

Destination Management Plan 2020-2030



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*We acknowledge the Wonnarua People as the
Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land within
the Maitland Local Government Area. Council pays
respect to all Aboriginal Elders, past, present and
future with a spiritual connection to these lands.*

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SECTION ONE: **Executive Summary**

Maitland City Council (MCC) has developed this Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Maitland in consultation with the community, tourism operators, local businesses and the broader industry. The information presented in the plan has been developed to reflect the 1,100+ ideas collected during a six month engagement period in 2019.

1.1 KEY FINDINGS

As a key driver of economic development in Maitland, the goal of tourism development over the next 10 years is to grow the visitor economy by delivering the actions identified in the implementation plan. The following reflects the key findings from research and analysis undertaken during 2019 for this DMP.

- Maitland is centrally located within the Hunter Region and surrounded by established tourism product from neighbouring destinations.
 - Maitland has many natural assets for recreation and tourism use including the Hunter River, however many are not currently set up to generate financial returns.
 - Most tourism operators, including accommodation, attractions, food and beverage outlets, transport providers and retailers are micro to small businesses with very few medium or larger businesses.
 - Maitland has 51 accommodation venues (with a further 20+/- properties listed on Airbnb), 564 rooms available and the capacity to accommodate nearly 1,600 people.
 - Investment in quality and diverse visitor accommodation development is required to grow overnight visitation.
 - Maitland has a strong visual arts community that is anchored by the Maitland Regional Art Gallery (MRAG) (operated by MCC) and a strong performing arts community that is supported by a range of community led groups and commercial operators.
 - Given the history and heritage of Maitland, there is a strong case for a contemporary museum experience.
 - There are several tourism hubs across the local government area (LGA) however they have limited connectivity.
 - MCC runs an annual program of flagship events including Taste, Steamfest, Aroma, Riverlights and Bitter & Twisted. Such events provide an opportunity to attract visitors from outside the area.
 - There are also a number of privately run events that attract visitors from outside the LGA.
- Visit maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp for a summary of the tourism product audit.



1.2 CURRENT CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

Maitland has a number of challenges to overcome if tourism opportunities are to be grown on a sustainable basis. At present, some of the major challenges include:

- Visitor entry points/gateways from neighbouring LGAs with a lack of clear and welcoming signage.
- Limited connectivity between key destinations, plus these destinations do not have an integrated relationship so little synergy exists.
- There are very few commercial visitor experiences and a subsequent shortage of commissionable tourism product, which has resulted in a lack of tour operator and wholesaler interest in Maitland.
- A heavy reliance on self drive with limited tours and transport options.
- Limited awareness of Maitland as a destination with no clear destination brand in the broader market.
- Moving from natural assets to tourism attractions will require substantial investment and development.
- Within Maitland's priority hubs (and across the LGA), cars dominate and pedestrians are secondary. This will make it harder to encourage greater walkability.
- Minimal directional and interpretative signage hampers visitors from exploring areas.
- MCC has responsibility for many of the key attractions including Maitland Gaol, MRAG, Walka Water Works and Morpeth Museum and has therefore had to take a much more dominant role to activate the visitor economy.
- Limited private investment to grow the visitor economy.
- Many overnight visitors stay with friends and relatives rather than staying in commercial accommodation, which limits the economic benefit to those associated with experiences.

1.3 SUMMARY OF THE ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Engagement for the DMP commenced in January 2019 and ended on Sunday 30 June 2019. The purpose of this engagement was to seek feedback from local tourism operators, businesses, visitors, residents and MCC staff on how they would like to see Maitland evolve as a tourism destination in the future. From the 1,100+ ideas and suggestions MCC received, five priority hubs and seven key themes were identified. In no particular order these are listed below, each with a summary extracted from the feedback.

Visit maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp for the full Engagement Report.

KEY THEMES

RIVER ACTIVATION

Respondents suggested a number of ideas for activation along the river from evening activities such as a river dinner cruise, enhancement of riverbanks with boat ramp/access points for canoes or kayaking, more water facing restaurants and lighting along the river to a dedicated cycle path linking Walka Water Works to Morpeth.

ARTS, HERITAGE AND CULTURE

Respondents suggested that more needs to be done to promote the Aboriginal culture and heritage and the European history of Maitland. There was also mention of the need to better connect the MRAG, Repertory Theatre and Maitland Town Hall with outdoor art installations, entertainment and food pop ups to create an Arts and Cultural Precinct. Recurring ideas included a performing arts centre, concerts and international acts at Maitland Town Hall, outdoor art and art trails, interactive museum and gallery immersion experiences, and attracting national cultural events such as writers' festivals and more art exhibitions.

SPORTS AND RECREATION

Dedicated cycle ways connecting Walka Water Works to Morpeth via Central Maitland was the most common suggestion, along with mountain bike trails and walking trails in various locations. Other suggestions included a waterpark or wave pool, a large advanced adventure playground, more major sporting events, concerts and live music at various locations such as Maitland Gaol, Maitland No.1 Sportsground, The Levee and in Morpeth. They would also like to see an increased number of sports and recreational facilities from basketball courts and skate parks to archery and (quarry) rock climbing.

CONCERTS AND EVENTS

Many believe the major drawcard for visitors to Maitland will be event related, including major sporting events, music festivals, food related festivals such as a winter harvest and a variety of night time events. Suggestions for enhancement of current popular MCC flagship events included extension of Steamfest by running regular trips from Maitland at other times on the popular locomotives, better event way finding signage as well as maps for the event(s) online and healthier food options.

FARMLAND AND NATURE

Farm stays, tasting trails and farm tours, farm to fork festival/paddock to plate experiences and more frequent farmer's markets were suggested. There was also consideration given to a winter program of foodie events, suggesting the timing of Taste should change and then be followed by a Winter Harvest Festival and wrap up with Maitland Aroma. Other ideas included eco cabins, nature walks and hiking trails, horse riding and mountain biking.

CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN ATTRACTIONS

Cycle ways and walkways were suggested as a way to connect Walka Water Works to Central Maitland and Morpeth. However it was not only physical connections suggested but virtual reality and online technology as a way to connect themed itineraries and immersion experiences.

ACCOMMODATION ALTERNATIVES

Additional visitor accommodation options were identified as an important element in growing visitor numbers to Maitland. Suggestions included eco cabins, camping/ glamping and/or a boutique hotel at Walka Water Works, a caravan/tourist park in a suitable location, recreational vehicle (RV) friendly sites, and hotel/motel style accommodation, particularly in Central Maitland.

PRIORITY DESTINATION HUBS

MORPETH

Already a well known destination for visitors, suggestions focused on strengthening the heritage product offering in Morpeth. This as well as more events and activations, an interactive museum experience and additional diverse accommodation offerings within easy walking distance.

CENTRAL MAITLAND

The heart of Maitland needs a better shared pathway connection with Morpeth and other areas of the LGA, hotel accommodation, river activation and more food and beverage options facing the river. MRAG, Maitland No.1 Sportsground and The Levee were identified as important attractions within Central Maitland.

MAITLAND GAOL

Respondents highlighted the fact Maitland Gaol is underutilised and there is plenty of opportunity to enhance the visitor experience. Suggestions included overnight accommodation, restaurant and bar, an interactive experience and a community garden.

WALKA WATER WORKS

Respondents suggested improvements could include a café, restaurant and bar/brewery, function centre particularly to cater for weddings, accommodation options (eco cabins, camping/glamping, caravans) and better amenities. They would also like to see more activities supported such as hiking trails with lighting, cycle way connections, consideration of uses for the lagoon, horse riding, and ideas for attractions such as a sculpture park, an adventure playground and a destination for festivals and events, filming and photography.

TOTAL

Total was identified as the ideal hub for agritourism with its location, product offering and well established events (Total Field Days, Total Beekeepers' Field Day and Peek into the Past). Its close proximity to a variety of farm experiences for package tours and guided trails was also mentioned together with connectivity to other priority destinations through shared pathways, tourist drives and signage.



Saint Peter's Anglican Church, East Maitland.

FIVE PRIORITY HUBS

Hillsborough

Gosforth

Anambah

Maitland Vale

Mindaribba

HUNTER RIVER

Windermere

NEW ENGLAND HIGHWAY

Lochinvar



MAITLAND AIRPORT

Aberglasslyn

Oakhampton

Bolwarra Heights

Largs

Rutherford



RUTHERFORD SKATEPARK



WALKA WATER WORKS

Bolwarra

HUNTER RIVER

Phoenix Park



MORPETH

Raworth

Farley

Telarah



CITY LIBRARY



THE LEVEE



MAITLAND TRAIN STATION



MAITLAND POOL



MAITLAND PARK

Lorn



CENTRAL MAITLAND

Pitnacree



MAITLAND GAOL

Tenambit



MINISTERS PARK

East Maitland

Louth Park

Chisholm

1.4 KEY FOCUS AREAS

For the purpose of this plan, the engagement outcomes (outlined on pages 5 and 6) have been segmented according to the following key focus areas:

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Besides the annual calendar of flagship events, Maitland currently has a limited product offering for visitors and locals alike. New tourism product development should be consistent with community values and MCC has a critical role to play in attracting private investment that aligns with these values.

New visitor experiences and the development of a range of visitor accommodation options will be vital to growing the visitor economy.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

MCC should be an enabler in this space. The focus will be on providing effective planning mechanisms, appropriate policy and incubator programs to encourage start ups and diversification of existing businesses into the visitor economy.

In order to effectively grow the visitor economy and assist the local industry to thrive, the focus should be on partnering opportunities and investment attraction.

The objective is to provide support, working collaboratively through cooperative marketing campaigns, visitor publications and networking events as well as industry, media and buyer famils.

1.5 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The opportunities outlined in the DMP are for consideration and are not in any priority order. A progressive and ongoing implementation plan will be developed in consultation with key stakeholders. This will outline projects for further exploration as well project responsibility, key stakeholders, an indicative timeline and possible funding opportunities.

Many of the opportunities fall outside of MCC’s control so the primary objective is to work together with key stakeholders to provide a clear direction for the development and growth of Maitland’s visitor economy. It identifies a range of actions which, if realised, will see the city transform into a hero destination as identified in the Statewide DMP.

The DMP is a long term document that aims to attract investment and funding, ensuring tourism adds value to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the Maitland community. It will be reviewed in line with MCC’s four year Delivery Plan cycle.

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

The destination brand should reflect Maitland’s unique and distinctive identity, while building recognition and desirability of the city.

From the work that was undertaken by Hall & Partners for Destination NSW, Maitland’s primary Unique Selling Point (USP) consists of creatives, local produce and food, and people.

The NSW Statewide DMP (available at maitland.nsw.gov/dmp) identifies Maitland as a potential future hero destination (p21). The long term vision for Maitland as a hero destination is not about attracting mass tourism. The goal is to maintain authenticity, a place where the community is always welcoming, and visitors return as friends.

VISITOR SERVICING

This should consider the needs and wants of the visitor and how they continue to evolve. Focus in the first instance should be on building awareness, with less focus on bricks and mortar and more on smart technology with an interactive visitor website with maps, themed itineraries, walking tours, history, comprehensive calendar of events and transport options.



SECTION TWO: Introduction

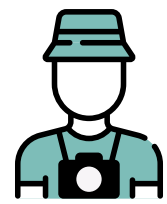
The Destination Management Plan for Maitland brings together the ideas and vision of key stakeholders including the local community, industry and government. The purpose of this DMP is to provide a 10 year plan with a set of core strategic directions and the necessary actions for implementation in the short, medium and long term.

The primary objective is to work collaboratively, ensuring tourism adds value to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the Maitland community.



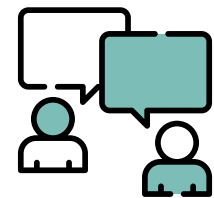
2.1 PREPARING THE PLAN

When setting out the five stage project methodology, MCC recognised the value and importance of stakeholder engagement. The six month engagement period was vital to preparing this plan, which is a collaborative roadmap for building and maintaining Maitland's visitor economy.



STAGE ONE

Visitor economy product audit to determine Maitland's capacity, visitor patterns, source markets and purpose of visit.



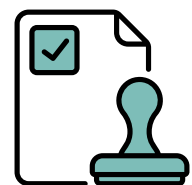
STAGE TWO

Phase one stakeholder engagement to reflect the views of local stakeholders including community, tourism operators, local businesses and industry.



