNSW initiatives and partnerships with RV and Campervan rental companies.   |
| Strategy 15: Encourage and grow the touring motorcycle market |   |         |   |
| 15.1  | Build the road cycle touring market   | 15.1.1  | Work with Singleton Shire and the New England Region to develop a 'Putty Road and Beyond' promotion that leverages the Putty Road and New England Motorcycle touring route promotions, and 'formalises' and promotes the touring route from Sydney to the New England Region via the Putty Road.  |
|   |   | 15.1.2  | Explore options for a second route linking the Central Coast and Lower Hunter area to the New England Region via Raymond Terrace, Dungog and Gloucester.  |
|   |   | 15.1.3  | Work with the Hunter JO (or individually with Councils) to develop and promote a Hunter Valley motorcycle touring loop which includes Dungog Shire.   |
| 15.2  | Encourage trail bike touring  | 15.2.1  | Work with NPWS and Forestry Corporation to identify touring loops in the National Parks and State Forests with these loops packaged with accommodation.   |
| Strategy 16: Grow Agri Tourism                                |   |         |   |
| 16.1  | Develop and promote agri tourism products and experiences   | 16.1.1  | Encourage and support the development of agri tourism ventures within the Shire.  |
|   |   | 16.1.2  | Explore opportunities to work with Maitland and potentially Port Stephens and MidCoast Councils to develop and promote agri tourism experiences, including farm gate trails.  |
|   |   | 16.1.3  | Produce a 'Grown in Dungog' brochure – providing a guide to local producers and provedores, as well as outlets (such as markets) where local produce can be purchased.  |
| Strategy 17: Grow the Accessible Tourism Market               |   |         |   |
| 17.1  | Position Dungog Shire as a destination for 'adaptive' outdoor tourism – providing opportunities for adaptive mountain biking, bushwalking and paddling. | 17.1.1  | Establish MTB trails on the Dungog Common suitable for adaptive mountain biking.  |
|   |   | 17.1.2  | Position Clarence Town as a destination for adaptive paddling and water skiing and suitable for people with mobility limitations to fish. Modify the jetty / or develop a new facility at Bridge Reserve that enables people with disabilities to fish and access canoes and boats.   |
|   |   | 17.1.3  | Encourage NPWS and the Forestry Corporation to establish accessible bushwalks.  |
|   |   | 17.1.4  | Identify and promote accessible accommodation, camping areas and day-use visitor areas.   |
|   |   | 17.1.5  | Improve facilities and infrastructure to support  |

## Strategic Priority 7: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place

Continue to improve its infrastructure, facilities and services to facilitate and support growth in the visitor economy.

### Goals

- To provide the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support and facilitate the growth in visitation.
- To ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services provided meets user needs and expectations.



## Strategic Priority 7: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.

| Actions   |  | Key Tasks |   |
|---|--|-----------|---|
| <b>Strategy 18: Increase the capacity of the accommodation sector</b> |  |           |   |
| 18.1  | Improve and expand the accommodation base of the Shire                             | 18.1.1    | Improve and increase sites for caravans, RVs and camping across the Shire (see Action 14.1).  |
|   |  | 18.1.2    | Encourage and support the development of additional rooms in Dungog and the villages and eco-friendly accommodation in suitable locations in rural areas.   |
| 18.2  | Continue to improve the on-line presence and marketing of accommodation properties | 18.2.1    | Encourage Accommodation operators to make more effective use of web-based and digital marketing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Updating their own websites and include real time booking facilities.</li> <li>○ Use of social media.</li> <li>○ List on the higher profile accommodation booking websites.</li> <li>○ Maintain listing on the DNSW State Tourism Data Warehouse data base.</li> <li>○ Utilise free / low cost listings on tourism and third party websites.</li> <li>○ Utilise web-based resource material on DNSW, Tourism Australia and business support sites.</li> </ul> |
|   |  | 18.2.2    | Encourage pub hotels with refurbished rooms to list on pubrooms.com.au and other pub hotel accommodation directories.   |
|   |  | 18.2.3    | Provide quality content and images that accommodation properties can include on their websites and social media posts.  |
|   |  | 18.2.4    | Encourage accommodation operators to include links to the visitdungog website and the on-line visitor guide (when produced) on their websites.  |
| 18.3  | Encourage improvements in customer service   | 18.3.1    | Continue to advise operators of training programs and industry briefing workshops held throughout the Region as well as the training resources available on-line.   |
|   |  | 18.3.2    | Identify skills gaps and training needs and access relevant training programs.  |

**Strategic Priority 7: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.**

| Actions   |  | Key Tasks |  |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| <b>Strategy 19: Improve facilities at, and increase use of, event venues</b>  |  |           |  |
| 19.1  | Upgrade and promote key venues   | 19.1.1    | Continue to upgrade key venues including the Showgrounds, Dungog Common, James Theatre, Lostock Dam and Council sports grounds and reserves – See Action XX.   |
|   |  | 19.1.2    | Work with venue managers to market and promote venues to potential users – inviting them to bring their events to Dungog Shire.  |
| 19.2  | Target the wedding and functions market  | 19.2.1    | Identify locations and venues suitable for weddings and functions, produce a weddings and functions directory / brochure and endeavour to list venues on function venue and wedding data bases.  |
| 19.3  | Raise awareness of the Shire’s venues  | 19.3.1    | Include a venue landing page and an on-line venue guide on the visitdungog website.  |
|   |  | 19.3.2    | List suitable venues on the DNSW regional conference and events data base.   |
|   |  | 19.3.3    | Leverage opportunities (eg the opening of the Royal Hotel function room) to attract coverage in the regional media.  |
|   |  | 19.3.4    | Direct market venues to potential user groups and commercial event promoters.  |
| <b>Strategy 20: Continue to expand and improve information services, ensuring that information on the Shire is available from multiple touch points at all stages of the path to purchase and whilst travelling</b> |  |           |  |
| 20.1  | Revamp the Dungog Visitor Information Centre   | 20.1.1    | Revamp / update the Dungog VIC, moving towards a ‘next generation’ centre with a mix of static and digital displays which enhance the Shire’s attractions and experiences, tells the Shire’s ‘stories’ and improves the delivery of information. In updating the Centre, consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding the displays and the range of information on offer (see Section 16.3)</li> <li>• Incorporating digital screens to showcase the Shire’s stunning landscape, lifestyle, industries and assets.</li> <li>• Incorporating virtual and/or augmented reality technology for ‘story-telling’ and to provide ‘virtual’ access to more inaccessible areas of the Shire.</li> <li>• Providing free WiFi and a charging station for digital devices and potential e.bike batteries.</li> <li>• Installing a bicycle rack.</li> <li>• Using the exterior of the VIC as an arts space, regularly changing the artwork on the verandah posts, using the corrugated walls as hanging space and having temporary installations in the garden.</li> </ul> |
|   |  | 20.1.2    | Plan and seek funding for the relocation of the VIC to a larger building within the town centre.   |
| 20.2  | Continue to improve and expand the range of information and promotional collateral available | 20.2.1    | Produce a Dungog Shire Visitor Guide in print and e.book format.   |
|   |  | 20.2.2    | Expand the range of brochures, information, maps etc to promote and support the Shire’s scenic drives, trails, attractions and activities. Ensure that key brochures and maps are downloadable from the visitdungog website.   |
|   |  | 20.2.3    | Develop information kits to support targeted marketing to special interest and activity-based markets (eg bushwalking, cycling, MTB, horse riding etc).  |
|   |  | 20.2.4    | Develop a shared Council – DRT image library and continually update video clips, images and display material.  |
|   |  | 20.2.5    | Erect comprehensive information directories at strategic locations in Dungog, the villages and other localities.   |
|   |  | 20.2.6    | Develop and maintain an on-line business and services directory with this accessible from the visitdungog and Council websites.  |

## Strategic Priority 7: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.

| Actions  |  | Key Tasks |   |
|--|--|-----------|---|
| 20.3   | Continue to improve the Shire's on-line presence                                     | 20.3.1    | Continue to enhance the visitdungog tourism website, incorporating video clips, itinerary planner and booking platform.   |
|  |  | 20.3.2    | Increase the use of social media in accordance with Council's tourism social media strategy.  |
|  |  | 20.3.3    | Progressively build consumer data bases to be used for distribution of information, direct marketing, promotional offers etc.   |
|  |  | 20.3.4    | Improve and expand Dungog Shire content on third party websites – including touring route sites and special interest and activity-based sites.  |
|  |  | 20.3.5    | Continue to improve the Dungog Shire content on local operator, town and village, and event websites.   |
|  |  | 20.3.6    | Increase exposure of individual products, services and facilities: Encourage operators to list on free and low-cost tourism, travel and other relevant websites and directories.  |
| 20.4   | Continue to build product knowledge and sales skills                                 | 20.4.1    | Continue to expand the knowledge and skills of VIC staff, including undertaking property inspections and famils   |
|  |  | 20.4.2    | Provide opportunities for tourism and business operators to expand their product knowledge. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute a regular e.newsletter</li> <li>• Host networking functions, with operators invited to showcase their product / services.</li> <li>• Encourage new operators to hold a briefing function / open day for other existing operators.</li> <li>• Host familiarisation tours and/or take new operators / accommodation managers on guided tours of the Shire.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Strategy 21: Improve and leverage access infrastructure</b> |  |           |   |
| 21.1   | Recognise that road conditions will influence visitation levels and travel patterns. | 21.1.1    | Ensure that implications for tourism are assessed in developing road construction and maintenance programs and priorities. The most significant roads from a tourism perspective are listed in Section 16.4.1.  |
| 21.2   | Improve safety and connectivity on key access routes                                 | 21.2.1    | Seek funding to reduce / remove the flood risk on the Allyn River Road.   |
|  |  | 21.2.2    | Seal the short section of road between Salisbury Road and the Williams River Picnic Area – Blue Gum Loop to provide a sealed, all weather access road, suitable for all vehicles, to the southern end of the Barrington Tops National Park (all access roads are currently unsealed).   |
|  |  | 21.2.3    | Seek funding to re-seal the main access route through Dungog (Clarence Town Road – Mary Street – Dowling Street – Hooke Street).  |
|  |  | 21.2.4    | Improve and maintain the pavement on the unsealed sections of the main forest access roads. As visitor traffic increases the Allyn River Road may need to be sealed.  |
|  |  | 21.2.5    | Review and update flood, bushfire and other warning signs throughout the Shire.   |
| 21.3   | Encourage use of rail services to support cycle tourism                              | 21.3.1    | Work with surrounding LGAs and through the Hunter JO, advocate for removing restrictions on cyclists on the Xplorer and XPT train services – enabling movement of cyclists between Dungog and Gloucester and Dungog and other Hunter Valley locations.  |
| 21.4   | Improve access to the Shire's rivers and waterways                                   | 21.4.1    | Improve pedestrian access to the rivers in Dungog, Gresford and East Gresford.  |
|  |  | 21.4.2    | Investigate opportunities to provide public access to the Paterson River in Vacy.   |
|  |  | 21.4.3    | Improve access to the Paterson River at John Tucker Park and Kings Wharf Reserve in Paterson and investigate opportunities to incorporate a small pontoon or jetty as well as facilities for launching and retrieving canoes.   |

