

SUMMARY SHEET



Introduction

One of the key roles of local government is to foster the development of the local economy to provide a base for local communities to grow and for residents to maintain and improve the quality of their lives.

Tourism is an economic development activity that directly and indirectly contributes to the performance of almost all of the traditional industries and to a variety of forms of employment. Visitor expenditure flows through a community to a very wide range of businesses that service visitors, or in turn, provide services to those that do. Tourism attracts investment and the provision of infrastructure, services and facilities that caters to both visitors and residents.

The Local Government Pathways to Sustainable Tourism Workshop Program

The Local Government Pathways to Sustainable Tourism Workshop Program aims to provide staff, managers and elected representatives within local government with an understanding of council's role and the current strengths and weaknesses of its approach to supporting tourism marketing development and management within the community.

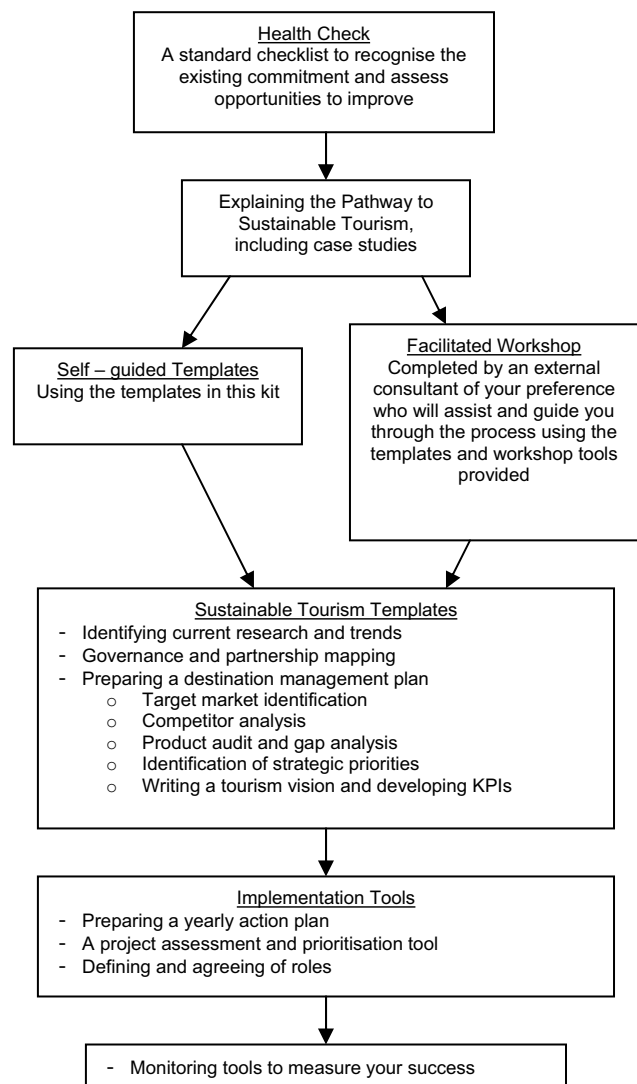
Once this is achieved, the program provides a process, supporting templates, information and resources to assist the council to better engage in sustainable tourism development of their destination.

This kit provides three key components:

- a health check to assess the current situation
- a guided pathway to sustainable tourism that can either be self-guided through the templates in this kit or facilitated through a one and a half day workshop
- a range of implementation and monitoring tools available for local government.

The diagram to the right outlines the steps to be undertaken, and tools available to assist councils in achieving sustainable tourism at the local level.

What is in the kit?



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Why should local government be involved?

Through the primary responsibilities of planning and development, local government has a direct role in shaping the 'look and feel' of tourism infrastructure and facilities and integration with the local community.

Local government is also involved in the provision of a wide range of infrastructure and facilities which are also used by visitors. A partnership between local government and industry, where each partner accepts different roles and responsibilities, helps to maximise both the opportunities to develop and promote tourism, and the economic and social benefits for local communities.

What is the role of local government?

Local government can be actively engaged in tourism to optimise social, economic and environmental outcomes for communities. This can be achieved through planning for sustainable development, facilitating growth and managing impacts.

Other opportunities for involvement are to:

- provide and manage tourism-related infrastructure
- engage communities in tourism planning
- be an active participant in destination management
- support and facilitate destination marketing and product development
- operate or support Visitor Information Centres.

There are a number of issues for local government to consider in undertaking its tourism role:

- The importance of tourism to a local government area—this varies from one area to the next depending on the tourism attractions, infrastructure and services available and the number and type of visitors to an area. Information on tourism's contribution to each of the traditional industries' share of Gross Regional Product and employment is also necessary to place tourism in its right context and to determine appropriate resource commitments.
- An effective tourism industry structure is important—this usually includes a Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) and often one or more Local Tourism Organisations (LTOs). These organisations can provide local government with information and advice, providing industry leadership and a conduit for local government participation in tourism industry activities.