STAGE THREE

Refinement and plan development involved considering over 1,100 ideas and suggestions identified during the engagement period.



STAGE FOUR

Endorsement by Maitland City Council to then go on public exhibition for review and comment as part of phase two stakeholder engagement.

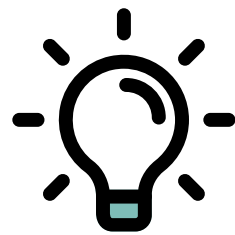


STAGE FIVE

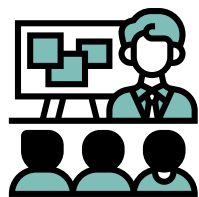
Implementation will commence in 2020 once the DMP has been endorsed and adopted. Phase three stakeholder engagement will commence and continue throughout implementation.



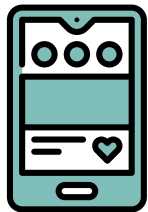
2.2 HOW WE ENGAGED



1,100+
IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR NEW OR IMPROVED ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS TO CONSIDER



60
INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS
ATTENDED THREE WORKSHOPS



3,659
REACH
ON SOCIAL MEDIA



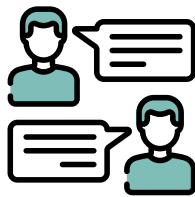
524
WEBSITE VISITORS
MAITLANDYOURSAY.COM.AU



35
BUSINESS LEADERS
COMPLETED INTERACTIVE SURVEY



344
SURVEYS
ONLINE SURVEYS COMPLETED



729
FACE TO FACE
THROUGH POP UP STANDS



Enjoying coffee riverside in Morpeth.

2.3 A GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR THE PLAN

From the 1,100+ suggestions, five priority hubs and seven key themes have been identified in this DMP. The graphic on the following page explains the guiding framework for how the DMP has been developed and highlights the relationship between the priority hubs, key themes and the four focus areas.

Essentially, Maitland's five priority hubs and seven key themes will guide:

- 1. The development of products and experiences.
- 2. The subsequent requirement for industry development to support growth.
- 3. Maitland's brand identity, who the target markets are and how to attract them.
- 4. How we service their needs and wants during each stage of travel, from dreaming, planning and booking through to experiencing and sharing.

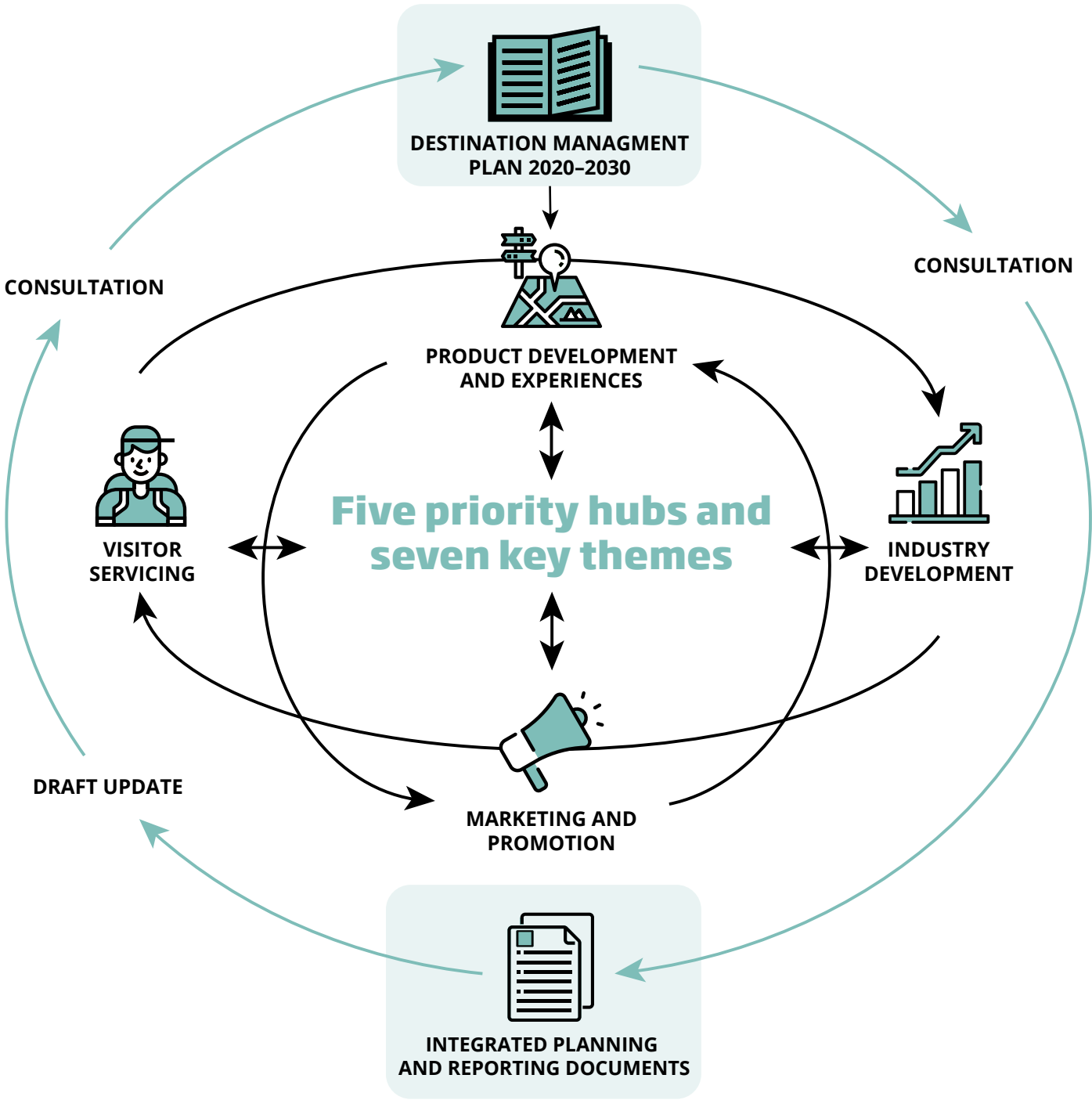
The guiding framework allows for regular review, and MCC as custodians of the plan will continue to assess each of the focus areas based on the five priority hubs and seven key themes.

The Maitland +10 Community Strategic Plan (one of MCC's integrated planning and reporting documents) sets a range of outcomes for the future of Maitland (available at maitland.nsw.gov/dmp). Identified as an action in the four year Delivery Program 2018–2022, the DMP aims to address the community's wish for Maitland to be seen as a desirable place to live, an easy place to work, a welcoming place to visit and a wise place to invest.

The DMP also has linkages with the following plans and strategies:

- Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan (VEIAP)
- NSW Statewide DMP
- Destination Sydney Surrounds North DMP 2018–2020
- Hunter Regional Plan 2036
- Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036
- Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022

These plans are available to preview at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp



A GUIDING FRAMEWORK FOR THE PLAN



SECTION THREE:

Destination Analysis

The City of Maitland has long been regarded as a special place and we are fortunate today in retaining a wonderfully rich and diverse legacy of Aboriginal and European cultural values as demonstrated through local communities, places and historic settlements.

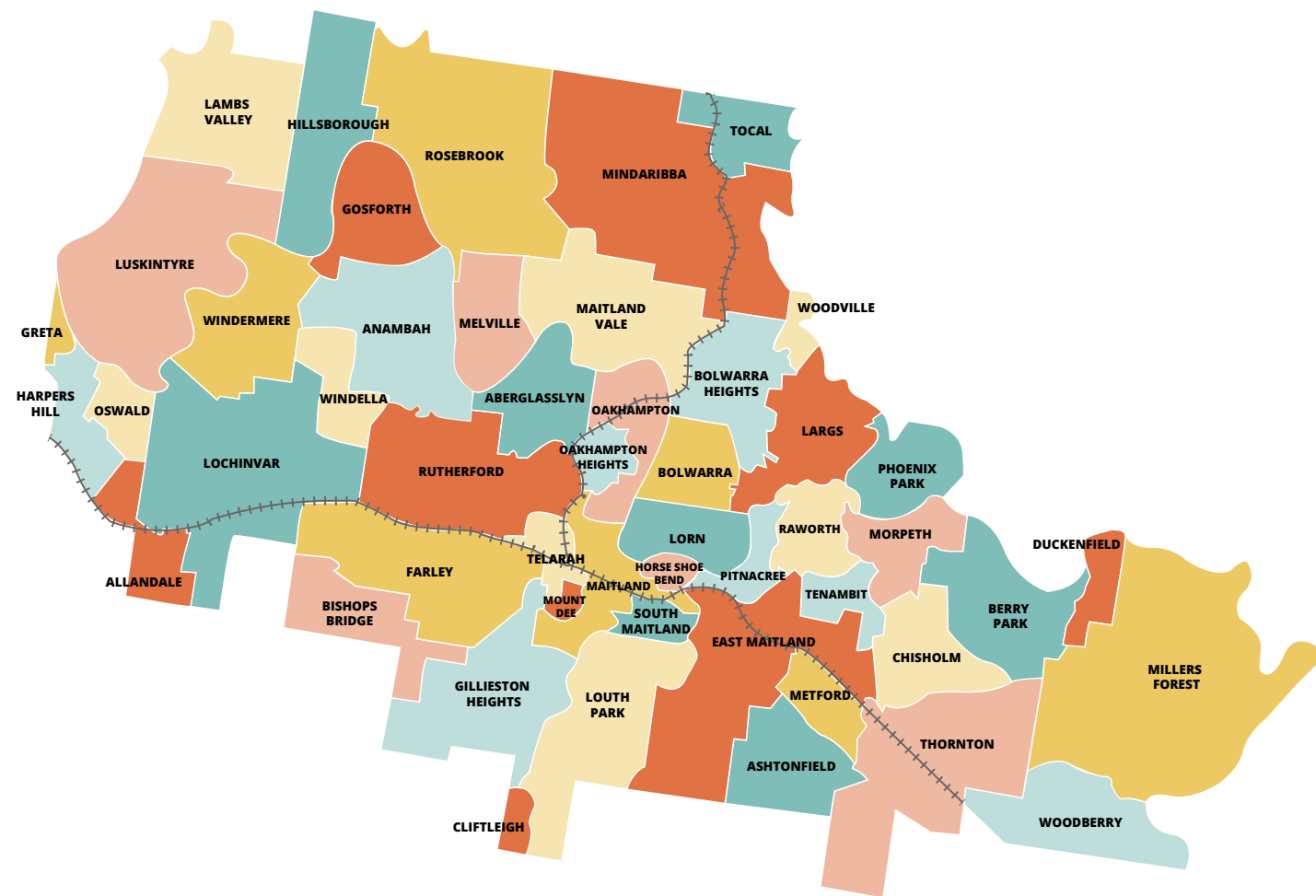
Our cultural diversity is further strengthened by the many ethnic communities increasingly making Maitland their home. There are 49 different countries represented in Maitland bringing a wealth of multicultural traditions to the city.

3.1 MAITLAND

Maitland has experienced substantial population growth in the last 10 years. In 2018 the residential population for Maitland was 83,203 people, which is an increase of more than 15,000 people (18.8%) since the 2011 Census. (Source: [mait.city/3qLkSMg](https://maitlandcity.nsw.gov.au/3qLkSMg)).

Situated in the lower Hunter Region of NSW on the Hunter River, Maitland is approximately 166 kilometres north of Sydney by road and 35 kilometres north west of Newcastle. The LGA is spread over an area of 390.2 square kilometres.

Maitland is located between Port Stephens, Hunter Valley and Newcastle, which creates a challenge in attracting visitation amongst these established competitor destinations. Furthermore, the Hunter Expressway, diverts day trip and overnight visitation from Maitland.



Maitland Local Government Area by Suburb.

VISITORS TO MAITLAND

Maitland welcomes on average 678,000 visitors each year with the majority being domestic day trips. These visitors contribute an estimated \$104 million to the Maitland economy with 1,289 jobs* supported by tourism.