**Strategic Priority 7: Ensure that the infrastructure, facilities and services needed to support growth of the visitor economy are in place.**

| Actions   |   | Key Tasks |  |
|---|---|-----------|--|
|   |   | 21.4.4    | Upgrade Wharf Reserve in Clarence Town, improving signage and visitor facilities and strengthening the pedestrian link with the village shops.   |
|   |   | 21.4.5    | Investigate the potential for including 'all ability' facilities for canoe launching, boat access and fishing at Bridge Reserve in Clarence Town.  |
|   |   | 21.4.6    | Signpost all river access points. Include these access points on the proposed A3 tear-off map.   |
| <b>Strategy 22: Ensure that signage is effective, contributes positively to the image of the Shire and encourages dispersal</b> |   |           |  |
| 22.1  | Improve signage throughout the Shire  | 22.1.1    | Undertake a comprehensive signage audit and formulate and progressively implement an improvement plan.   |
|   |   | 22.1.2    | Update gateway arrival signs – for the Shire, Dungog and the villages, and include facility icons for the services available in the villages.  |
|   |   | 22.1.3    | Improve directional, service and facility signs, including signage to and within the National Parks and Forests.   |
|   |   | 22.1.4    | Update and signpost existing information boards and erect new information boards in strategic locations / visitor activity precincts throughout the Shire.   |
|   |   | 22.1.5    | Erect frames to hang signs for forth-coming events, at strategic locations throughout the Shire.   |
| <b>Strategy 23: Advocate for improved and expanded telecommunications infrastructure</b>  |   |           |  |
| 23.1  | Extend mobile phone coverage in the norther of the Shire                      | 23.1.1    | Advocate for improved mobile and broadband coverage throughout the Shire, with the priority being for coverage in the upper river valleys, Chichester State Forest and visitor precincts within the Barrington Tops National Park. |
| 23.2  | Increase access to free Wifi  | 23.2.1    | Provide free WiFi in the Dungog VIC.   |
|   |   | 23.2.2    | Identify and promote free Wifi locations within Dungog and the villages.   |
| <b>Strategy 24: Continue to improve visitor facilities</b>  |   |           |  |
| 24.1  | Ensure that the parks, gardens and reserves are well presented and maintained | 24.1.1    | Continue to maintain and improve the presentation of parks, gardens and reserves, both to enhance the visual impact and appeal of the locality and to encourage travellers to stop.  |
|   |   | 24.1.2    | Improve signage to Jubilee Park, Frank Robinson Park and the Dungog Common from the Dungog town centre.  |
|   |   | 24.1.3    | Upgrade or remove the picnic tables at Lioness Park, Dungog.   |
| 24.2  | Continue to provide and maintain public toilets in strategic locations.       | 24.2.1    | Provide new public toilets in the Dungog Town Centre with these to be fully accessible and include a parent room / baby changing facilities.   |
|   |   | 24.2.2    | Progressively upgrade / replace the older toilet blocks in the villages.   |
|   |   | 24.2.3    | Ensure that public toilets throughout the Shire are clean and well maintained and signposted using the international facility symbols.   |
|   |   | 24.2.4    | List accessible toilets on inclusive / accessible tourism and other related websites.  |
| 24.3  | Cater for electric vehicles (EV)  | 24.3.1    | Investigate options for an electric vehicle charging station in Dungog Shire.  |
|   |   | 24.3.2    | Provide facilities for charging e.bike batteries.  |

## Priority 8: Continue to build industry capacity

Allied with product and infrastructure development is the need to increase the skills of tourism and business operators and their staff. The marketplace is evolving, and tourism and business operators need to keep abreast of changes. Tourism and business operators need to be highly active in the digital space, with this space used to communicate, build relationships, market and promote, and ‘make the sale’. Tourism operators also need to be responsive to changing needs and expectations, recognising that customers are becoming more sophisticated and demanding and less tolerant of inferior customer service. The retail community needs to recognise the importance of the presentation of both their shop front and merchandise. It is also essential that retailers and service providers have a strong online presence and travellers looking for goods and services are increasingly searching on-line.

### Goal

- Skilled and motivated business and tourism operators.

| Strategic Priority 8: Continue to build industry capacity   |   |           |   |
|---|---|-----------|---|
| Actions   |   | Key Tasks |   |
| <b>Strategy 25: Continue to provide and promote opportunities for industry training and development</b> |   |           |   |
| 25.1  | Encourage tourism and retail operators to continue to build their business, customer service and marketing skills | 25.1.1    | Continue to work with business organisations, operators and training service providers to identify skills gaps and the type of training programs needed within the Shire and develop strategy / approach to deliver appropriate programs. |
|   |   | 25.1.2    | Promote on-line tourism and business training programs and resources to tourism and business operators.   |

## Strategic Priority 9: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

Dungog Shire needs to continue to build visitation and diversify its market base, focusing on building the markets that are a natural fit with the attractions, activities and experiences that are available in the Shire and surrounding region; can be accommodated with the infrastructure, facilities and services that are available; and are cost and resource efficient to target, namely:

- Building outdoor, nature and adventure based special interest and activity-based markets (see Strategic Priority 2)
- Growing the touring caravan and RV market and encouraging these travellers to stay longer in the Shire (see Strategic Priority 6)
- Building the regional market – encouraging residents and their visiting friends and relatives to take day trips and short breaks in Dungog Shire and to attend the Shire’s events.
- Building the group markets – targeting social groups, activity-based clubs and associations, and caravan and motorhome clubs.
- Growing the events market (see Strategic Priority 5).

Market development needs to be supported by effective marketing and promotion.





## Goals

- To grow visitation to Dungog Shire.
- To increase the yield from visitation.
- To spread visitation throughout the Shire, to provide benefits for Dungog and each of the villages.

## Outcomes Sought

- Increased visitation to and visitor expenditure in Dungog Shire, with visitation spread throughout the year.
- A more diversified market base.
- Raised awareness of Dungog Shire.



### Priority 9: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

| Strategies   |   | Actions |  |
|--|---|---------|--|
| <b>Strategy 26: Build the regional market - targeting leisure-based day trips and short breaks; social and activity-based groups</b> |   |         |  |
| 26.1   | <b>Regional Residents</b> - Grow the regional market focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offering the opportunity for families and groups of friends to escape: to be outdoors, get back to basics, reconnect and have fun.</li> <li>- Bringing residents and their VFR into the Shire for events and activities.</li> <li>- Positioning Dungog Shire as a day and short breaks destination for social groups.</li> </ul> | 26.1.1  | Endeavour to raise the profile of Dungog Shire within the surrounding region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use PR marketing to place stories in the regional media.</li> <li>• Explore options for harnessing social media and user generated content.</li> <li>• Place articles about the different activities on offer in the Shire in the local and regional media. In the lead-up to school holidays local papers often have feature articles and discount coupons.</li> <li>• Use both the visitdungog and Council social media sites to communicate with the regional media (journalists are increasingly using social media sites to generate ideas for stories).</li> <li>• Ensure that Dungog Shire events and activities are listed in regional 'what's on' directories and programs and seek media coverage in the lead-up to and during the events.</li> <li>• Explore 'quirky' opportunities to raise the profile of Dungog Shire and generate interest and media coverage.</li> <li>• Work with accommodation and business operators to develop and promote 'short-break' packages.</li> </ul> |
|  |   | 26.1.2  | Work with DDCC and local businesses to raise the profile of shopping and dining opportunities within the Shire.  |
|  |   | 26.1.3  | Target and direct market Dungog Shire to clubs and social groups within the surrounding region – those that organise day and short trips including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement homes – often have their own mini-buses.</li> <li>• Disability groups and service providers – excursions and day trips.</li> <li>• Walking clubs and groups.</li> <li>• Probus / View Clubs and organisations.</li> <li>• Social clubs and groups within Licensed Clubs.</li> <li>• Church groups.</li> <li>• Car and motorcycle clubs.</li> <li>• Activity based groups including cycling, horse-riding, bushwalking clubs, birdwatchers, golf clubs, art collectives</li> </ul>  |
|  |   | 26.1.4  | Direct market Shire venues to potential users and relevant interest groups; encouraging sporting clubs and commercial promoters to hold an event in the Shire.   |

## Priority 9: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

| Strategies   |  | Actions |  |
|--|--|---------|--|
|  |  | 26.1.5  | Explore opportunities to attract / bid for regional school events – eg cross country, horse events, triathlon.   |
| <b>Strategy 27: Build special interest and activity-based markets – individuals, clubs and social groups</b> |  |         |  |
| 27.1   | Build special interest and activity-based markets.   | 27.1.1  | <p>Use the Shire’s assets and facilities to grow special interest and activity-based markets – individuals, clubs and social groups - targeting these groups primarily through direct marketing online, and PR in specialist publications and on specialist websites.</p> <p><b>Potential targets:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cyclists – road, gravel grinding, mountain-biking</li> <li>- Bush walkers - walking groups</li> <li>- Horse riders and horse sports enthusiasts</li> <li>- Paddlers</li> <li>- Adventure / endurance sports</li> <li>- Touring motorcyclists</li> <li>- Golfers</li> <li>- Water skiers / water sports</li> <li>- 4WD clubs</li> <li>- Historical associations</li> <li>- Garden clubs</li> <li>- Rail heritage enthusiasts</li> </ul> <p>Basically, the same approach can be used to grow the different special interest markets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the activities, attractions, facilities and/or services available in the Shire and surrounding region that the market is likely to be interested in.</li> <li>- Package these into itineraries and products.</li> <li>- Use the internet to identify associations, clubs, event organisers etc – develop a data base.</li> <li>- Direct marketing to clubs and associations.</li> <li>- Conduct follow-up.</li> <li>- Support the direct marketing with public relations marketing – seeking to place articles in relevant magazines, newsletters and websites and post on social media sites.</li> <li>- List on free directories and websites relevant to the interest / activity and participate in forums.</li> <li>- Include relevant information on the tourism website and seek links to relevant activity-based sites.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Strategy 28: Grow visitation through effective marketing and promotion</b>                                |  |         |  |
| 28.1   | Continue to market and promote the Shire, working collaboratively to extend the reach of the ‘marketing dollar’. | 28.1.1  | Adopt a collaborative approach with Council, DRT and DDCC aligning strategies, sharing information, images, video resources and the timing of initiatives.   |
|  |  | 28.1.2  | Continue to work cooperatively with DNSW and other partners and leverage opportunities to work with adjoining LGAs to develop specific markets (eg Singleton LGA and the New England Region to develop the touring motorcycle market).   |
|  |  | 28.1.3  | Focus on-line marketing activities to build destination awareness, communicate directly with key target markets and to harness user-generated content.   |
|  |  | 28.1.4  | Leverage opportunities provided by NPWS and Forestry Corporation websites, social media channels and marketing initiatives.  |
|  |  | 28.1.5  | Continually improve and update Dungog Shire content on third party websites (eg Trip Advisor, Wiki Camps, travelling with children, travelling with pets).   |

## Priority 9: Market growth and development supported by effective marketing and promotion

| Strategies | Actions  |
|------------|--|
|            | 28.1.6 Undertake direct, targeted marketing to activity-based enthusiasts, clubs and association, leveraging relevant websites, magazines, you-tube content etc (see Action 27.1.1)  |
|            | 28.1.7 Encourage tourism and business operators, community organisations and event organisers to develop /update their websites, embrace social media and to list on relevant free directories and third party websites.                                   |
|            | 28.1.8 Encourage accommodation operators and event organisers to include a link to the visitdungog website on their website and social media channels  |
|            | 28.1.9 Increase marketing and PR activities within the surrounding region to raise awareness of Dungog and grow the regional day trip, VFR and short-breaks markets.   |
|            | 28.1.10 Endeavour to ensure that Dungog Shire is represented at key travel, caravan and camping and lifestyle shows in Sydney, the Hunter – Central Coast and regional NSW.  |
|            | 28.1.11 Explore opportunities to purchase editorial content in the Visitor Guides from surrounding LGAs. Dungog Shire may need to buy space in these Guides or enter into a quid-pro-quo arrangement to feature these towns in the Dungog Visitor’s Guide. |



## 20. MONITORING

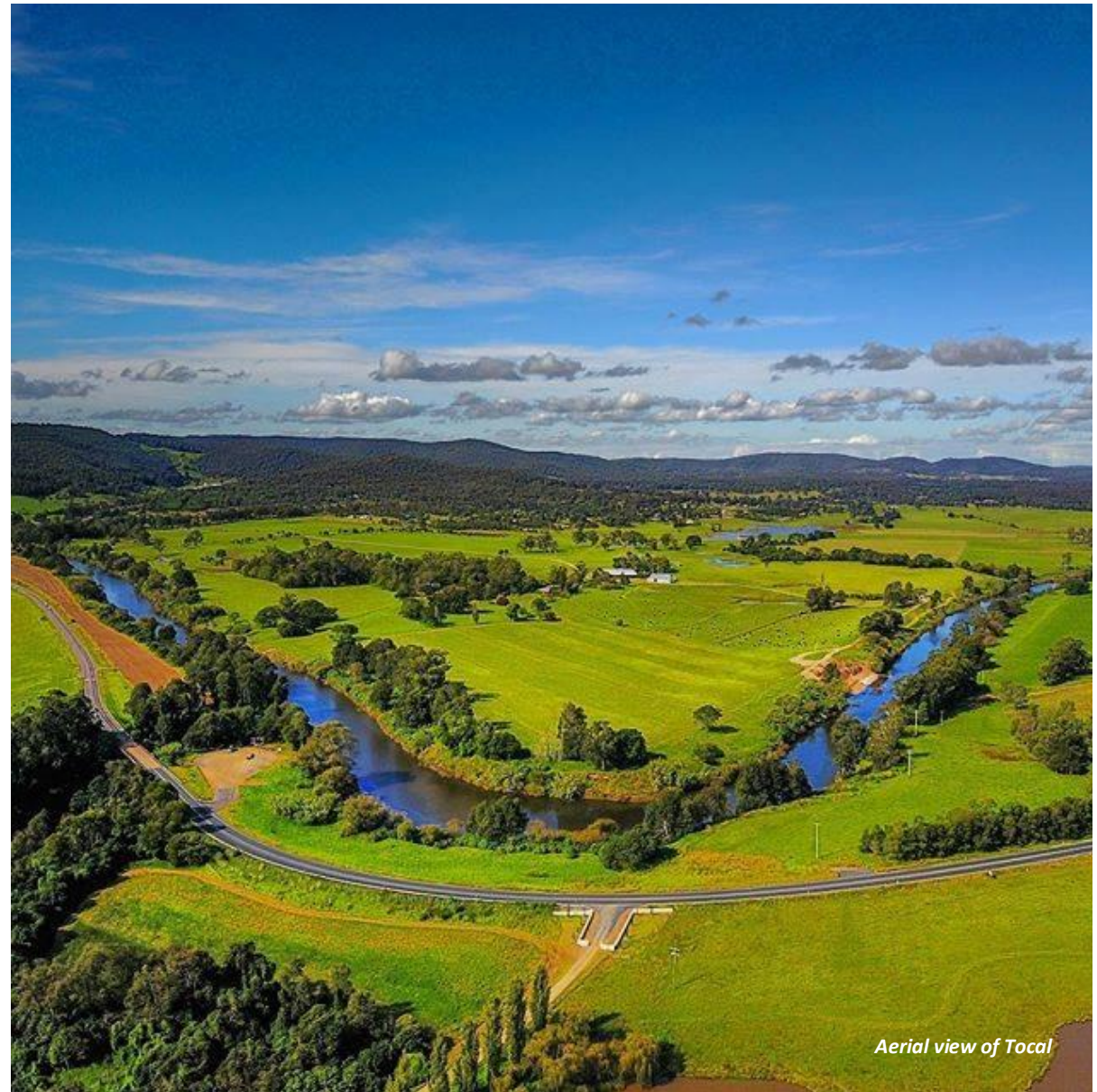
It is important that a simple program is put in place to monitor the effectiveness of tourism development and marketing activities. This will assist in:

- Providing an indication of whether the strategies and actions are effective in building visitation and/or achieving economic growth. Ineffective actions can be terminated or modified.
- Setting priorities and allocating funds and resources.
- Providing data to support funding applications. This is particularly important where funding for the extension of an existing program is being sought.

### Potential indicators include:

- Visitor statistics collected at the Dungog VIC.
- Website and social media analytics.
- Performance statistics from the Williams River Holiday Park, caravan booking data from the Showgrounds and Paterson Sportsground.
- Data from Ride Dungog, Dungog Common Reserve Manager, NPWS and Forestry Corporation.
- Event attendance.
- Media coverage gained (track amount of coverage and the dollar value).
- Familiarisation tours hosted and resultant media coverage.
- Traffic count data.
- Number of events attracted to the Shire, and the number of participants and room nights generated.
- Grant funding secured.
- Value of new / additional investment in the tourism facilities (accommodation, attractions, tours etc) in the Shire.

For some initiatives, particularly in the areas of market development, it may take several years before the results are fully realised.