KEY TOURISM METRICS FOR MAITLAND

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Visitors ('000)	5	142	531	678
Nights ('000)	170	347	-	517
Average stay (nights)	35	2	-	4
Spend (\$m)	4	43	56	104
Average spend per trip (\$)	897	306	105	153
Average spend per night (\$)	25	125	-	92
Average spend (commerical accommodation) per night (\$)	np	188	-	np

*Jobs figure from [mait.city/3qLkSMg](https://maitlandcity.nsw.gov.au/3qLkSMg)



Cycling in Lorn.

VALUE OF THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN 2017-2018

	ECONOMIC VALUE	DIRECT EMPLOYMENT
Australia	\$53.3b (3.2% of GDP)	598,200 jobs
New South Wales	\$34.2b (6.1% of GDP)	171,100 jobs
Maitland	\$104m (2.5% of GDP)	1,289 jobs



Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Central Maitland.

PURPOSE OF VISIT

The following table summarises the purpose of visit to Maitland, travel party type and preferred accommodation in 2018.

VISTORS TO MAITLAND	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Reason (visitors '000)				
Holiday	np	31	211	np
Visiting friends or relatives	3	79	149	230
Business	np	np	np	np
Other	np	np	107	np
Travel party type (visitors '000)				
Unaccompanied	3	45	-	49
Couple	np	46	-	np
Family group	np	np	-	np
Friends/relatives travelling together	np	np	-	np
Accommodation (nights '000)				
Hotel or similar	np	53	-	np
Home or friend or relative	138	235	-	372
Commercial camping/ caravan park	np	np	-	np
Backpacker	np	np	-	np
Other	np	np	-	np

Based on this data, over 55% of domestic overnight visitors to Maitland are travelling to visit friends or relatives. (Source: Tourism Research Australia - Local Government Area Profile for Maitland).

Of the 517,000 total overnight stays, 372,000 nights are attributed to staying at the home of a friend or relative. While data was not provided (np) for other accommodation options, you could assume that less than 28% of overnight visitors stayed in paid accommodation.

There are many possible reasons for this, including the preference to stay with friends or relatives, a lack of accommodation options, quality, style and cost. There is also the consideration that outside of the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, there is little awareness of and a low desire to travel Maitland.

KEY TRAVEL TRENDS AND INSIGHTS

As outlined in the NSW Statewide DMP (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp), ‘the travel and tourism sector has undergone immense disruption in the past 20 years. Digital and mobile technology has changed the way people make travel decisions, book, travel and share their travel experiences.’ The only thing for sure is that ‘change is a constant in the sector’.

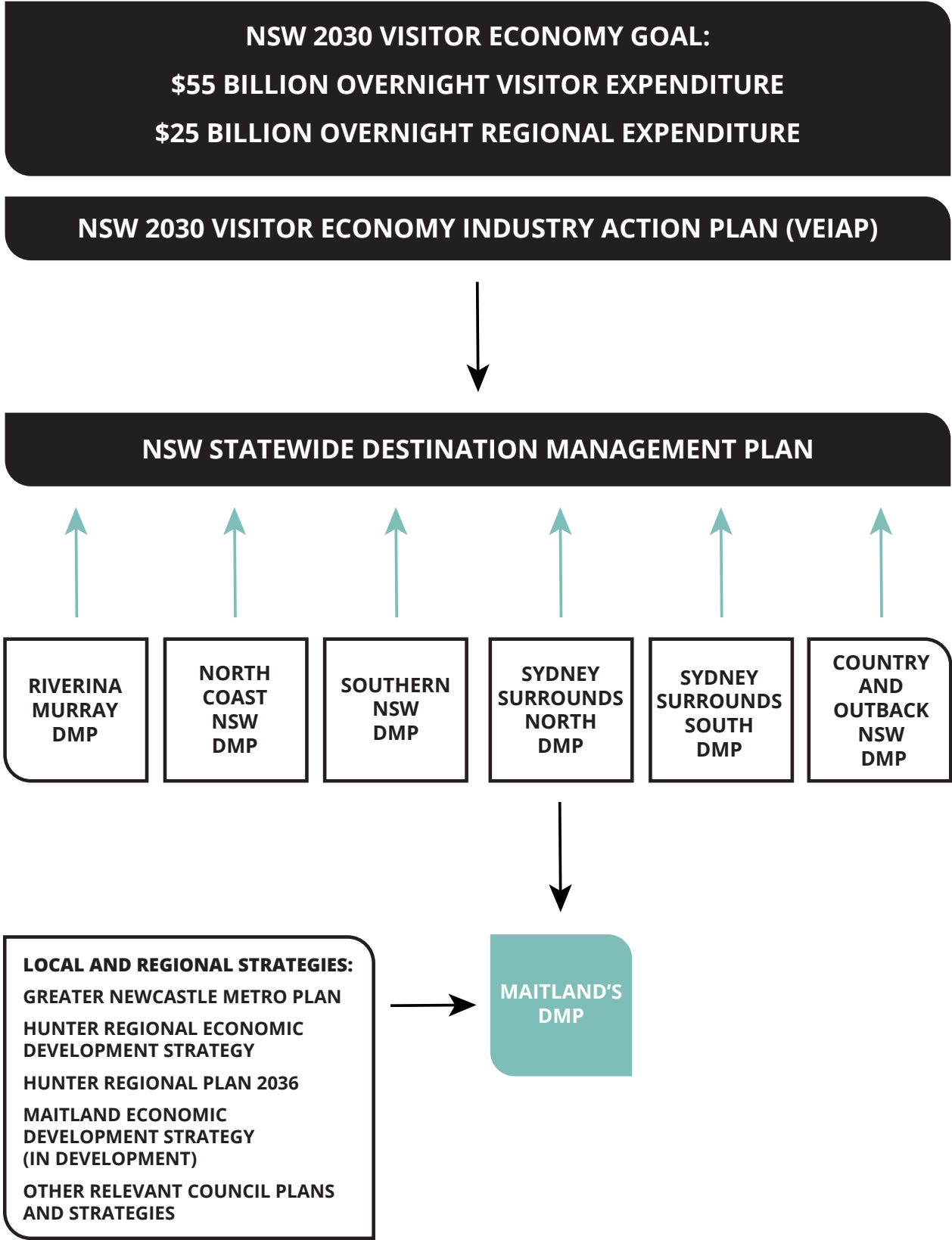
Visit maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp for an outline of the key travel trends Maitland can leverage in the short term.



3.2 LINKS WITH KEY VISITOR ECONOMY PLANS

Maitland’s DMP has linkages with key visitor economy plans and economic development strategies. By aligning local targets and tracking with those at the state and regional levels, there are opportunities to share comparable insights with industry and further collaborate on opportunities and initiatives to grow the visitor economy.

ROLE AND LINKAGES WITH KEY VISITOR ECONOMY PLANS AND ECONOMIC STRATEGIES



3.3 PRODUCT GAP ANALYSIS

A comprehensive product audit together with research and analysis has identified a number of gaps which exist in Maitland’s tourism product offering and supporting infrastructure. Gaps include:

- Limited accommodation offering, including a range of quality hotels.
- Limited quality campgrounds and caravan/RV tourist park accommodation.
- Lack of experiences connected with the river.
- Lack of user pay experiences and bookable product.
- Very few drawcard attractions, both free and paid.
- Poor connectivity between anchor destination hubs and attractions.
- Limited options for tours and transport to Maitland, particularly from Newcastle Airport, Maitland Train Station and surrounding areas such as Hunter Valley Wine Country.
- Limitations of Maitland Town Hall or other appropriate venues to cater for larger performances and audiences.
- Trading hours in key destinations do not cater consistently to visitors including seven days and night time options.
- Limited indoor activities.
- Lack of integrated smart tourism technology including virtual reality, augmented reality, near field communications and mobile applications.
- Very few international ready and commissionable product.
- Slowly emerging visitor focused food and beverage offering.

Visit maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp for a summary of the tourism product audit.

These gaps present a range of opportunities for Maitland, which are explored in the following sections.



Riverside walk at The Levee, Central Maitland.



SECTION FOUR: Priority Hubs

The following section provides a vision for each of the priority destination hubs, the goal being to create a strong sense of place with a unique identity, where residents are proud to live and visitors are always welcome. The opportunities listed for consideration are based on stakeholder input as well as existing MCC publications, plans and strategies.

PRIORITY HUB:

4.1 Morpeth

Morpeth has a rich Aboriginal and European heritage and was instrumental in the development of the Hunter Valley. Parts of Morpeth are like a living museum with preserved buildings and a number of heritage listed sites, many in Swan Street, the main street of Morpeth.

VISION

Morpeth has a proud history and a rich architectural heritage that has been classified by the National Trust. The vision is for Morpeth to become a unique destination with 'a beautiful merging of old world and hipsteresque chic' (to rival the best hipster destinations).

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Linking Morpeth with Walka Water Works and Central Maitland through a network of shared pathways with way finding and interpretative signage.

B. Upgrading road access to Queens Wharf to allow for overnight RV parking.

C. Establishing a beach with access path and an area to launch kayaks, canoes and paddle boards along with other improvements as identified in the Queens Wharf Masterplan.
- D. Providing better pedestrian and cyclist links between Swan Street commercial precinct and Queen's Wharf, along the riverbank to the historic bridge and into Phoenix Park. This would allow for visitor experiences like cycle to farm bike tours and country trails.

E. Promoting opportunities at Queen's Wharf and Morpeth Common for events, activations and commercial enterprise including markets, performances, festivals, hiring facilities and river tours along with associated infrastructure.
- F. Encouraging intermodal tours, linking with the ferry experience from Newcastle to Morpeth with a kayak or canoe tour to Central Maitland.

G. Showcasing the historical significance of the township at Morpeth Museum through a contemporary and highly interactive museum experience. The redeveloped museum should be staffed by paid employees and supported by volunteers. By incorporating smart technology, offering a changing program of displays and events and opening seven days per week, the Museum will attract a broader audience and encourage repeat visitation.
- H. Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings for tourism purposes.

I. Creating a meeting point at the Morpeth Museum for guided and self guided tours of the Morpeth Heritage Walk.

J. Introducing an outdoor theatre program in Morpeth as part of the city's events and/or activations program.

K. Attracting a range of unique and quirky businesses including intimate bars, organic cafés, farm to fork restaurants, an eclectic mix of artisans and makers, live music venues and independent retail stores to bring a new type of visitor to Morpeth.

Queens Wharf Morpeth concept.





CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THIS VISION

A number of challenges were identified in the Morpeth Business Review in 2016 (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp) and these remain much the same today:

- Lack of visitor attractions other than shopping.
- Inconsistent trading hours and inaccurate promotion of trading hours.
- Parking issues including no enforcement of parking times, lack of loading zones in the main street.
- No pedestrian crossings – however these would take out more parking spaces.
- The number of trucks travelling through the main street.
- Poor public transport.
- Keeping and maintaining the heritage and unique character.
- Queens Wharf is subject to seasonal flooding.
- Absentee landlords.
- Lack of business cohesion and unity resulting in little cooperative funds to promote Morpeth.
- Zoning of key sites, the development application process and land ownership.

PRIORITY HUB:

4.2 Central Maitland

Central Maitland is the city's major regional centre with strategic importance. It has a high diversity of economic activity and provides a wide range of services and historic civic functions.

VISION

Central Maitland is to become the city's premier lifestyle and entertainment precinct, supported by a range of visitor experiences. For the purposes of this plan, Central Maitland is divided into distinct nodes, which align with the Central Maitland Structure Plan.



THE LEVEE CENTRAL MAITLAND (MAIN STREET NODE)

Taking in the area from the intersection of Church Street and High Street extending to The Levee shared zone, this functions as Maitland’s ‘Main Street’.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Redeveloping the Riverside Car Park into a mixed use development including a large residential component with accommodation and ground level commercial.

B. Improving connections to the Hunter River.

C. Creating safe play spaces for children dispersed throughout the precinct.

D. Capitalising on the strong historic character of the street.

E. Identifying opportunities for shop top housing within the existing buildings, taking into consideration the Maitland Local Environment Plan (LEP) and current zoning restrictions which are available at mait.city/2Y8hJJZ

F. Implementing planning mechanisms to identify suitable sites for accommodation, making it easier for adaptive reuse etc.