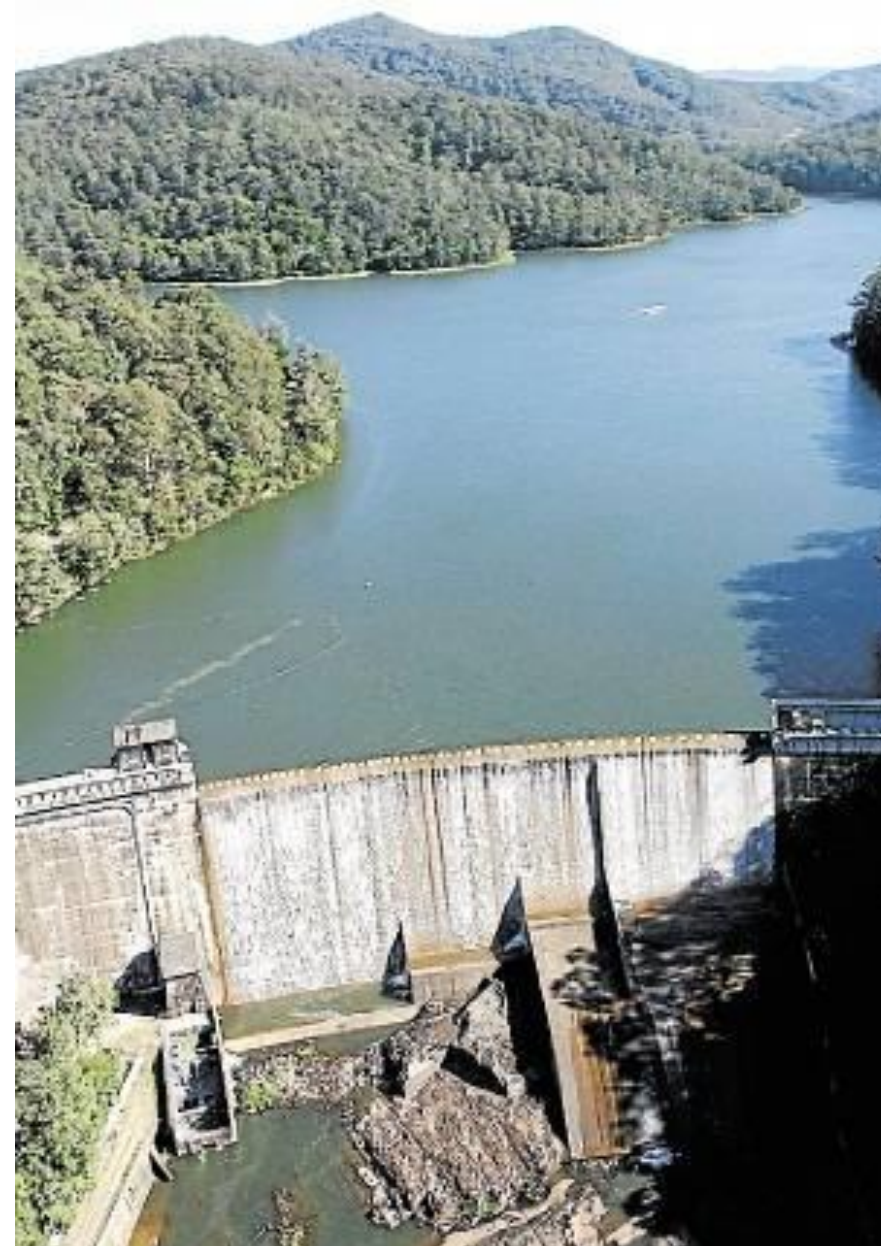
*Aerial view of Tocal*

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## PHOTO CREDITS: SOURCE OF IMAGES USED

| Page  | Position     | Description                                    | Source                                   |
|-------|--------------|--|--|
| Cover | Left         | Rainforest, Barrington National Park           | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| Cover | Centre       | Waterfall, Williams River                      | Carriageway Resort                       |
| Cover | Right        | Dungog Countryside                             | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| Cover | Top Right    | Mountain Biking Dungog Common                  | Ride Dungog                              |
| Cover | Bottom Right | Horse Riding Dungog Common                     | Dungog Common Facebook                   |
| 1     |              | Williams River Gorge                           | Newcastle University Mountaineering Club |
| 2     | Left         | Canoeing on the Williams River                 | Trip Advisor: School of Yak              |
| 2     | Right        | Williams River Canyon                          | A wildland - blogger                     |
| 3     |              | Barrington Tops National Park                  | Aussie Bushwalking                       |
| 4     |              | Allyn River                                    | Visit Dungog                             |
| 5     |              | Camping Chichester State Forest                | Visit Dungog Facebook posted by jaybabe7 |
| 7     |              | Upper Williams River Gorge                     | A wildland.blogspot.com                  |
| 8     |              | Bushwalking Barrington Tops National Park      | NSW National Parks                       |
| 11    |              | Military Swim-in, Williams River Clarence Town | Maitland Mercury                         |
| 12    |              | View from Mt Allyn, Chichester State Forest    | Forestry Corporation of NSW              |
| 15    |              | Dungog Markets                                 | VisitNSW                                 |
| 17    |              | Exploring Dungog by Bike                       | Ride Dungog                              |
| 18    | Left         | James Theatre Dungog                           | Subcultureentertainment.com              |
| 18    | Centre       | Tocal Homestead                                | Tocalhomestead.com.au                    |
| 18    | Right        | Dungog Festival Long Dinner, Dungog            | Events on Line                           |
| 19    | Top          | Visitor at the Dungog VIC                      | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| 19    | Bottom       | Stella Bistro, Dungog                          | Trip Advisor                             |
| 24    | Left         | Gorge at Pilchers Reserve                      | Helicite.caves.org.au                    |
| 24    | Centre       | Café at Tempest Cycles                         | Tempest Cycles                           |
| 24    | Right        | Forest Trail                                   | We are Explorers                         |
| 27    |              | Camping for Music Festival Dungog              | Event Photography Sydney – by Orlando    |
| 29    |              | Touring Motorcycles, Dungog                    | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| 30    |              | Camping at Ferndale                            | Air Camp                                 |
| 33    |              | Weaving Workshop, Hive and Gobbler Dungog      | Hiveandgobbler.com.au                    |
| 35    | Top Right    | Connecting with Nature                         | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| 35    | Bottom Left  | Mountain Biking, Careys Peak                   | Ride Dungog                              |
| 35    | Bottom Left  | 4WD – Allyn River Crossing                     | Pat Callinan's 4x4 Adventures            |
| 37    |              | Country Drive, Dungog Shire                    | Visit Dungog Facebook                    |
| 38    | Bottom Left  | Chichester State Forest                        | Which Car 4x4 Adventures                 |
| 38    | Centre       | Connecting with Nature – Wangat Lodge          | Wangat Lodge                             |
| 38    | Bottom Right | Chichester State Forest                        | Which Car 4x4 Adventures                 |
| 39    | Top          | Mountain Biking, Dungog Common                 | Ride Dungog                              |
| 39    | Bottom       | Bushwalking, Barrington Tops National Park     | Campermate                               |
| 41    |              | Boutique Shopping - Chic and Antique, Dungog   | Jenny Rand & Associates                  |

| Page | Position      | Description   | Source  |
|------|---------------|---|---|
| 41   | Top Left      | Bicycle Art Topiary                                   | Ivy League Bikers <a href="http://www.flickr.com">www.flickr.com</a>  |
| 41   | Top Centre    | Planter boxes   | <a href="https://blog.gardenloversclub.com/container-gardening/bicycle-planter-ideas/">https://blog.gardenloversclub.com/container-gardening/bicycle-planter-ideas/</a> |
| 41   | Top Right     | Bicycle wheel sculpture                               | Pintrest: Pratik Haldankar @pratik9190  |
| 41   | Bottom Left   | Bicycle Fence   | Black Bicycle Fence <a href="http://www.funfunpics.blogspot.com">www.funfunpics.blogspot.com</a>  |
| 41   | Bottom Centre | Figure in the paddock                                 | Bicycle Sculpture, Palmer Sculpture Biennial, Australia Pic: Harvey Schiller <a href="http://www.flickr.com">www.flickr.com</a>   |
| 41   | Right Centre  | Bike accident Denmark                                 | Tomasz Sienicki <a href="http://www.commons.wikimedia.org">www.commons.wikimedia.org</a>  |
| 41   | Bottom Right  | Bicycle Dome  | Bicycle Wheel Dome Via: <a href="https://facebook.com/GreenSetGo">facebook.com/GreenSetGo</a>   |
| 43   |               | Water Skiing on the Williams River Clarence Town      | River Realty  |
| 44   | Top           | Fun Run – Wallaroo State Forest                       | Running Calendar Australia  |
| 44   | Centre        | Wharf Reserve Clarence Town                           | Clarence Town Facebook  |
| 44   | Bottom        | Horse Riding – Columbey National Park                 | NSW National Parks  |
| 45   |               | Camping, Gresford Showground                          | happycampersaustralia.com.au  |
| 47   | Right         | Paterson Tavern                                       | Paterson Tavern Facebook  |
| 47   | Left          | John Tucker Park, Paterson                            | Instagram #Paterson images by Deb   |
| 48   |               | Mountain Biking, Dungog Common                        | Ride Dungog   |
| 50   | Top           | Example: MTB Skills Park                              | Pinterest: paustin360.com   |
| 50   | Bottom        | Gravel Grinding Dungog Shire                          | Dungog Pedalfest  |
| 50   |               | Pedalfest   | Dungog Pedalfest  |
| 52   | Left          | Riders at Dungog Common                               | Ride Dungog   |
| 52   | Right         | Bike at Paterson Station                              | Mark Hensen Hunter Valley Cycle Tour  |
| 53   |               | Camping Chichester State Forest                       | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 54   |               | Walking Track Signage – Barrington Tops National Park | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 55   |               | The Corker Trail – Barrington Tops National Park      | Campermate  |
| 56   |               | Paddling on the Clarence River                        | Visit NSW   |
| 57   |               | White Water Paddling, Upper Paterson River            | You Tube – Johannes Hendricks   |
| 58   |               | Horse Riding on the Dungog Common                     | Dungogcommon.org  |
| 59   | Top           | Wirragulla Polo Cup Dungog                            | Wirragulla.org.au   |
| 59   | Bottom        | Horse Riding near Vacy                                | Eaglereach Wilderness Resort  |
| 60   |               | Horse Trails – Columbey National Park                 | NSW National Parks  |
| 61   |               | 4WD Chichester State Forest                           | Pat Callinan's 4x4 Adventures   |
| 62   | Left          | Art Retreat, The Bower Main Creek                     | Retreat2maincreek.com   |
| 63   | Right         | Art Exhibition, Dungog Arts Society                   | Dungog Arts Society Facebook  |
| 64   | Top Right     | Dungog Festival                                       | Dungog Festival Facebook  |
| 64   | Bottom Left   | Clarence Town Courthouse Museum                       | Clarence Town Facebook  |
| 64   | Bottom Centre | Dungog Festival                                       | Visit NSW   |
| 64   | Bottom Right  | Art & Sip at the Hive and Gobler                      | Hive and Golber   |
| 62   |               | Sculpture, Dungog Festival                            | Dungog Festival Facebook  |
| 66   |               | Sculpture on the Farm, Dungog                         | Sculptureonthefarm.com  |
| 67   |               | New Year's Eve, Paterson                              | Visit NSW   |
| 68   |               | Gresford Billy Cart Derby                             | The Young Witness   |



| Page | Position      | Description  | Source  |
|------|---------------|--|---|
| 68   |               | Dungog Team Penning                                  | Visit NSW   |
| 69   |               | Clarence Town Country River Hoedown                  | Hoedown Facebook  |
| 70   |               | Karuah River Motorcycle Rally – Lunch in Dungog      | Clubman Tourers   |
| 74   | Top Left      | Adaptive Canoe Launcher – Murray River National Park | NSW National Parks  |
| 74   | Top Right     | Adaptive Mountain Biking                             | <a href="https://mountainculturegroup.com/worlds-first-adaptive-mountain-bike-trails/">https://mountainculturegroup.com/worlds-first-adaptive-mountain-bike-trails/</a>                                   |
| 74   | Bottom Left   | Adaptive Waterskiing                                 | <a href="http://maineattractionwaterski.com/">http://maineattractionwaterski.com/</a>   |
| 74   | Bottom Centre | Adaptive Supported Bushwalking                       | <a href="http://adaptiveadventures.ca/adaptive-equipment/">http://adaptiveadventures.ca/adaptive-equipment/</a>   |
| 74   | Bottom Right  | Adaptive Independent Bushwalking                     | <a href="https://wonderfulengineering.com/freedom-wheelchair-lets-disabled-go-hiking-on-rough-terrain/">https://wonderfulengineering.com/freedom-wheelchair-lets-disabled-go-hiking-on-rough-terrain/</a> |
| 75   |               | Boydell's Safari Tent                                | boydells.com.au   |
| 76   |               | Wedding Venue: Dungog Weddings and Functions         | Dungog Weddings and Functions facebook  |
| 81   |               | Clarence Town Information Directory                  | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 82   |               | Allyn River Road                                     | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 87   |               | Dungog Promotional Brochure                          | Dungog Regional Tourism   |
| 88   |               | Touring Motorcyclists                                | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 89   | Left          | Dungog Rumble  | Instagram.com/illshootya  |
| 89   | Centre        | Cycling Dungog                                       | Visit NSW   |
| 89   | Right         | Camping – Chichester Forest                          | Visit Dungog Facebook posted by Jaybabe7  |
| 90   |               | Dungog Common Flow Tracks                            | Ride Dungog   |
| 91   |               | Bushwalking Chichester State Forest                  | Visit Dungog Facebook   |
| 92   |               | Lostock Dam  | Robcaz.net  |
| 94   | Left          | Clarence Town Post Office                            | Placesandpics.com   |
| 94   | Middle Left   | St Annes Anglican Church Gresford                    | Organ History Trust of Australia  |
| 94   | Middle Right  | Settlers Arms Dungog                                 | Trip Advisor  |
| 94   | Right         | Paterson Courthouse                                  | Visit NSW   |
| 97   |               | Flow Track Dungog Common                             | Ride Dungog Facebook  |
| 101  |               | Art Exhibition                                       | Dungog Arts Society   |
| 104  | Left          | Yamaha AORC Round, Dungog                            | Australian Off Road Championships   |
| 104  | Right         | Dungog Festival                                      | News of the Area  |
| 105  |               | Agri Tourism – Farm Visit                            | Newy with Kids  |
| 107  |               | Dungog Railway Station                               | NSW Rail.net  |
| 111  |               | Cyclists   | Visit Dungog Facebook   |
| 112  |               | Tour at Tocal Homestead                              | Tocal Homestead   |
| 114  | Left & Right  | Allyn River  | Jenny Rand & Associates   |
| 115  |               | Tocal from Above                                     | Visit Dungog Facebook / Jeremy Cross 87   |
| 116  |               | Cyclists Dungog Common                               | Visit Dungog Facebook   |
| 117  |               | Chichester Dam                                       | Hunter Water  |
| 121  |               | View from Mount Allyn                                | Visit Dungog Facebook   |

# APPENDICES



## APPENDIX 1: ALIGNMENT WITH KEY STRATEGIC PLANS AND STRATEGIES

### A1.1 Policies for the Development and Management of Tourism Destinations

#### Australian Government - National Long Term Tourism Strategy

The National Long Term Tourism Strategy (2009) for Australia recognised that the future of tourism is dependent on providing ‘compelling and sustainable experiences’ to consumers. It also recognised that for Australia to move up the international tourism value chain and to remain competitive, required ‘innovation, continuous improvement and renewal’ of products, experiences and infrastructure. To facilitate this, the Commonwealth Government, in conjunction with the State Tourism Agencies is advocating for integrated planning, development and management of tourism destinations, with localities encouraged to prepare and adopt Destination Management Plans (DMPs). The Strategy is currently being reviewed with the draft directions including a focus on dispersal of visitors into regional Australia, developing unique Aboriginal tourism experiences, harnessing technology to enhance the visitor experience, addressing transport and accommodation capacity constraints and building a skilled workforce.

#### NSW – Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP) 2030

Building the visitor economy is a key priority of the NSW Government, with the visitor economy recognised as having the potential to drive growth in the State’s economy. The VEIP sets a target to increase visitor expenditure in NSW to \$55 billion by 2030. The Plan has a strong emphasis on growing tourism in Regional NSW and has set targets of achieving \$20 billion in visitor expenditure in Regional NSW by 2025 and \$25 billion by 2030. Key directions include a focus on:

- Product development: nature-based activities, aboriginal experiences, tours and trails, interest-based activities, events and regional conferencing
- Investing in infrastructure: including accommodation and signage
- Industry development: including workforce skills

#### Destination NSW – Strategic Objectives<sup>30</sup>

##### Destination NSW’s eight key strategic objectives are:

1. *Position Sydney and NSW as world leading tourism and events destinations*
2. *Attract and secure high value major events*
3. *Build a sustainable events calendar for NSW*
4. *Increase industry stakeholder and customer engagement*
5. *Deliver value in partnership cooperative programs*
6. *Develop and sustain a high-performance organisation*
7. *Maximise yield and dispersal from the visitor economy*
8. *Implement the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan*

##### For product development, Destination NSW’s priorities include:

- Food and wine
- Aboriginal experiences
- Regional conferencing
- Events
- Nature-based
- Agri-tourism
- Touring routes and trails
- Interest-based activities

<sup>30</sup> Destination NSW Annual Report 2018-19

## Statewide Destination Management Plan

The Statewide Destination Management Plan sets the directions for tourism product, infrastructure and industry development in NSW to deliver on the Government's visitor expenditure targets for NSW. The Plan has 10 Strategic Focus Areas:

- *Destination NSW will continue to take a leadership role in aligning Government and industry across the state to deliver the 2030 Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan and grow the NSW visitor economy sustainably and raise the importance of the sector with all levels of Government.*
- *Position the visitor at the heart of the NSW visitor economy by making best use of data and developing deep customer insights that drive destination development, management and marketing strategy.*
- *Develop and deliver statewide experiences and products strategies in partnership with the Destination Networks.*
- *Support the Department of Industry, National Parks & Wildlife Service and other Government departments in the development and delivery of sustainable statewide tourism infrastructure and access improvement strategies.*
- *Work with Roads and Maritime Services and the Destination Networks to develop and deliver a streamlined statewide wayfinding and visitor information services strategy.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide industry development strategy, in partnership with the Destination Networks and the Department of Industry.*
- *Develop and deliver an enhanced statewide digital and content strategy and plan, in consultation with the Destination Networks.*
- *Develop a Destination Management Plan for Sydney.*
- *Prepare for future industry disruption, innovation and global trends.*

For product development, DNSW will focus on supporting the Destination Networks to create and maintain a pipeline of 'hero' experiences, better 'bundling' of assets, developing touring routes and trails, industry development and increase the number of 'export ready' and 'China ready' experiences. The DMP identifies 20 experience categories that DNSW and the Destination Networks need to focus on.