G. Better connecting Central Maitland and Lorn through creative lighting of Belmore Bridge along with consideration of a footbridge as identified in the Central Maitland Structure Plan available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/DMP

H. Developing a dispersed play space, featuring bespoke artist designed pieces, across Central Maitland linked by a shared walking/cycleway that commences at Maitland Station and travels via Central Maitland, along the river, down High Street ending at High Street Station.

I. Creative lighting of buildings to bring vibrancy and
- increase night time patronage.

J. Encouraging a vibrant night time economy with entertainment and activations, live music venues, quality restaurants and small bars open in the evening.

K. Encouraging property owners with buildings along the river that could be reoriented to create dual frontages to do so, with riverside dining, bars, galleries and retail.

L. Creating more shade to sit and enjoy the views in any weather.

M. Attracting commercial operators to provide river experiences on and off water, for example hiring facilities for canoes, kayaks, tinnies, aqua bikes, bicycles, pedal cars and experiences that can be enjoyed all year round.

N. Developing events connected with the river.

O. Attracting the right tenants with more fresh and local produce, a mix of restaurants, gourmet bakery, cheese shop and deli, bars and small venues.

P. A review and refresh of events and activations held in the space.

Q. Implementing a façade improvement program.

R. Ensuring the streetscape is free of clutter.

S. Connectivity through public art and other creative opportunities.



St Andrews Square concept.



MAITLAND TOWN HALL NODE

Civic and cultural precinct

Taking in High Street from Cathedral Street through to Devonshire Street, this area has a distinct character. The precinct is home to key civic and cultural institutions including the Maitland Town Hall, MRAG and Repertory Theatre all housed in substantial 19th century buildings. These, together with the large school campuses, have made this area a focus of public life in Maitland for more than a century. The Central Maitland Structure Plan identifies this area as a crucial anchor within Central Maitland.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Promoting the precinct as the centre of art, culture and public life.

B. Expanding employment and activity in the area through redevelopment of MCC lands to include additional residential, commercial office space and retail.

C. Increasing residential population of the area by promoting infill residential development north of High Street and on both sides of James Street.

D. Upgrading the public domain including a new public square adjacent to High Street.

E. Upgrading Maitland Town Hall to attract live performances, national and international acts as well as catering to local schools and amateur productions.

F. Hosting regular cultural events and night time activations, such as light projections, laneway festivals, markets, workshops and masterclasses.

G. Connecting the east and west ends of High Street through outdoor art installations, murals and activations.
- H. Building on the seasonal Olive Tree Art & Design Markets at MRAG to offer a night time food market.

I. Transforming the grounds of MRAG into an open air theatre during the warmer months.

J. Considering certain buildings for adaptive reuse for tourism purposes, including accommodation, galleries, cafés, start ups, independent retail, or simply for visitors to access and enjoy the heritage and architecture.

K. Utilising MCC's new administration centre and adjacent buildings for exhibitions, installations, interpretation and smart tourism technology (AI/VR) opportunities.

L. Bringing heritage buildings to life through stories, shared via digital technology, light displays, open house events, signage and people/guides/tourism operators.



Maitland Regional Sports Complex

An extension of the Maitland Town Hall node taking in the area on the northern side of High Street, from James Street and incorporating the Maitland Regional Sportsground, Maitland Regional Athletics Centre and Harold Gregson Park.

Since the Central Maitland Structure Plan was endorsed in November 2009, the Maitland Regional Sportsground redevelopment has been completed and construction of the athletics track commenced.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Positioning the Maitland Regional Sports Complex to attract a range of major sporting events, regional and state level athletics meets and other sporting activities.

B. Increasing versatility of the Maitland Regional Sports Complex to allow for other sporting codes as well as showcase a range of new sporting activities, such as Crossfit and Ninja Warrior competitions.

C. Encouraging alternative uses such as trade and consumer shows, concerts and festivals and cosplay carnivals.

D. Creating live sites with entertainment including music, films and kids adventure zone as well as live coverage of large sporting games for example FIFA World Cup.

E. Better connecting the Maitland Federation Centre with Maitland Park to leverage the facilities to attract high profile teams including basketball, netball, volleyball and hockey games.
- F. Consider how the Maitland Regional Sports Complex connects with Maitland Park and its facilities including the Maitland Aquatic Centre.

G. Identifying specific areas within the complex for passive recreation.



Maitland Visitor Information Centre

For the purposes of this plan, the Maitland Visitor Information Centre (VIC) will be included in this node as the gateway to Central Maitland. The focus here is on undertaking a review of the current visitor information centre location and model to establish how to best service visitors and locals now and in the future.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Identifying complementary services and experiences at the VIC that engage visitors and residents with Maitland's culture, history and heritage.

B. Advertising for expressions of interest from experienced operators, from tour guides and makers to establish a destination style restaurant or café, for example farm to fork eatery that promotes local produce.

C. Encouraging unique pop up experiences in the café space, for example themed cuisine nights, special guest chefs from Maitland and surrounds, cooking classes and other special food events.

D. Integrating the latest technologies onsite to enhance the visitor experience and better connect with Central Maitland.



Riverside concept.



CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THIS VISION

The Central Maitland Structure Plan (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp) sets out an ambitious vision, supported by key strategies to guide growth and development over the next 20 years. The vision relies on:

- Growing the residential community to facilitate day long activation, expand the walking community and support local businesses.
- Solving the problems that have made the flood liable area unbuildable and encouraging denser mixed use development in the city.
- Reducing car dependency and dominance of vehicles in Central Maitland.
- Improving 'walkability' through the improvement of pedestrian connections and crossings, way finding and links to effective public transport.
- Considering park and ride options as well as electric vehicle infrastructure.
- Other challenges identified through engagement include but are not limited to:
 - Attracting investment from the right types of businesses.
 - Absentee landlords who aren't necessarily invested in the future of Maitland or maintaining the appearance of their property.
 - Finding suitable sites for commercial accommodation.



PRIORITY HUB:

4.3 Maitland Gaol

Maitland Gaol is a heritage listed former prison located in East Maitland. Its construction was started in 1844 and prisoners first entered the gaol in 1848. By the time of its closure, on 31 January 1998, it had become the longest continuously operating gaol in Australia.

VISION

Keeping in mind that MCC has engaged a consultant to develop a Master Plan and Development Plan for the site, the vision for Maitland Gaol is to become 'an iconic tourism destination, driven by its unique heritage, connection to community, and innovative experiences.'



BACKGROUND

In February 1999, MCC accepted an offer from the State Government for adaptive reuse of Maitland Gaol with the expectation a long term lease would follow. While these negotiations were never finalised, a modification to the purposes for the Gaol's Crown Reserve was authorised in February 2017. This incorporated heritage purposes, tourist facilities and services, and urban development. MCC was then appointed Reserve Trust Manager in March 2017.

With the commencement of the Crown Land Management Act 2016 in July 2018, MCC became the Crown Land Manager of the Maitland Gaol site and in March 2019, MCC's application for categorisation of the Gaol's Crown Reserve as General Community Use was approved by the Department of Industry – Crown Lands.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Improving (regional) awareness of Maitland Gaol as a tourism destination.

B. Expanding the Gaol's education products for the Hunter Region school market, with the school age population in the Hunter region projected to increase from 174,500 in 2016 to 190,000 in 2026.

C. Enhancing and renewing the core tour offer on a regular basis to encourage repeat visitation by locals and regional tourists.

D. Attracting interest from the younger regional population who are seeking an increased diversity of experiences and night time events.

E. Integrating a range of cultural and heritage tourism experiences to establish a hub for heritage, arts and culture with performing arts or entertainment centre.

F. Introducing more events like the successful Bitter & Twisted Boutique Beer Festival. Consider night events, theatre and concerts, outdoor cinema and movie nights, market days, boutique food and wine festivals showcasing local produce and demonstration days incorporating street artists.

G. Establishing an 'artist in residence' program specific to Maitland Gaol, with spaces available for artists to use.

H. Encouraging private investment in a new four star accommodation offering, with meeting and conference facilities to support regional, interstate and international tourism.
- I. Considering other unique accommodation options from backpackers and school overnight experiences to exclusive boutique hotel accommodation with high quality amenities and views to the Maitland flood plains.

J. Introducing supporting tourism infrastructure including amenities to attract a range of unique dining and bar experiences including progressive lunch/dinners, food trucks and pop ups.

K. Sourcing and attracting coinvestment for capital requirements (eg. conservation grants, accommodation development).

L. Leveraging the proximity to East Maitland Train Station, new hospital development and Newcastle Cruise Ship Terminal.

M. Offering 'start up' spaces connected with a business accelerator program to encourage and support new business ideas.

N. Activating outside areas with lighting to create a precinct area including the courthouse, park and railway station.

O. Allowing free public access to a portion of the site to encourage visitation and create atmosphere.

P. Providing better connection with Morpeth and Central Maitland through signage, shared pathways and guided tours.
- Refer to the Maitland Gaol Development Plan (available at mait.city/3a4qv1v) for a detailed list of opportunities also on Public Exhibition.



Bitter & Twisted Boutique Beer Festival, Maitland Gaol.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THIS VISION

- Low awareness of Maitland as a tourism destination.
- Underdeveloped marketing and social media channels.
- Lack of capacity/staffing to develop additional tours, events and attractions.
- Inadequate funding to support ongoing operational and maintenance requirements.
- Deterioration of heritage structures and significant unfunded conservation requirements for the Gaol.
- Lack of recent capital investment in Maitland accommodation.
- Current limited local engagement with, and sense of ownership of, the Gaol.
- Limited wet weather infrastructure, amenities and security resources to cater for large groups and schools.
- Continued competition from nearby mature tourism destinations – Newcastle, Port Stephens and Hunter Valley Wine Country.
- Funding and investment.
- Backlog of heavy maintenance.
- Ownership and permissible uses under land ownership.



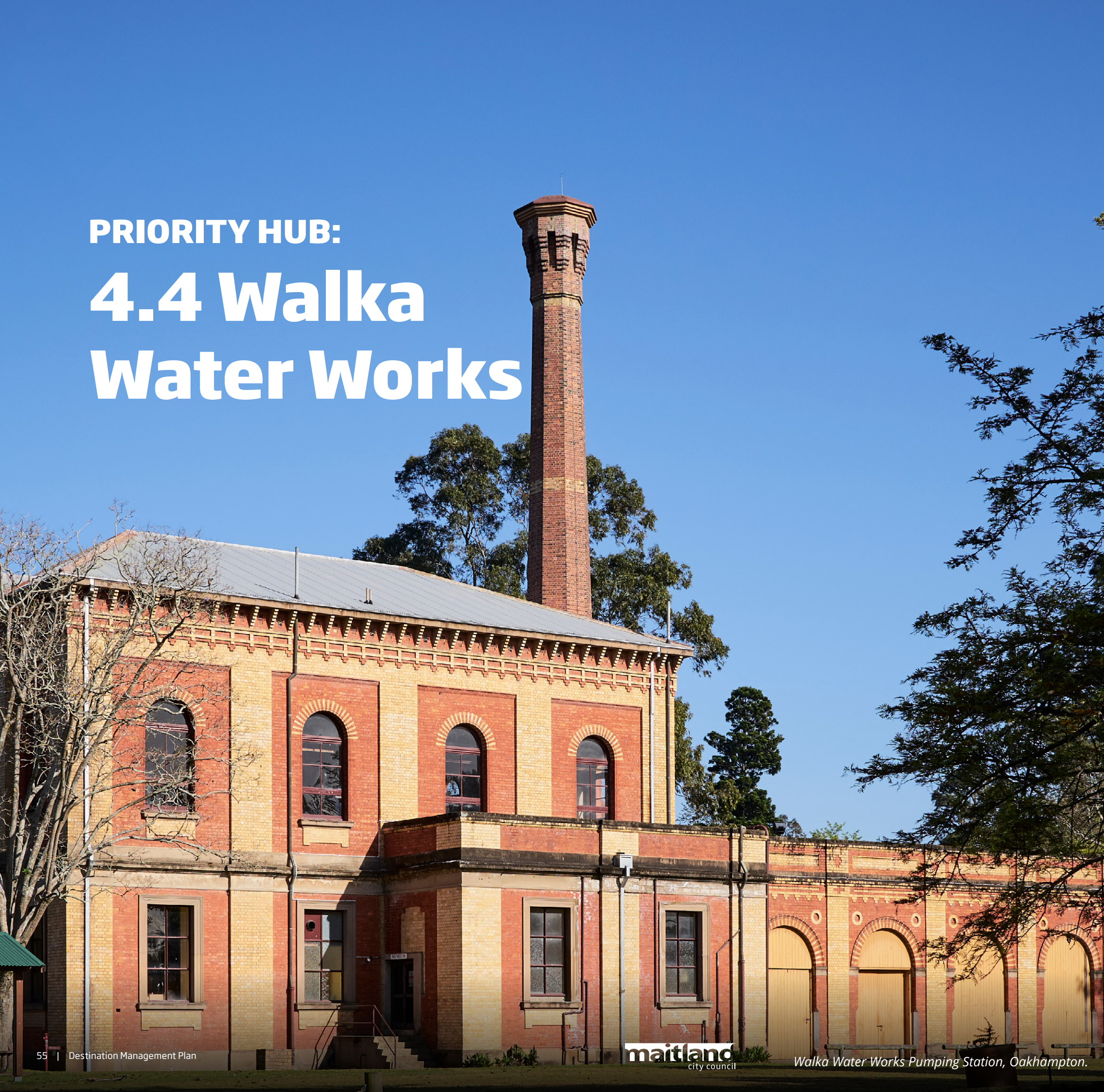
PRIORITY HUB:

4.4 Walka Water Works

Walka Water Works is a 64.23 hectare parcel of Crown Land located approximately 2km north west of the commercial centre of Maitland. The reserve has been reserved for the 'Preservation of Historical sites and buildings' under the Crown Lands Act 1989, the Crown Lands Legislation Amendment Act 2005 and the now the Crown Lands Management Act 2016.