The experiences that Dungog Shire can contribute to / deliver on are:

- Nature and adventure
- Arts and culture
- Special interest
- Journeys and touring routes
- Events and festivals
- Caravan and camping
- Short-breaks

## Sydney Surrounds North - Destination Management Plan 2018-2020

In 2016, DNSW established six Destination Networks in NSW. Dungog Shire lies within the Sydney Surrounds North Destination Network. The Network, which incorporates the Hunter, Central Coast, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions of NSW, is administered by Destination Sydney Surrounds North (DSSN). The Destination Network has adopted a DMP for the Region with the Mission Statement being:

- *To make Destination Sydney and Surrounds North the most successful Destination Network in NSW*
- *Maximise the benefits of the Visitor Economy for the region and NSW.*
- *Work with industry partners to ensure that they are enabled to maximise opportunities and grow the Visitor Economy.*

The objectives of the Plan and the key priorities are:

| Objectives   | Key Priorities  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase overnight tourism expenditure in the region year on year</li> <li>• Increase MICE expenditure in the region</li> <li>• Increase leisure expenditure in the region</li> <li>• Increase visitor length of stay in the region</li> <li>• Grow the region's export ready product</li> <li>• Increase partnerships between the LGAs in the region</li> <li>• Grow funding secured by DSSN regions</li> <li>• Ensure stakeholder satisfaction with the DN</li> </ul> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advocate for the DSSN Visitor Economy and foster greater collaboration between regions in DSSN.</li> <li>2. Facilitate destination infrastructure development.</li> <li>3. Facilitate product and experience development.</li> <li>4. Facilitate major events and conference growth.</li> <li>5. Maximise the benefits of regional tourism funding programs.</li> <li>6. Facilitate industry skills development and knowledge.</li> <li>7. Improve destination marketing effectiveness</li> </ol> |

The Plan identifies the key experiences, products and infrastructure in Dungog Shire and gaps in visitor facilities as:

| Key Experiences / Products   | Key Infrastructure   | Gaps   |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Parks, wilderness, forests and reserves including part of the UNESCO World Heritage Listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia.</li> <li>• Rivers: swimming, kayaking, fishing</li> <li>• Scenic drives</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Attractive historic towns and villages</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Theatre</li> <li>• Good access to Sydney and also to Newcastle Airport</li> <li>• Rail access (limited service)</li> <li>• Dungog festivals / events</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to the Barringtons needed</li> <li>• Forest walks not well maintained</li> <li>• Accommodation (</li> </ul> |

## A1.2 Regional Strategies and Plans

### Priorities for Regional NSW - A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

In July 2018, the NSW Government released its priorities for driving economic growth in Regional NSW<sup>31</sup>. In relation to tourism, the NSW Government is looking to:

- *Draw in more domestic and international tourists in areas with tourism potential*
- *Attract more domestic and international students to regional NSW*

The Plan is also looking to ‘Grow vibrant places to live and work to encourage business and population growth.’

### Hunter Regional Plan 2036<sup>32</sup>

The Hunter Regional Plan applies to the 9 LGAs that comprise the Hunter Region plus MidCoast LGA. The vision for the Region is: ***‘The leading regional economy in Australia with a vibrant new metropolitan city at its heart’***

The Plan has 4 core goals:

*GOAL 1: The leading regional economy in NSW*

*GOAL 2: A biodiversity-rich natural environment*

*GOAL 3: Thriving communities*

*GOAL 4: Greater housing choice and jobs*

The Plan has a number of directions and actions that will help to drive growth in the regional visitor economy and have implications for Dungog Shire:

*Direction 2: Enhance connections to the Asia-Pacific through global gateways* – with the focus on increasing cruise ship activity through the Port of Newcastle and expanding activities at Newcastle through additional domestic routes and the introduction of international flights

*Direction 8: Promote innovative small business and growth in the service sectors* – recognising that *‘the rise of middle-class consumers throughout the world, particularly in Asia, significantly increases the potential customer base for new products and services in the health, education and tourism sectors’*.

*Direction 9: Grow tourism in the region.* The plan recognises the world heritage significance of the Barrington Tops National Park. Actions under this direction relevant to Dungog Shire are:

*9.1 Enable investment in infrastructure to expand the tourism industry, including connections to tourism gateways and attractions.*

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<sup>31</sup> NSW Government (2018) A 20 Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW

<sup>32</sup> NSW Planning and Environment Central West and Orana Regional Plan 2036.

9.2 *Encourage tourism development in natural areas that support conservation outcomes.*

9.5 *Develop capacity for growth in food-based tourism.*

*Direction 10: Protect and enhance agricultural productivity with Action 10.4 ‘Encourage niche commercial, tourist and recreation activities that complement and promote a stronger agricultural sector, and build the sector’s capacity to adapt to changing circumstances’, relevant to Dungog Shire.*

*Direction 18: Enhance access to recreational facilities and connect open spaces including expanding on the recreational walking and cycling trails, improving public access to natural areas and investing in infrastructure to improve access to waterways.*

*Direction 20: Revitalise existing communities with actions relevant to Dungog Shire being:*

20.2 *Undertake planning and place-making for main streets and centres.*

20.3 *Enhance the amenity and attractiveness of existing places.*

The Plan’s narrative for Dungog Shire recognises that *‘Dungog’s future lies in strengthening its tourist connection to Barrington Tops, diversifying its already-strong agricultural base and capitalising on its potential for large-scale music festivals.* Priorities for the Shire include:

- *Support the growth and diversification of the agricultural sector.*
- *Expand the tourism sector by leveraging its strengths, including growing of fresh produce and nature tourism*

## **Hunter Functional Economic Region - Regional Economic Development Strategy (REDS) 2018-2022**

The State Government, through the Department of Premier and Cabinet, has prepared Regional Development Strategies (REDS) for 37 Functional Economic Regions in NSW. Dungog Shire, along with Cessnock, Maitland, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Port Stephens LGAs, form the Hunter Functional Economic Region (FER)<sup>33</sup>. The vision for the Hunter FER is:

***A leading region in innovation, resilience and diversity of opportunity, with world class infrastructure and direct access to interstate and international markets, boasting an enviable lifestyle.***

The REDS identifies tourism as a significant opportunity and has as an infrastructure priority – *‘develop tourism assets and supporting infrastructure’*. The Plan also identifies the need to improve and maintain roads; invest in telecommunications infrastructure (internet and mobile phone); support growth in Newcastle Airport routes and services; expand/improve public transport services; enhance access to recreational facilities and connect open spaces; and facilitate greater access to and development of facilities in National Parks and State Forests. These initiatives will help to support and grow the tourism (and other) sectors.

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<sup>33</sup> The Hunter Functional Economic Region is smaller than the Hunter Region. It does not include Lake Macquarie and Newcastle LGAs

## Hunter Joint Organisation: Aspire. Act. Achieve – Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Dungog Shire is a member of the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. The Organisation has six strategic priorities, with *Priority 3* being ‘Our economy is multifaceted, resilient and is Australia’s leading regional economy’. Actions 6 and 7 of this priority are:

*Action 6: Develop a sustainable model to coordinate council-run events across the region and showcase the Hunter and attract local, national and international visitors.*

*Action 7: Work with Destination NSW, Newcastle Airport and other partners to more strongly promote the Hunter as a multifaceted visitor destination. Develop a regional destination management plan.*

## A1.4 Dungog Shire – Local Plans and Strategies

### Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030

The Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030, articulates the vision, directions and framework for coordinating development, resource allocation and service delivery within the Shire. The Plan has seven key focus areas and defines the goals, priorities and strategies for each of these areas. Priorities and strategies that relate directly to growing and managing the visitor economy or have implications for improving the infrastructure and facilities for visitors are summarised in the following table.

| Focus Area / Themes        | Goal   | Priorities – from a tourism perspective.   | Key Strategies – that have implications for the growth of the visitor economy.   |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Natural environment</b> | The health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural assets in our Shire need careful management to protect them from degradation arising from human activity.</li> <li>• Appropriate access to our local national parks, forests and waterways needs to be maintained.</li> <li>• Weeds and pest animals need to be effectively managed and their impacts on our local area minimised.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage public access and use of natural areas to enhance our environmental experience and to preserve and promote ecological values.</li> <li>• Raise public awareness of the responsibilities of landholders regarding management of land.</li> <li>• Ensure that Dungog Shire council’s policies and procedures adequately protect and enhance the Shire’s natural environment and biodiversity.</li> <li>• Ensure that local waterways and riparian areas in the Shire are clean and healthy.</li> <li>• Ensure that appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies are proactive in addressing environmental issues in our Shire.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Local economy</b>       | Our economy is strong, innovative and sustainable providing diverse employment opportunities and ease of access to goods and services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic and agricultural diversity across our Shire needs to be expanded.</li> <li>• Local employment opportunities need to be explored.</li> <li>• Increase awareness of Dungog Shire as a tourism destination for visitors.</li> <li>• Promote and support a range of tourist accommodation and facilities.</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that economic growth and expansion across the Shire is supported by improvement of local public and private infrastructure.</li> <li>• Ensure that appropriate public and private sector agencies and businesses work co-operatively to strengthen and expand the Shire’s economic base.</li> <li>• Work with Dungog Regional Tourism to develop a strategic approach to growing visitor numbers across the Shire</li> </ul>   |



| Focus Area / Themes                       | Goal  | Priorities – from a tourism perspective.   | Key Strategies – that have implications for the growth of the visitor economy.  |
|---|---|--|---|
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extend the day and overnight stay visitation to the Dungog Shire so as to enhance visitor expenditure supporting a range of infrastructure including restaurants, cafes, accommodation, and retail all which actively contribute to developing liveable communities. .</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage a ‘buy local – sell local’ approach to goods and services.</li> <li>Develop a unique brand, identity and value proposition for the Dungog Shire to promote local economic growth and tourism development.</li> <li>Identify and develop in partnership with local business operators, local tourism opportunities with a focus on overnight stay visitors to the Shire.</li> <li>Improve the availability of telecommunications infrastructure to our communities and visitors.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Community and Culture</b>              | We enjoy a safe supportive community characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our service provision and planning needs to account for the distinctiveness of our towns and villages.</li> <li>Local European and Indigenous heritage and history need to be preserved and promoted.</li> <li>Recognise the value of celebrating and building the Shire’s creative and cultural communities to enhance community wellbeing and identity.</li> </ul>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise public awareness of local activities and events that provide a foundation for community building</li> <li>Foster and support the cultural life of the Shire.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Rural and Urban Development</b>        | Growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local land use planning needs to ensure the retention of the character of the area whilst encouraging ecologically sustainable development.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that our land use planning for the Shire acknowledges the importance of our rural character and agricultural activities.</li> <li>Ensure the heritage and streetscapes of our villages are preserved and enhanced and our town entrances are signposted.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Recreation and Open Space</b>          | Access to a range of places, activities and facilities which cater for diverse sporting and recreational interests. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and management of local parklands and recreational facilities needs to reflect community growth and change across the Shire.</li> <li>Access to and within areas of our local national parks and forests needs to be appropriately managed and expanded.</li> <li>Ensure that our local parks, sporting and recreation facilities are safe and well maintained.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that local recreational and sporting facilities reflect the needs and interests of a growing community.</li> <li>Ensure that sporting and recreational spaces are well maintained and provide appropriate facilities and amenities for locals and visitors.</li> <li>Review the provision of improved camping and caravan facilities throughout the Shire.</li> <li>Encourage and support a diversity of sporting and recreational activities throughout the Shire.</li> <li>Ensure that appropriate access to public land is maintained.</li> <li>Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including national parks, forests and waterways are accessible and well cared for.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Public Infrastructure and Services</b> | Our community is supported by safe, functional, accessible and well maintained infrastructure and                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The long term retention and enhancement of local services provided by Governments at all levels needs to be ensured (eg. Health, Rail, Education, and Policing).</li> <li>Our road and bridge network is safe, well maintained and able to provide appropriate vehicular access across the Shire</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the safety and functionality of our road network.</li> <li>Ensure a local police presence throughout the Shire.</li> <li>Ensure that our communities have access to quality educational institutions and health and social services/facilities.</li> </ul>   |

| Focus Area / Themes                         | Goal   | Priorities – from a tourism perspective.  | Key Strategies – that have implications for the growth of the visitor economy.  |
|---|--|---|---|
|   | effective local and regional transport networks.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public facilities across the Shire need to be provided and maintained to an appropriate standard.</li> <li>The ongoing provision of local health and medical facilities needs to reflect the requirements of our community including our ageing population. Appropriate public transport options are needed to connect us locally and regionally.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure our local bridge network is safe and able to accommodate heavy vehicle load requirements.</li> <li>Improve the provision of transport services to communities within the Shire. Ensure that community assets, facilities and public infrastructure are planned for, maintained and improved to a reasonable standard.</li> <li>Ensure that the provision of public infrastructure and services reflect the needs of a growing and changing population. Advocate for improved rail services/timetables for the Dungog Shire</li> </ul> |
| Dungog Shire Council Governance and Finance | Dungog Shire council is recognised for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council will demonstrate strong and accountable leadership embracing collaboration, agility and a determination to succeed</li> <li>Council needs to plan and manage its resourcing and expenditure to ensure its long term financial sustainability.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council maintains a regional outlook and seeks opportunities for strategic alliances with neighbouring councils.</li> <li>Council will advocate for our communities by actively pursuing constructive relationships with other spheres of government.</li> </ul>   |

## Dungog Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement – Moving Towards 2040

The Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030 provides a long-term vision for the future of Dungog Shire and provides clear planning priorities. The Vision for the Shire is:

***‘Dungog Shire has a vibrant united community, with a sustainable economy. It is an area where rural character, community safety and lifestyle are preserved’***

The Plan recognises the need to protect and diversify agriculture, protect the natural environment and the lifestyle of the Shire and provide infrastructure to support both residents and visitors. The Plan’s core themes and planning priorities relevant to tourism are:

| Core Theme                       | Planning Priorities   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| A Thriving New economy           | PP 1: Protect & enhance local important agricultural land<br>PP 2: Promote diversification & innovation of agriculture<br>PP 4: Growth in tourism |
| Infrastructure Supporting Growth | PP 1: Improve key transport routes<br>PP 2: Improve tourism infrastructure  |
| A Sustainable Environment        | PP 1: Protect & enhance areas of ecological significance  |
| A Place to Grow                  |   |

Planning priorities and actions related to PP4 – Growth in Tourism and PP2 – Improve Tourism Infrastructure, are given in the following Table.

| Planning Priorities                 | Planning Principles   | Actions   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| PP4: Growth in Tourism              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase the perception of the Dungog LGA as a tourist destination and develop a brand for the Shire.</li> <li>2. Promote and support a variety of tourist accommodation types.</li> <li>3. Increase overnight visitation and daily visits.</li> <li>4. Explore opportunities for Eco Tourism, Rural Tourism, Agritourism and Food and Events-based tourism.</li> </ol> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Development Control Plan: Develop a tourism chapter and include temporary events.</li> <li>• Review Dungog Local Environmental Plan: Insert clause for temporary events / Undertake review of permissible tourism uses in environmental and rural zones.</li> <li>• Review the Dungog Shire Visitor Economy 2015-2018 Report and collaborate with Dungog Regional Tourism and local stakeholders in creating a DMP.</li> <li>• Develop a strategy for local tourism operators to help support business growth.</li> <li>• Work with DRT, Hunter JO, MidCoast, Upper Hunter and Singleton Councils, National Parks and Wildlife Service and NSW State Forest to investigate inter-regional and connected tourism opportunities and increase access and connectivity to Barrington Tops national Park, Columbey National Park and State Forests.</li> </ul>   |
| PP2: Improve Tourism Infrastructure | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote inter-regional tourist routes</li> <li>2. Leverage off the proximity to the Barrington Tops National Park, Columbey National Park and State Forests.</li> <li>3. Encourage transient tourism through the LGA.</li> <li>4. Promote local heritage.</li> </ol>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance inter-regional tourism through better connected infrastructure in roads, train network and possible tourism routes across adjoining LGAs.</li> <li>• Advocate for improved signage and infrastructure in National Parks.</li> <li>• Work with relevant local stakeholder groups to investigate opportunities for tourism signage as part of the marketing and signage plan including heritage interpretation and heritage route.</li> <li>• Review tourism infrastructure such as picnic facilities, amenities, camping facilities, signage and mapping across the LGA to identify shortfalls.</li> <li>• Investigate opportunities for walking trails, mountain bike trails and cycling routes across the LGA while preserving and leveraging of those already established by working with stakeholder groups.</li> <li>• Work with DRT and local stakeholders to investigate opportunities for events, routes and tracks for visitor activities such as 4WD and motorbike touring to promote the LGA.</li> </ul> |

## APPENDIX 2 PRODUCT AUDIT – DUNGOG SHIRE

### Attractions

|   | Williams and Telegerry River Valleys  | Allyn and Paterson River Valleys   |
|---|---|--|
| Historic Towns & Villages                   | Dungog<br>Clarence Town   | East Gresford – Gresford<br>Vacy<br>Paterson   |
| National Parks and State Conservation Areas | Barrington Tops National Park - Williams River Picnic area, Blue Gum Loop, Jerusalem Falls and walking Trail, Rocky Crossing Trail, Corker Trail<br>Columbey National Park, Clarence Town<br>Columbey SCA, Clarence Town<br>Wallaroo National Park, Clarence Town | Barrington Tops National Park – Burraga Swamp<br>Mount Royal National Park (part)  |
| State Forests                               | Chichester State Forest (Telegerry); riverside camping and picnic areas<br>Uffington State Forest, Clarence Town<br>Wallaroo State Forest, Clarence Town  | Chichester State Forest (Allyn River) – Ladies Wells, Allyn River Rainforest Walk, picnic and camping areas.   |
| Reserves                                    | Dungog Common: Mountain biking, horse riding, bushwalking, lookout<br>Dungog Showground<br>Bandon Grove Reserve<br>Apex Lookout, Dungog   | Gresford Showground<br>John Tucker Reserve Paterson<br>Paterson Sports Ground  |
| Rivers & Waterways                          | Williams River: riverside camping areas, riverside reserves and walking tracks<br>Telegerry River: riverside camping<br>Chichester Dam and picnic area  | Allyn River: Upper Allyn River, Gresford<br>Paterson River<br>Lostock Dam – caravan park and picnic area   |
| Heritage                                    | Dungog Museum<br>Dungog Town Walk<br>Clarence Town and District Museum<br>Brig O'Johnston Bridge, Clarence Town   | Gresford Heritage Museum<br>Paterson Railway Museum<br>Court House Museum<br>Tocal Homestead<br>Paterson Town Walk<br>Historic sites – churches, iron and wooden bridges |
| Arts & Cultural                             | Dungog Arts Society Gallery<br>Dungog by Design<br>Gallery on Dowling<br>James Theatre  | Vacy Community Arts Centre<br>Studio La Primitive, Gresford (by appointment)   |
| Lifestyle                                   | Cafes / eateries<br>Boutiques and lifestyle shops<br>Plant nursery<br>Heritage Hotels – Dungog and Clarence Town  | Heritage hotels – East Gresford, Vacy, Paterson<br>Cafes – Paterson and Vacy   |

|               | Williams and Telegerry River Valleys   | Allyn and Paterson River Valleys                                |
|---------------|--|---|
| Local produce | Westwood Dungog Proviadores – Dungog<br>Tinshed Brewery, Dungog<br>Dungog Local Growers Stall<br>Clarence Town Farmers Market<br>Frog Grange Winery, Clarence Town |   |
| Other         | Scenic Drives<br>Bird Trails<br>Dungog Golf Club   | Boot Hill<br>Scenic Drives<br>Bird Trails<br>Paterson Golf Club |