VISION

Become an iconic visitor attraction for the city, with active day use as well as an overnight destination for nature based tourism, weddings, functions and events.



BACKGROUND

Built in 1885, Walka Water Works is one of the largest and most intact 19th century industrial complexes in the Hunter Valley. The former water works provided the people of the Lower Hunter Valley with their first permanent water supply from 1887 until 1923. It was decommissioned in 1931, before being resurrected in 1951 by the Electricity Commission as a temporary power station during the post war electricity shortages. Since 1978 the site has been decommissioned and the power station dismantled.

MCC was appointed the Reserve Trust Manager in August 2007 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the NSW Department of Lands and by entering into the MOU, MCC envisaged that Walka Water Works would be more strategically integrated into MCC’s passive open space system.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Acknowledging the importance and value of the existing wildlife, ecology and heritage through interpretation, signage, museum experience and capital upgrades.

B. Considering accommodation options such as permanent eco cabins scattered through the reserve, temporary glamping sites, RV parking and a boutique hotel.

C. Incorporating private function and event spaces, with a bar, craft brewery, restaurant and/or café in the existing building infrastructure.

D. Expanding on the existing train rides which operate only on the third Sunday of the month or by appointment.

E. Formalising nature walks and trails with wayfinding and interpretive signage.

F. Adding interactive experiences such as guided walking tours, adventure park, play areas and hiring facilities.
- G. Packaging nature based products and experiences such as enhanced walking trails and commercial activities.

H. Considering active uses of the lagoon.

I. Assessing the site to determine its suitability for a range of events and activations including music festivals, outdoor theatre and evening performances.

J. Testing commercial activities through pilot initiatives using temporary infrastructure and pop up activations like Street Eats.

K. Planning for better people movement to facilitate a safer, smarter, enhanced visitor experience. This would include better vehicle access into the site, park and ride options and improved connectivity with other areas of Maitland, including roads, signage and a network of shared pathways between Walka and Morpeth .



Walka Miniature Railway, Oakhampton.



Park Run, Walka Recreation and Wildlife Reserve, Oakhampton.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THIS VISION

- Accessibility to and connectivity of the road and cycle network, and inadequate development of 'big picture' people movement strategies.
- Flooding in the surrounding areas.
- Ownership and permissible uses under land ownership.
- Set amongst a residential area therefore consideration must be given to neighbours.
- History and heritage of the site.
- Environmental factors including blue green algae levels.
- Lack of recent capital investment in Maitland accommodation.
- Potential contamination of land and buildings.
- Funding and additional private sector investment.
- The quality of water in the lagoon is not suitable for any water sports.
- Any activities must have a mutual understanding to be able to coexist.
- Impending conditions assessment report with so many unknowns and variables that could limit the feasibility and viability of potential uses for the site – both buildings and grounds.
- Low awareness of Maitland as a tourism destination.



Walka Water Works Pumping Station, Oakhampton.





Artist Impression - cut away of Walka Water Works Pumphouse.



PRIORITY HUB: 4.5 Tocal

Tocal is a 2,200 hectare farm located at the junction of the Paterson River and Webbers Creek 20 minutes north west of Central Maitland. It is surrounded by high value agricultural land with sweeping picturesque views.

VISION

Agritourism has the potential to provide a unique visitor drawcard for Maitland, so the vision for Tocal is to become a hub for agritourism in Maitland and the Hunter.

BACKGROUND

The property is home to the Tocal College - Paterson campus (Maitland LGA) and Tocal Homestead heritage precinct (Dungog Shire LGA). CB Alexander Foundation is the custodian of the land and heritage precinct while the rest of the site is managed by NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

Tocal College has modern training facilities and equipment, as well as commercial and demonstration farm enterprises including beef, dairy, sheep, horses, poultry and cropping. They offer a breadth of short courses and diplomas.

The site is also popular for weddings, events and conferences on both the college side and the heritage precinct grounds. Accommodation varies from boutique accommodation (heritage precinct) to hotel style accommodation, cottages and flats (college). Facilities include a chapel, hall, lecture rooms, dining hall, meeting rooms, and a converted hay shed that can accommodate a range of budgets, group sizes and tastes.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Expanding the education offering for local farmers interested in transitioning into tourism. A series of short courses and resource materials could include an introduction to agritourism, growing an agritourism business, business planning and marketing, risk management, regulations and safety considerations, as well as how to attract and cater to Willing Workers On Organic Farms (WWOOF).

B. Other opportunities for farmers to learn from or share information, workshops and development of short courses specifically for the agritourism market.

C. Encouraging more authentic farm gate experiences, where visitors can meet real farmers and sample local food. This might incorporate sustainable farming tours where visitors will learn more about farm practices, impacts of the environment, who is growing the food and how it is being grown.

D. A focus on agritainment which encompasses a variety of fun filled activities that provide not only recreation and entertainment, but also a range of educational and wellness experiences for visitors.

E. Packaging these experiences through suggested itineraries, self guided tours, organised farm trails and day camps.
- F. Introducing farm to fork/paddock to plate events and experiences which could incorporate a range of destination farms and successful agritourism businesses.

G. Showcasing future intensive farming techniques.

H. Leveraging the various accommodation options including farm stays, glamping and eco lodges for an agritourism package experience.

I. Providing better connectivity with other areas of Maitland, including improved signage and shared pathways to improve accessibility.

J. Including Slow Food Earth Markets and other farmer's markets in agritourism experiences and itineraries. Consider meet the farmer, cooking classes, farm gate sales and tasting trails.

K. Working with local farmers to support the establishment of a farm trail that is easily accessible by road and/or shared pathways.

L. Leveraging buy from the bush and buy regional campaigns.

M. Liaising with the Small Business Commissioner and Service NSW with the aim of supporting farmers to navigate the regulatory processes in setting up an agritourism business.



Piglets at Tocal Homestead, Tocal.



Chickens at Tocal College, Tocal.

CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THIS VISION

- Misconception Tocal is too far or too remote when in fact it is only 20 minutes drive from Lorn and Central Maitland.
- Weather conditions can have a severe impact on the product and experience, from extended periods of drought and seasons of bushfires through to flooding.
- There may be zoning restrictions, and licences and permits may also apply.
- It can be tricky and time consuming for a farmer to navigate the path to setting up an agritourism business.
- Farming is dangerous and includes heavy equipment, large animals, and structural hazards, so the risk is high and insurance premiums costly.
- Loss of privacy as agritourism puts a farm and family on display.
- Location can be a challenge if a farm is difficult to find so directions, particularly signage and up to date GPS listings, will be important.
- Advertising is often a large operating expense that is underestimated by farmers.
- Staff, who are often family, need to be part educator, part entertainer. This can be a difficult skill to teach if it does not come naturally.
- Understanding the risks associated with running an agritourism business, including safety and farm emergency preparedness and planning.



SECTION FIVE: Key Focus Areas

The following provides a summary of the opportunities Maitland should focus on in order to activate and grow tourism on a sustainable basis. These are based on what the community and industry want to see.

It is important to note that not all the opportunities listed will be implemented as they fall outside of MCC's control. They are not in any priority order, but rather grouped within four key destination management focus areas for Maitland over the next 10 years.

5.1 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Maitland currently has a limited product offering for visitors and locals. This has in part been addressed by MCC’s annual calendar of flagship events, however growing the visitor economy will have its challenges unless new tourism products are established.

Addressing the supply side of tourism will rely heavily on private sector investment. Demonstrating a growth in demand for tourism product will inevitably lead to those investment decisions. New tourism product should be consistent with community values and MCC has a critical role to play in that respect. The following opportunities are based on what the community and industry would like to see in Maitland. There are seven key themes to consider.

ENHANCE AND DIVERSIFY VISITOR ACCOMMODATION OFFERINGS

To support an increase in visitor numbers, attract more major events and convert day trippers to overnight stays (in paid accommodation) there is a need for additional short term accommodation options.

The opportunities to consider are:

- A. Identifying parcels of land that would be suitable for accommodation development.
- B. A new dedicated tourist or holiday park for caravans, RVs and tent sites that could support the growing family and caravan and camping market from the greater Sydney region and intra and interstate travellers.
- C. Overnight parking for self contained RVs and free camp areas. There is a dump point at the VIC however Maitland is lacking a dedicated overnight parking area/s for RVs.
- D. Permanent eco cabins at locations such as Walka Water Works or other rural areas/farmland as part of an agritourism precinct.
- E. Boutique glamping to provide a unique nature based experience and cater for higher spending leisure visitors. This could link with other nature based experiences and take in riverine vistas.
- F. Farm stay accommodation.
- G. A variety of high quality hotel/motel and serviced accommodation options. There is also the potential for conference and function facilities, which could attract business events and conferences.
- H. Temporary boutique camping (pre-approved large scale pop up site/s) to support major events and festivals similar to that implemented for Groovin’ the Moo.
- I. A variety of accommodation options onsite at Maitland Gaol, including a hotel with conference and meeting facilities, unique B&B, as well as youth and overnight school experiences.
- J. Identifying opportunities to improve occupancy and increase revenue of existing accommodation supply through infrastructure improvements, expansion works and funding opportunities.
- K. Considering alternative accommodation options and how local residents can be encouraged to make their homes available to visitors through AirBnB, HomeAway, an organised home stay program etc.



Maddies of Bolwarra, Bolwarra.

IMPROVE THE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN KEY DESTINATIONS, ACTIVITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

Consideration needs to be given to the visitor experience in terms of connectivity, accessibility and inclusion to ensure planning considers and enables more people to participate in Maitland’s visitor economy.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. A continuous shared pathway (City Loop) to connect Walka Water Works to Morpeth via Central Maitland. This could be via the old Morpeth railway line, like the Fernleigh Track in Newcastle, or along the river. There is also potential to loop it back on road through Phoenix Park and Bolwarra to The Levee.

B. A consistent and planned approach to signage including gateway, way finding/directional and interpretation.

C. Seating along the river, particularly between Central Maitland and Lorn and in Morpeth, as well as additional landscaping along the pathways.

D. Public art and outdoor art displays, particularly in Central Maitland and Morpeth.

E. Creating a vibrant place through place activation initiatives that celebrate the unique people and places that make Maitland. Such initiatives aim to transform the way the community interacts with the public domain, support cultural expression and build community connections.
- F. Better connection between Maitland Regional Sports Complex and Maitland Park.

G. Develop Maitland Railway Station as the southern gateway to the City as per the Central Maitland Structure Plan. Install signage and formalise the site for the distribution of visitor information.

H. Research opportunities for electric vehicle infrastructure.

I. Consider connectivity through place making enhancements, from a planning perspective and smart technology, together with a city beautification program.