## Activities that can be undertaken in the Shire

Bushwalking / hiking / walking  
 Cycling: Mountain biking / gravel grinding / road cycling / cycling events  
 Boating  
 Horse riding and horse sports  
 Water skiing and wakeboarding  
 Rock sports / caving  
 Bird watching / wildlife viewing  
 Motorcycle touring  
 Four-wheel driving  
 Trail biking  
 Fishing  
 Sight-seeing / scenic drives  
 Boutique and market shopping  
 Arts and lifestyle workshops  
 Dining out

## APPENDIX 3 MAIN EVENTS - DUNGOG SHIRE

| Timing    | Dungog   | Clarence Town – Glen William                        | Gresford – East Gresford   | Vacy                  | Paterson                        |
|-----------|--|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Weekly    | Growers Stall  |   |                            |                       |                                 |
| Monthly   | Dungog Markets   | Clarence Town Markets<br>CT Fresh Market            |                            |                       |                                 |
| January   | Australia Day  |   |                            |                       |                                 |
| February  | Karuah River Motorcycle Rally (3 days)   |   |                            |                       |                                 |
| March     | Anglican Church Market Day   |   | Agricultural Show (2 days) |                       | Paterson Historic Walk          |
| April     | Dungog Rodeo   |   | Billy Cart Derby           |                       | Paterson – Allyn Garden Rally   |
| May       |  |   |                            |                       | Total Field Days (3 days)       |
| June      |  |   |                            |                       |                                 |
| July      | Dungog Archies / Dungog Art Show   |   |                            |                       | Total – Peak into the Past      |
| August    | Team Penning (2 days)<br>Dungog Tea Party (6 days)<br>Run Dungog (2 days)          |   |                            |                       |                                 |
| September | Pedal Fest (2 days)<br>Wirragulla Polo Tournament                                  |   |                            | Vacy Village Carnival |                                 |
| October   | Dungog Festival (4 days)<br>Sculpture on the Farm (4 days)<br>Dungog Garden Ramble | River Country Hoedown                               |                            |                       | Rail Museum Diesel Shuttle Ride |
| November  | Dungog A&H Show (2 days)   | Swim-in and Rally (4 days)<br>Glen William Gymkhana |                            |                       |                                 |
| December  | Christmas Carols   |   | Christmas Carols           | Christmas Carols      | New Years Eve                   |

There are also a range of smaller events

## APPENDIX 4 VISITOR ACCOMMODATION – DUNGOG SHIRE

| Property   | Location      | DRT Member | Visit NSW | Booking .com | Wotif | Air BnB | Stayz |
|--|---------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| <b>Motel</b>   |               |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Tall Timbers   | Dungog        | X          | X         | X            |       |         |       |
| Vacy Village Motel   | Vacy          |            |           |              | X     | X       |       |
| <b>Hotel</b>   |               |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| The Bank Hotel   | Dungog        | X          | X         | X            |       | X       |       |
| Settlers Arms Hotel  | Dungog        | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Court House Hotel  | Paterson      |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Beattie Hotel  | Gresford      |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Erringhi Hotel   | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| <b>Self-contained – note: properties move in and out of the short term holiday lettings market</b> |               |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Alison Cottage   | Alison        |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Allyn Riverside Cottages   | Allynbrook    | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Apartment (Helena)   | Dunns Ck      |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Apartment (Howard)   | Dungog        |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Arinya Lodge   | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Banjos Bushland Retreat  | Vacy          | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Banksia Mountain Retreat   | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Barrington Park Manor & Estate   | Bendolba      | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Barrington Tops Escapes  | Bandon Grove  |            | X         |              |       |         | X     |
| Barrington Tops Nest   | TB Wangat     | X          |           |              | X     |         |       |
| Bendolba Townhouse   | Dungog        |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Billabong Spa Cabin  | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Blackwattle at Barrington Tops   | Wangat        |            |           |              | X     | X       | X     |
| Blue Gum Cabins  | Wangat        | X          | X         |              | X     | X       | X     |
| Bobby's Country Cottage  | Eccleston     | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Bower Retreat  | Main Creek    | X          | X         |              |       | X       | X     |
| Bower Bird Cottage   | Salisbury     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Bundera Lodge  | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Boydells   | Gresford      | X          | X         |              |       |         | X     |
| Cabin (Amanda)   | Bandon Gr     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Cabin (Dimery)   | TB Wangat     |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| Cabins in the Clouds   | Vacy          | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Camyr Allyn Homestead  | Gresford      |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Carawirry Forest Escape  | Main Creek    | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Carriageway Resort   | Dungog        | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |

| Property                      | Location      | DRT Member | Visit NSW | Booking .com | Wotif | Air BnB | Stayz |
|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Cedar Lodge                   | Salisbury     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Chichester Forest Cabins      | Bandon Grove  | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Country Getaway               | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Curlew Cottage                | Dungog        |            |           | X            |       |         |       |
| Eaglereach Wilderness Retreat | Vacy          | X          | X         |              | X     | X       |       |
| Eagleview Retreat / Resort    | Vacy          | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Ernies Cottage                | Dungog        |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| Fabulos Large Farmhouse       | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Fosterton Retreat             | Fosterton     | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Fosterton School House        | Fosterton     | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Grand View House              | Wangat        |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Gully Falls House             | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Gum Tree Heaven Spa Cabin     | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Hamish Glen Hunter Resort     | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| Highclere Farm                | Torryburn     |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| Horseshoe House               | Dungog        | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Hillside Studio Retreat       | Bandon Gr     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| House (Grieves)               |               |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| House (Groves)                | Mt Rivers     |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| House (Helena)                | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Kiah Cottage Farm             | E Gresford    |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Inala Wilderness Retreat      | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Jamevin Lodge                 | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Kiah Cottage Farmhouse        | Gresford      |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Kookaburra Cottage            | Salisbury     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Lake Lodge                    | Salisbury     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Little Monkerai               | Main Creek    |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Lodge at Mount Rivers         | Mount Rivers  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Lyrebird Cottage              | Salisbury     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Mid Town Apartment            | Dungog        |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Millpond Vue                  | Gresford      |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Moonabung Wilderness Lodge    | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Mountain View Cabin           | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Mountain Retreat Cabin        | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Munni Home with a View        | Munni         |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Nerringundah Cabins           | Bendolba      | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Old Duninald                  | Paterson      | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| Orana Spa Cabin               | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |



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|-------------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Paterson BnB                  | Paterson      |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Paterson River Cottage        | Lostock       |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Peppercorn Farm Stay          | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Primrose Cottage              | Tocal         |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Rivers Run Country Retreat    | Glen William  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Riverwood Downs               | Monkerai      |            |           |              | X     |         |       |
| Riverdowns Cottage            | Clarence Town |            |           |              | X     | X       |       |
| Roscrea Homestead             | Glen Williams |            | X         | X            |       | X       |       |
| Rose Cottage                  | Torryburn     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Salisbury Lodges              | Salisbury     | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| School House                  | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Sugar Gums Cabins             | Wangat        |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Sugarloaf Dairy               | Dungog        |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Serindipity on Allyn          | Allynbrook    | X          |           | X            |       |         |       |
| Studio Retreat                | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Allyn Riverside Cottage   | Upper Allyn   |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Barracks Tocal            | Paterson      | X          | X         |              | X     | X       |       |
| The Barrrough Glass House     | Bandon Grove  | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| The Chichester Retreat        | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| The Gallery Cabin             | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Highlands                 | Monkerai      |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Lodge at Mt Rivers        | Mount Rivers  |            | X         |              |       | X       | X     |
| The Farm House (Hetherington) | Dunns Creek   |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| The Retreat Bushland Lodge    | Vacy          | X          | X         |              |       | X       |       |
| The School House              | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Shed on Sugarloaf         | Sugarloaf     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| The Treehouse                 | Main Creek    |            |           |              | X     |         |       |
| The Wattle Lodge              | Bandon Grove  |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Valley View Cabin             | Fosterton     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Valley View Cottage           | Paterson      |            |           |              |       | X       | X     |
| Valley View Luxury Retreat    | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Wallaby Leap Spa Lodge        | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Wallaroo Spa Lodge            | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Wallarobba House              | Wallarobba    |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Wangat Lodge                  | Wangat        | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Wanjii Pool and Spa Getaway   | Vacy          |            |           |              |       | X       |       |
| Williams River House          | Clarence Town |            |           |              |       |         | X     |
| Yellow House Killarney NR     | Fosterton     |            |           |              |       | X       |       |

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|---|-------------------------|------------|-----------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Yeranda at Barrington Tops              | Main Creek              | X          | X         |              |       |         | X     |
| <b>B&amp;B</b>                          |                         |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| CBC B&B                                 | Paterson                | X          | X         |              | X     |         |       |
| On Keppies B&B                          | Paterson                |            |           | X            |       |         |       |
| <b>Caravan Parks / Camping Areas</b>    |                         |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Camp on Allyn                           | East Gresford           | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| East Gresford Showground                | East Gresford           | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Ferndale Caravan Park                   | Bandon Grove            | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Lostock Dam Caravan Park                | Lostock Dam             | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Williams River Holiday Park             | Clarence Town           | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Wombat Creek Campground                 | BT National Park        | X          | X         |              |       |         |       |
| Dungog Showground                       | Dungog                  |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Paterson Sportsground                   | Paterson                |            |           |              |       |         |       |
| Chichester State Forest – 8 campgrounds | Chichester State Forest | X          |           |              |       |         |       |