J. Parking improvements, particularly in Morpeth and Central Maitland.

K. Assist accommodation providers to establish a hop on hop off bus shuttle service for guests to key activities and attractions throughout Maitland.

L. Consider the strategic direction and specific opportunities in relation to play spaces, sportsgrounds, libraries, community facilities, cultural facilities etc and how they are connected.

DEVELOP AND ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCES CONNECTED TO THE HUNTER RIVER

Currently underutilised, the Hunter River provides plenty of opportunity to develop visitor experiences.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Considering additional riverside infrastructure such as lighting, seating and shade structures as well as a suite of new signage for way finding and interpretation. Collapsible infrastructure may also be an option on the river in some instances, for example a temporary floating stage.

B. Reviewing and determining the feasibility of the opportunities identified in the Central Maitland Structure Plan, for example the pedestrian bridge across the River to Lorn.

C. Facilities and infrastructure for commercial operators to offer equipment hire such as SUP boards, kayaks and canoes where appropriate vehicle access is possible. There is also potential to create a meeting point for guided walks and cycling tours with additional bike hire services.

D. More restaurants, cafés and bars facing the river. In the short term this could be achieved through pop ups, roaming food vendors and designated areas to enjoy takeaway and picnics. There is also an opportunity to develop the Lowes site on High Street and St Andrews Square (see St Andrews Square concept pages 45 and 46).
- E. Activating areas along the river including Lorn, Central Maitland and Morpeth with entertainment to complement the local food and beverage (F&B) offering if available (or combining with a Street Eats style program where F&B is not available).

F. Adding more evening events, with potential for a floating stage, sound and light show and performance space.

G. Creating quality open spaces for passive recreation as well as commercial operators.

H. Collaborating with neighbouring LGAs to better utilise the Hunter and Paterson Rivers for recreation and tourism experiences.



St John's Cathedral, Central Maitland.



Queens Wharf, Morpeth.

LEVERAGE THE CITY'S HISTORY AND HERITAGE TO CREATE MEMORABLE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Maitland has rich and diverse Aboriginal and European cultural values as demonstrated through local communities and places. Therefore, the core visitor experiences will be intrinsically linked with the city's heritage.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- A. Engaging local Aboriginal stakeholders to identify opportunities that support social and economic benefits for Aboriginal people through Aboriginal cultural tourism.
- B. Engaging the Aboriginal Reference Group to assist with broader engagement of all local Aboriginal stakeholders to develop a citywide Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan.
- C. Preserving and repurposing the heritage buildings for the community and visitors to enjoy.
- D. Maitland Gaol becoming a major tourism, entertainment and heritage precinct which could also become a unique venue for meetings, conferences and events with accommodation, dining, exhibitions, performances and pop up bar.
- E. Creating an Open Museums, Open Minds experience which connects museums, outdoor sites, markers and pop ups.
- F. Further developing the city's various walks with links to other visitor experiences.
- G. The Visitor Information Centre could become a meeting point for both guided and self guided tours with an interactive audio tour/sound trail.
- H. Developing an enhanced museum experience at Morpeth Museum using technology, with a changing program of displays and events and open seven days, will attract a range of new and repeat visitors.
- I. Enhancing the visitor experience at Walka Water Works with extensive walking trails and interpretive signage to highlight the site's heritage. Restoring and improving the heritage buildings to cater for larger events, weddings and functions as well as allowing for commercial operators such as accommodation, food and beverage.
- J. Continuing to build on the success of Steamfest with new train related experiences that will attract a broader/different demographic. Consider different event 'zones' (like a Harry Potter inspired kids precinct, smart city precinct with a virtual reality tent showcasing high tech concept trains, and a night time precinct showing great train movies).
- K. Developing an outdoor theatre/performance program at various sites such as Walka Water Works, grounds of MRAG, Maitland Park, Morpeth Common and Queens Wharf.
- L. Connecting MRAG, Repertory Theatre, Maitland Town Hall and the new Maitland Administration Centre with signage and art installations as well as bringing vibrancy through entertainment and food pop ups to develop an arts, food and music quarter.
- M. Creating themed trails such as art, history, literature, poetry trails and art installations to better connect various sites and locations across the LGA.
- N. Working with external event organisers/partners to further develop existing cultural events as well as attract additional cultural festivals to the city such as IF Maitland Indie Writer's Festival.
- O. Continuing to implement actions from the Central Maitland Interpretation Plan (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp) and expanding on these to develop a broader city interpretation plan, with chapters dedicated to Morpeth and East Maitland.
- P. Utilising churches and other heritage facilities for performances and other unique experiences such as bell tower tours.
- Q. Continuing to implement actions from the Maitland Place Activation Strategy (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp, using the identified pillars of Repurpose, After Dark, Interpretation and Street Art.

ATTRACT, GROW AND FOSTER EVENTS

Significant economic, social and promotional benefits can be gained from festivals and events that realise their full potential.

Opportunities for consideration are:

- Identifying and monitoring the impacts of events including visitation, expenditure, seasonal hotel occupancy, potential to encourage local skills development and economic flow on to the local business community.
- Expanding Maitland's annual event calendar to attract a broad spectrum of audiences to the city.
- Attracting investment in new and existing infrastructure for meetings and events.
- Identifying relevant events, for which Maitland can bid.
- Leveraging the flagship events program to attract visitors from outside the area, encourage overnight stays and increase spend.
- Expanding the footprint and/or duration of some flagship events.
- Introducing live sites to enhance major sporting and cultural events, whether hosted in Maitland or elsewhere. For example, Maitland Regional Sportsground could become a live site for the community and visitors to gather to watch the 2022 FIFA World Cup.
- Adding evening experiences and new night time events in order to capitalise on the growing night time economy and encourage overnight visitation. Options might be related to food, music, open air concerts and theatre plus many other possibilities.
- Encouraging local community groups, businesses and event organisers to facilitate external events in Maitland.
- Pursuing, attracting and promoting a range of business events and conferences.
- Providing support to external event organisers that are bidding for events and conferences.
- Simplifying MCC's event application process and providing greater support to build the capacity of local event organisers to deliver events.
- Creating an event strategy to ensure Maitland attracts and develops the right events to grow the visitor economy. These events will introduce visitors to Maitland with the aim of turning them into loyal advocates who will not only return but also tell others about it.



SUPPORT THE VISITOR ECONOMY WITH SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Maitland has a wide range of recreation settings, outdoor and indoor, natural and built. Sporting infrastructure and facilities cater to football, rugby league, cricket, lawn bowls, netball, basketball, cycling, rowing, swimming etc. Maitland can therefore cater to a range of sporting and recreational activities.

The opportunities for consideration are:

- Redeveloping Maitland Park as the ideal location for an iconic family destination inclusive park with a café, BBQs and a citywide play space.
- Utilising Walka Water Works for nature based activities with a user pays option for commercial operations such as TreeTops Adventure Park.
- Developing a connected network of walking and cycling trails and pathways.
- Improving facilities, tracks and trails for dirt bike competitions at Rutherford and for BMX racing at Tenambit.
- Considering off road bike competitions and recreation mountain bike use at facilities in appropriate locations across the LGA.
- Improving facilities at the remote control car track in Harold Gregson Reserve.
- Utilising the Aquatic Centres for a range of activities and events such as Summer Cinema and inflatables.
- Bidding to host national, state or regional sporting competitions and games across a range of codes.
- Improving and leveraging existing infrastructure to attract major sporting events across the city.
- Working with key stakeholders to develop a plan for Sports Tourism to leverage existing, and identify opportunities for, sporting and recreational facilities. The aim is to create new economic and community value by hosting amateur and professional sporting events in Maitland, as well as provide entertainment and the opportunity to participate.

EMBRACE OUR FARMLAND AND NATURE TO CREATE UNIQUE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

The reported agricultural area for Maitland represents some 45% of the LGA (17,400 hectares). This presents a point of difference from neighbouring LGAs.

The opportunities for consideration are:

- Developing self guided trails and/or guided agritours, connecting a range of farm gate experiences in Phoenix Park, Largs ‘Flat Road’ (Turf Farm), Tocal, Bolwarra Heights, Anambah, Luskintyre etc.
- Establishing Walka Water Works as a hub for nature based activities including enhanced walking trails as well new commercial activities catering for visitors like TreeTops Adventure Park.
- Establishing Tocal as a regional hub for agritourism with connectivity to farm stays and experiences across Maitland.
- Encouraging development of farm stay style accommodation particularly along the Hunter River including Gosforth, Rosebrook, Hillsborough, Windemere, Luskintyre, Oswald, Lambs Valley and areas along the Paterson River including Phoenix Park, Largs and Mindaribba (where zoning permits).
- Encouraging restaurateurs and food businesses to use local produce as part of their menu for a truly local dining experience.
- Supporting local farmers through education and promotion.
- Working with the Slow Food Earth Markets to promote and support local produce.
- Facilitating commercial operations such as minibus or cycle tours.
- Working with key stakeholders to develop an agritourism plan for Maitland and the region.



Land owner demonstrating a potential on farm experience.



Phoenix Park Farm, Morpeth.

5.2 INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

To support existing operators and encourage investment in new tourism product, initiatives here aim to facilitate growth within the key themes and priority destination hubs identified in this plan.

SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

There is the opportunity to work with Destination NSW to support the development and marketing of products and priority tourism hubs within identified sectors. The focus here is on providing visitors with quality, authentic experiences. The sectors with growth potential for Maitland and worth further investigation and development are outlined below.

Aboriginal tourism

Acknowledging the traditional Custodians and Owners, the Wonnarua people, the first step here is to engage local Aboriginal stakeholders to understand the opportunities that support social and economic benefits for Aboriginal people through Aboriginal cultural tourism. This will be done by engaging the Aboriginal Reference Group to assist with broader engagement of all local Aboriginal stakeholders to develop a citywide Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan. Support could also be sought from DNSW if appropriate.

Agritourism

The benefits of agritourism are slowly being realised in Maitland. It provides an opportunity for farmers to supplement their income and market their produce through alternative channels, often attracting a premium price.

More broadly, agritourism showcases what’s good about Maitland, it embraces the farmland and nature (pristine air, water and soils) and provides a visitor drawcard from which other tourism businesses and experiences can benefit.

In consultation with Australian Regional Tourism (ART) and working with key stakeholders, the goal is to develop an agritourism action plan for Maitland and the region.

Education tourism

A hands on experience is arguably the best learning tool, so the aim is to work with tourism operators, local makers and producers and education facilities like Tocal College to create learning experiences for school groups that align with the Australian curriculum. Consideration should be given to an integrated school’s resource kit that packages the range of relevant experiences available across the City.

Events tourism

Events can bring a broad range of economic, promotional and community benefits to a destination. MCC is currently responsible for the delivery of seven regular flagship events for the City, along with several civic and sporting events each year. These are an integral part of Maitland’s cultural identity and are helping the City to become widely recognised as a home of unique, exciting and extremely successful festivals.

They are also a key attraction for the city, popular with both residents and visitors, attracting over 130,000 people and annually injecting \$20 million into the local economy.

A strategic plan for events tourism will focus on increasing the value of MCC’s events, look at opportunities for future events, as well as attracting and nurturing events, including business events, facilitated by external event organisers.

Food tourism

Intrinsically linked with agritourism, food tourism connects visitors with key culinary experiences unique to an area. Maitland can celebrate every facet of food, not only a from paddock to plate perspective but also historically. Arnott’s and Oak Milk were founded here and the dock at Morpeth was once Australia’s most significant transportation point for produce. Food is also the link that connects everything in Maitland so the opportunities this sector presents is many and varied.

Food has been identified as a main motivation for travellers when choosing their holiday destination. They are also spending more time and money on unique food and drink experiences.

Inbound tourism

This sector requires time to establish and with very little export ready product, the focus in the short term will be on operator education, training and support.

Through membership of the Hunter Cruise Industry Working Group, MCC has already been working with inbound tour retailers and local industry players to package up tour options to inbound tour operators and cruise ship operators (specifically Maitland Gaol and Morpeth).

Opportunities in the long term will be to consider a variety of language options as well as the inclusion of future commissionable product.

Sports tourism

The benefits of identifying, attracting and retaining international, national, regional, state and local sports events include:

- 1. Stimulate the local economy.
- 2. Enhance the area’s image.
- 3. Provide outstanding entertainment and in some instances, the opportunity to participate.
- 4. Contribute to the quality of life.

MCC is preparing a Community Infrastructure Plan which will be used to inform a sports tourism plan for Maitland. The aim is to identify opportunities to grow the sector by utilising existing infrastructure for major sporting events and associated live sites.



LOCAL INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Engagement with local tourism operators revealed that industry support is one of the most important considerations in the short term with:

- Regular industry networking meetings.
- Business development workshops and education sessions such as helping with creating bookable products and experiences.
- Support for infrastructure development projects, including appropriate planning advice and help applying for available funding.
- Industry family program and product showcases.
- Online resources.
- A monthly business newsletter with industry updates, marketing initiatives and funding opportunities.



Shopping at The Levee Central Maitland.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Identifying industry partners, such as DNSW, will be key in terms of delivering this Destination Management Plan for Maitland. These relationships go beyond our stakeholders, are based on a mutual benefit and will vary over time according to specific projects.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

To encourage investment in and enhance Maitland’s visitor economy, there is a need for MCC to highlight to industry and developers which tourism development opportunities are more likely to be supported and how this can grow the overall visitor economy. This could be undertaken via the development of a visitor economy investment prospectus which indicates:

- The type of tourism development which MCC would like to see within the LGA.
- Areas throughout Maitland which are suitable for the development of tourism facilities (accommodation, food and beverage, attractions, activities etc.).
- Elements that, subject to planning regulations being satisfied, MCC is supportive of in principle.
- A selection of ‘shovel ready’ projects with planning approvals in place.
- That MCC is ‘open for business’ and wishing to grow the visitor economy in specific ways.

The prospectus can be presented to the investment community to stimulate interest in Maitland, including investment by developers outside of the LGA and will help demonstrate that Maitland is open for business.

Investors and developers require certainty and by indicating areas where tourism development may be viewed more favourably sends a very positive signal.

Also, by fast tracking planning approvals and offering shovel ready projects, MCC can accelerate the process to drive investment into the area in the short term. This approach will deliver jobs immediately and boost the economy, benefiting the community and businesses.

5.3 MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Maitland has been identified in the Statewide Destination Management Plan (available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp) as a future hero destination. As defined in the Plan:

‘Hero destinations are world class, iconic and unique. They have high brand awareness themselves, and also define the essence of the country they are located in.’

‘Heroes are accessible, have appropriate infrastructure and developed world class products and experiences that are available all year round. The role of the ‘hero’ destination is to attract visitors and provide them with outstanding unforgettable experiences that keep them coming back, and encourage them to travel further and explore less well known destinations.’

There is some work to do to become a hero destination, firstly around developing a strong succinct brand. However, it is important to clarify the long term vision for Maitland as a hero destination is not about attracting mass tourism but increasing length of stay and yield. The goal is to maintain authenticity, a place where locals are always welcoming and visitors return as friends.

OVERARCHING MARKETING STRATEGY

With the current situation in mind but based on the direction and plans for development of tourism product, an overarching multi year marketing strategy will be prepared in order to grow the visitor economy in Maitland. In the development of the marketing strategy consideration will be given to:

- Building destination awareness
- Previous marketing activities
- Domestic and international marketing
- Sector and event marketing
- Key experiences, priority areas and key themes identified through the engagement for the DMP
- Industry trends and changes
- Research and statistics

Annual action plans with cooperative opportunities will also be developed as part of this process.



Welcome to #MyMaitland

DESTINATION BRAND IDENTITY

Destination branding in Maitland has had a number of iterations over the past 30 years, including Maitland – Heritage Centre of New South Wales and Hunter River Country – Immerse Yourself.

In 2013, MCC implemented a new overarching brand for the city under the banner of Brand Maitland. The desired outcome of the rebrand was to establish the city as a desirable place to live, work, visit and invest.

The proposition ‘you’re welcome’ has been integrated into the entire range of visitor economy initiatives along with an underlying theme of ‘My Maitland’.

We are now at a crossroad. According to a report by independent market research agency, Hall & Partners, currently there is little awareness of Maitland as a holiday or short break destination.

Maitland naturally attracts the VFR market and these visitors will always be welcome. However, in order to increase the value of the visitor economy, the destination brand, within Brand Maitland, should be reviewed to reflect Maitland’s unique and distinctive identity, while building recognition and desirability for the brand.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION PROSPECTUS

To encourage investment into Maitland, and in particular development of tourism product highlighted in this DMP, a prospectus of opportunities would clearly indicate which projects are more likely to be supported.

This marketing tool will indicate to investors and industry if there are any planning incentives, what the shovel ready projects are and what development is likely to be supported in Maitland.

A prospectus would include the types of tourism development the community and visitors would like to see in Maitland together with specific areas and sites which are suitable, taking into consideration any planning and zoning restrictions.

A targeted distribution plan would be developed.

5.4 VISITOR SERVICING

In 2015 MCC commissioned a review of Visitor Information Services to ensure they are effective and relevant within the changing marketplace. Five years on and many of the recommended actions have been implemented however the needs and wants of the visitor continues to evolve. The following opportunities are therefore based on new trends and availability of smart technology.

MAITLAND VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Utilisation of VICs by visitors nationally is trending downward whilst operating costs continue to increase. To ensure MCC’s investment in the provision of visitor information services through the VIC is sustainable and cost effective, the actions for implementation here are:

- Continuing to evaluate the performance of the VIC through the visitor data collected including door counts, demographics and origin data, dispersal patterns statistics, retail sales, brochure distribution and the type of information requested.
- Defining the requirements of Maitland’s visitors and target markets.
- Determining the most appropriate option for the role, location and format of MCC’s VIC to best service not only visitors but also the local community.
- Considering alternative and mixed uses of the VIC site.
- Conduct an audit of the existing in area visitor information touch points that complement the VIC.

SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Conduct a signage audit and develop an action plan to remove, replace or install signage across the City. Ensure there is a uniform approach to directional and interpretive signage. Consideration should be given to the development of a broader City Interpretation Plan, which would complement MCC’s Central Maitland Interpretation Plan available at maitland.nsw.gov.au/dmp



NEW INTERACTIVE VISITOR WEBSITE

The existing mymaitland.com.au site was updated in 2017 as part of a local visiting friends and relatives (VFR) campaign. In order to create awareness of Maitland as a visitor destination and enhance the site’s functionality and design, the actions for implementation here are:

- Streamlining the process for tourism operators, associated businesses and MCC staff by pulling product listings from the ATDW thereby limiting the number of uploads to a single annual update.
- A comprehensive what’s on calendar listing all events (could also be pulled from ATDW or a dedicated content API) which will encourage private event organisers to list their events. The calendar should be available to add to a smart phone calendar and download as a printable PDF.
- The site should be interactive with links to travel review sites such as TripAdvisor as well booking engines like Hotels Combined, Expedia and Trivago and discount sites such as Groupon.
- Refining the content and site structure, and including user generated content where possible, to enhance the online visitor experience.
- Responsive web design (RWD) that would complement a City pocket guide and replace the need for a comprehensive Visitor Guide or lifestyle magazine like Meander.
- Leveraging the site to launch the locals guide to Maitland, which would be a regular blog with stories and videos.

EXPLORE SMART TECHNOLOGY

In addition to a new interactive website, there are many opportunities to improve the visitor experience through innovative ways to provide information and accessibility to key visitor places/ experiences through smart technology. These include:

- A self guided walking app.
- An interactive map which you could filter by interest/ theme for example farm gates, antiques and arts trail, heritage walks.
- Interactive digital visitor guide.
- App for augmented reality tours, to bring the heritage of Maitland alive.
- Visitor servicing through social media, like SMS, Facebook Messenger, Twitter and WhatsApp, to enhance the customer experience.
- Creating a comprehensive visitor database from enquiries to target monthly communications.
- Coordinating and equipping tourism operators to provide better social visitor servicing.
- Integration of smart parking with signage and map apps.

Going above and beyond to help future travellers customise and plan their trips may lead them to stay longer and find greater value during their stay. Given the rapid pace at which technology advances, keeping abreast of new travel and visitor servicing trends will be important.

MY MAITLAND AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Research in the past has shown that a clear majority of visitors to Maitland are coming for the purpose of visiting friends and relatives (VFR). The inception of My Maitland was based on locals becoming ambassadors. The objective of the campaign was to challenge locals to invite just one extra person a year, from outside of Maitland, to visit and stay overnight so they could show them the best things about their City.

To expand on this ground work, there is an opportunity to formalise an ambassador program to:

- Engage locals who are connected with a professional association, sporting or social club or community/ service club to promote Maitland for meetings, events, group tours and sports tournaments.
- Educate locals, businesses and frontline service staff, not only of the economic impact of tourism but of the City’s attractions as well as tips on improving their customer service skills.
- Excite through a network of high profile influential people, who can share their stories of ‘My Maitland’.
- Leverage connections to volunteers across MCC and other volunteer groups across the City to participate in an ambassador program.





SECTION SIX:

Implementation and Review

A TEN YEAR VISION

Presented here is a high level 10 year implementation plan with an indicative timeframe. A progressive and ongoing action plan will be developed with key stakeholders to allow for a flexibility to react to opportunities for funding and cooperation which may present themselves.

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The following actions have been identified to help facilitate the successful implementation of this DMP.

They are presented by key focus area and strategic approach. The plan presents a 10 year vision and suggests a timeframe for implementation:

- Short term actions should be implemented within the next two years (2020–2022).
- Medium term actions should be implemented within the following three to five years (2022–2027).
- Long term actions are likely to be achieved after seven or more years (2027 onwards) but may need to commence in the medium term.
- Ongoing actions are those that once achieved will continue to be reviewed and implemented.

While there are indicative timings, actions must also be opportunistic in order to respond to factors such as available funding and increased demand or support relating to population growth, which means they may be implemented sooner than indicated.

MCC will be a key player and responsible for some of the actions, however many of the opportunities fall outside of MCC’s control. Therefore it will be important to work together with key stakeholders to provide a clear direction for the development and growth of Maitland’s visitor economy. By doing so we can attract investment and funding, ensuring tourism adds value to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the Maitland community.



Morpeth Bridge, Morpeth.

MORPETH		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
VISION: TO BECOME A UNIQUE ‘HIPSTER HERITAGE’ DESTINATION		
Riverside shared pathway project Development of a shared pathway along the Hunter River in Morpeth, with interpretive public art and wayfinding signage.	Short	MCC
Redevelopment of Queens Wharf Plan for the staged works as outlined in the Queens Wharf Master Plan. Upgrades would present a potential location for overnight RV parking and will be considered as part of an RV friendly plan for Maitland.	Short - medium	MCC
Morpeth Museum experience (feasibility) Investigate the feasibility of an interactive and immersive experience at Morpeth Museum to showcase the history and heritage of Morpeth.	Short	MCC with various stakeholders
Facilitate events and activations Review zoning and permissibility of specific sites in Morpeth, such as Queens Wharf and Morpeth Common, to allow for a range of unique events, activations and commercial enterprise.	Short	MCC
Prospectus of business opportunities Consider the types of businesses that will enhance the existing product offering and how to attract a new type of visitor to Morpeth. Create a prospectus of business opportunities aimed at attracting investment in developing appropriate tourism product and experiences.	Short	MCC

CENTRAL MAITLAND		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
VISION: TO BECOME THE CITY'S PREMIER DESTINATION FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT		
Civic and Cultural Precinct Master Plan (Maitland Town Hall Node) Develop a Master Plan with associated action plans for a cultural precinct incorporating MRAG, Maitland Town Hall, Repertory Theatre and MCC's new Administration Centre together with Maitland Regional Sports Complex. Include the Maitland Visitor Information Centre site.	Short	MCC
Improve the connectivity of the precinct (feasibility) Investigate opportunities to better connect the different areas within the precinct, to the river and with other priority hubs.	Short	MCC
Dispersed play space Develop a day/night dispersed play space featuring bespoke artist designed pieces across Central Maitland linked by a shared pathway from Maitland Station along the river and main street to High Street Station.	Medium	MCC with partners
Cultural events and activations Host regular cultural events and night time activations such as light projections. Research the feasibility of projects like creative lighting of Belmore Bridge.	Ongoing	MCC
Attract sporting events and competitions Leverage the existing infrastructure to attract a range of sporting events, competitions and activities. Consider alternative uses such as trade and consumer shows, concerts, festivals and cosplay carnivals.	Short and ongoing	MCC with key sporting associations
Adaptive reuse of heritage buildings Identify and consider certain heritage buildings in Central Maitland for adaptive reuse. Implement planning mechanisms to allow for tourism uses including accommodation and galleries.	Short - medium	MCC
A gateway visitor experience (feasibility) Investigate the feasibility of Maitland Visitor Information Centre as a gateway to the precinct, for information and as a key site for the Open Museums Open Minds experience and meeting point for guided heritage walks.	Short - medium	Council

CENTRAL MAITLAND		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
VISION: TO BECOME THE CITY'S PREMIER DESTINATION FOR ARTS, CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT		
Redevelopment of St Andrews Square (feasibility) Conduct a feasibility assessment of St Andrews Square to determine the potential redevelopment of Riverside Car Park for mixed use accommodation, ground level commercial, play space and connectivity with the river.	Medium - long	MCC facilitates Private investment
Reorientation of riverside properties Encourage property owners with buildings along the river to create dual frontages to allow for riverside dining, bars, galleries and retail.	Medium	MCC facilitates Private investment
Riverside activation Consider opportunities to activate areas along the river with entertainment and pop ups.	Ongoing	MCC
Connectivity with Lorn Riverbank Review and assess opportunities identified in the Lorn Riverbank Masterplan and the Central Maitland Structure Plan for example the pedestrian bridge connecting Lorn with Central Maitland.	Medium	MCC

MAITLAND GAOL		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
VISION: TO BECOME AN ICONIC TOURISM DESTINATION, DRIVEN BY ITS UNIQUE HERITAGE, CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY AND INNOVATIVE EXPERIENCES		
Broaden visitor access Open a section of the facility to the public for free via the front gates to encourage visitation and create atmosphere. Investigate operating hours and renew the tour offering to provide a range of experiences and attractors.	Short	MCC
Create an activity hub Redevelop the store and saddlery area to include an upgraded auditorium with theatre seating, ticket office, retail shop, bar and servery as well as new amenities.	Medium	MCC
Visitor accommodation offerings Research feasibility of unique accommodation options from backpackers and school overnight experiences to exclusive boutique and four star hotel accommodation. Source and attract investment.	Short - medium	MCC feasibility Private investment
Enhance the events capability Investigate the feasibility of a service entry point to facilitate more event and function bookings.	Medium	MCC
Enhance heritage value Consider the ongoing maintenance and conservation of the site's heritage (to allow for adaptive reuse).	Ongoing	MCC
Maitland Gaol Development Plan and Site Master Plan Consider the opportunities identified in the Maitland Gaol Development Plan and Site Master Plan and prepare a timeline and budget for implementation.	Short	MCC

WALKA WATER WORKS		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
VISION: TO BECOME AN ICONIC VISITOR DESTINATION		
Site feasibility study Conduct a site assessment to determine feasibility of product development opportunities including accommodation options, events and activations.	Short	MCC
Preserve and manage the ecology and heritage of the site Consider the ecological and heritage value of the site to ensure a balanced approach to planning and development.	Ongoing	MCC with stakeholders
Adaptive reuse of the Pumphouse Investigate feasibility of adaptive reuse of the Pumphouse. Consider cost of repairs and refurbishment and opportunity for private sector investment.	Medium	MCC with stakeholders and investors
Eco product development The focus will be on low impact sustainable development including eco cabins and enhanced walking trails. Consider opportunities for commercial activities such as Tree Tops Adventure Park.	Long	MCC with stakeholders
Enhanced access and connectivity Assess the accessibility and connectivity of the road and cycle network as the starting/finishing point for the shared pathway network connecting Morpeth with Walka Water Works. Plan for improved people movement strategies that aim to enhance the visitor experience .	Medium	MCC RMS

Tocal		
Actions	Timing	Responsible
VISION: TO BECOME THE HUB FOR AGRITOURISM IN MAITLAND AND THE HUNTER		
Develop a regional agritourism plan Collaborate with key stakeholders together with appropriate neighbouring LGAs to develop a regional plan for agritourism. Consider connectivity between Tocal, Morpeth and the region, as well as existing agritourism experiences, opportunities for commercial activities and development of appropriate accommodation.	Medium	MCC with partners
Develop agritourism products and experiences Consider permissibility and the planning mechanisms required to facilitate more authentic farm experiences. Expand the education offering for local farmers interested in transitioning into tourism .	Short – medium	Tocal College
Support local producers Encourage local restaurateurs and food businesses to use local produce as part of their menu. Continue to support the Slow Food Earth Markets under a Memorandum of Understanding.	Ongoing	MCC

Tourism Product Development		
Actions	Timing	Responsible
CITYWIDE		
Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences Acknowledging the traditional landowners, work with key stakeholders to identify appropriate products and experiences that may be relevant to not only Aboriginal tourism but within events, food, education and inbound tourism. Collaborate with the Aboriginal Reference Group and other stakeholders to develop an Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan for Maitland.	Short	Aboriginal Reference Group with MCC support
Increase supply of visitor accommodation MCC to initiate a project to identify suitable sites/areas for short stay accommodation. Identify gaps as a result of this investigation, and potential LEP amendments to allow for future uses.	Short	MCC with investors
Staged development of cycleways and shared pathways Investigate opportunities to develop a network of cycleways and shared pathways to connect Morpeth and Walka Water Works via Maitland Gaol and through Central Maitland with a view to connecting back as a city loop.	Short - long	MCC with partners
Initiate a beautification program Improve, enhance and maintain connectivity through a city beautification program and streetscape improvements. Consideration should be given to traditional elements such as landscaping and signage, as well as integrated smart technology initiatives including smart lighting, smart waste bins, smart parking and car charging stations.	Ongoing	MCC with community and business support
Tours and transport Research opportunities and viability of a range of transport services including smart solutions to connect visitors with key activities and attractions throughout Maitland and neighbouring LGAs.	Short	MCC with partners
Heritage preservation and management Safeguard heritage sites, buildings and churches to ensure Maitland's unique built heritage remains integral to the city's distinct character. Where possible, repurpose these buildings for the community and visitors to enjoy.	Ongoing	MCC with partners
Enhance and expand Maitland's event calendar Enhance existing events, as well as enable and bid for new events that attract visitors from outside the area, encourage overnight visitors and increase spend.	Ongoing	MCC with partners
Accessibility and inclusion Liaise with MCC's Access and Inclusion Group to ensure planning considers and enables more people to participate in the visitor economy.	Ongoing	MCC

TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
<i>CITYWIDE</i>		
River activities and experiences Investigate the feasibility of a range of activities and experiences along the Hunter and Paterson Rivers for development to attract investment from relevant commercial operators.	Short - medium	MCC with investors
Riverside infrastructure (feasibility) Consider feasibility of permanent and temporary infrastructure, including seating, shade, launch pontoon, viewing areas, etc required to support visitor experiences.	Medium - long	MCC with partners
Maitland Place Activation Strategy Continue to implement actions from the Maitland Place Activation Strategy, using the identified pillars of Repurpose, After Dark, Interpretation and Street Art.	Ongoing	MCC
Maitland Interpretation Plan Develop a broader city interpretation plan to complement the Central Maitland Interpretation Plan.	Short - medium	MCC with partners
Evening experiences and the night time economy Facilitate evening experiences and events as part of a plan to grow the night time economy. Develop a pilot event.	Short – medium	MCC
Attract a range of events and competitions Develop a bid support document to attract a range of events, competitions, conferences and activities.	Short and ongoing	MCC
Maitland’s event infrastructure Conduct an audit of key event sites to determine accessibility, power, lighting, amenities, parking, connectivity with public transport and accommodation. Consider and plan upgrades at selected sites to facilitate a range of events.	Short - medium	MCC
Infrastructure to support product development (feasibility) Investigate options for the delivery of a range of permanent and temporary infrastructure to enable the growth of the visitor economy, including feasibility, locations and cost.	Short - medium	MCC
Community Infrastructure Plan Develop a Community Infrastructure Plan that identifies facilities and infrastructure that could be leveraged for tourism purposes.	Short	MCC

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
<i>CITYWIDE</i>		
Identify and engage industry partners Industry partners will be key in delivering this Destination Management Plan. These relationships go beyond our stakeholders, are based on mutual benefit and will vary over time according to specific projects. Current and potential partners include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination NSW • Destination Sydney Surrounds North • Tourism Australia • Australian Regional Tourism • Department of Premier and Cabinet • NSW Environment, Energy and Science • Transport for NSW • NSW Aboriginal Tourism Operators Council 	Ongoing	MCC
Sector development Collaborate with relevant stakeholders and industry partners to support the development and marketing of products through Tourism Action Plans, within the following identified sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal tourism • Agritourism • Education tourism • Event tourism • Food tourism • Inbound tourism • Sports tourism 	Short and ongoing	MCC with key stakeholders
Product development, support and education Encourage and enable new product development and support ongoing business growth through education and training, including but not limited to help with creating bookable products and experiences, which distribution channels to use, and how (and why) to build in commission.	Ongoing	MCC with industry partners

MARKETING AND PROMOTION		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
CITYWIDE		
Develop a destination brand strategy Consider and identify Maitland’s unique selling points and how they differentiate Maitland from surrounding mature destinations.	Ongoing	MCC
Brand guidelines and roll out Create destination brand guidelines to ensure consistent messaging and build awareness of Maitland as a destination. Encourage operators to align with the brand identity.	Short and ongoing	MCC with key stakeholders
Prepare an overarching marketing strategy Define the long term approach to delivering the overall direction and marketing goals to grow the visitor economy for Maitland.	Ongoing	MCC with industry partners
Annual tourism marketing plan Develop an annual marketing plan based on a defined budget with cooperative opportunities to increase spend and reach.	Annual	MCC
Packaging of bookable product Develop targeted packaged experiences to strengthen the product offering, help extend visitor stay as well as greater dispersal throughout the LGA.	Ongoing	MCC with industry partners
Local accommodation monitor Conduct an annual survey of accommodation to determine trends in visitation, source markets, occupancy levels, peaks and troughs to assist with planning marketing activities.	Annual	MCC with accommodation partners
Prospectus of tourism product development opportunities Encourage and attract investment in tourism product development with a prospectus of specific opportunities identified in this Destination Management Plan that MCC will actively support.	Short	MCC

VISITOR SERVICING		
ACTIONS	TIMING	RESPONSIBLE
CITYWIDE		
Maitland Visitor Information Services Strategy Evaluate the performance of the VIC and investigate a range of delivery options with the opportunity to provide additional services as part of a gateway experience.	Short - medium	MCC
Signage improvements across the city Undertake a review of existing gateway, tourist and service signage, and install, remove or update as required to improve the connectivity and enhance the visitor experience.	Short	MCC RMS TASAC
New interactive website Develop a new interactive website with enhanced functionality including responsive content and bookable product.	Short	MCC
My Maitland ambassador program Engage, educate and excite residents, businesses, associations and high profile influencers for a series of ‘MyMaitland’ stories to share and increase engagement levels	Ongoing	MCC
Integrate smart technology to improve the visitor experience Consider innovative ways to provide visitor information through smart technology. Plan how connectivity should be enhanced including free Wi-Fi, smart parking, smart lighting and digital wayfinding initiatives.	Short	MCC



SECTION SEVEN: Appendix

APPENDIX 1

DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN ENGAGEMENT REPORT

APPENDIX 2

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- A. Maitland +10
- B. Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan
- C. Statewide Destination Management Plan
- D. DMP Destination Sydney Surrounds North
- E. Hunter Regional Plan 2036
- F. Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2018
- G. Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy
- H. Maitland tourism product audit
- I. DMP preliminary engagement report
- J. Travel trends
- K. Morpeth Business Review 2016
- L. Central Maitland Structure Plan 2009
- M. Glossary and key definitions

You will find the Destination Management Plan with links to these related documents on MCC's website under planning and reporting.

Disclaimer: Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information herein however Maitland City Council accepts no responsibility for any consequences resulting from misdescription or inadvertent errors. It is recommended that the accuracy of the information supplied be confirmed with the contact listed.

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