All of the above roles should be undertaken in consultation with local resident and business communities and other key stakeholders.



Explaining the Path to Sustainable Tourism



Getting Started

It is recommended that a 'tourism team' be identified within council with representation from the key areas within council that have a role in tourism. This group will drive the process either as active participants in the facilitated workshop or in completing the templates in the self guided module.

The first step in the Pathway to Sustainable Tourism is the tourism health checklist. The checklist should be completed by the tourism team including the relevant tourism representative in council, and should be updated annually. It provides an indication of how council is performing in key areas of research; funding and governance (including its relationship with the Regional and Local Tourism Organisations); strategy and planning; marketing and events; industry and product development; and community.

The Six-Step Process

The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre has developed a simple six-step process supported by a range of easy-to-use templates. These can be used by the local government to self-guide along the pathway, or council may wish to engage an external consultant to facilitate the process. The templates and a workshop presentation guide council through the five steps of research, governance, planning, implementation and monitoring. They are included in this kit along with practical exercises and case studies to assist in understanding.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism is responsible tourism that is both ecologically and culturally sensitive. It is an industry which attempts to have a low impact on the environment and local culture, while still achieving Triple Bottom Line outcomes relating to social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

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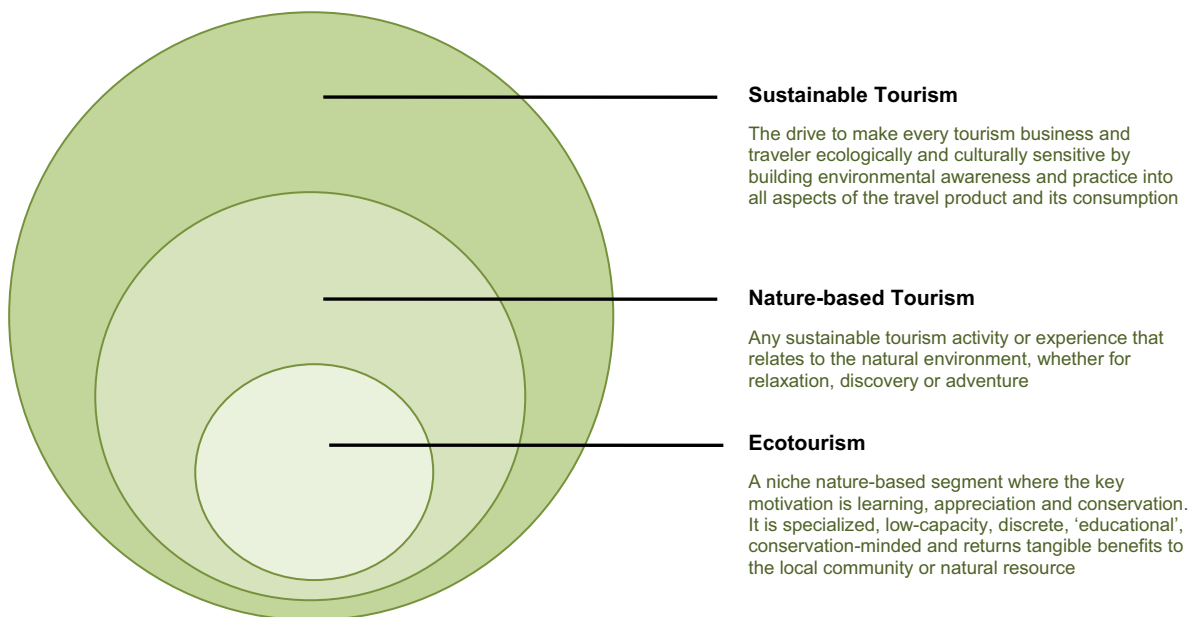


Internationally, consumer demand for sustainable products and services is increasing as sustainable tourism not only ensures the natural environment is preserved for future generations but can also enhance the present day visitor experience.

Sustainable tourism means:

- An approach that recognises that **Sustainable Tourism** is broader than 'eco-tourism' and is based on the Triple Bottom Line
- Adopting a planned **Destination Management** approach
- **Working with your partners** to encourage sustainable tourism growth and development and taking a collaborative approach to addressing challenges
- Having a clearly articulated **vision** and measurable goals with stakeholder buy-in
- **Monitoring progress** and constantly improving

The relationship between sustainable tourism, nature-based tourism and ecotourism is best depicted in the diagram below.





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Case Studies

Logan City, QLD

Logan City is the third largest city in Queensland and is currently experiencing rapid population and economic growth. As a result of recent amalgamations, Logan City has tripled in size, covering an area of 913km² with a population of 253,000.

The Economic Development Unit of Logan City Council is responsible for managing tourism development within the city and in recent times tourism has progressed through a partnership with Logan's Regional Tourism Organisation, Brisbane Marketing.

Logan City has faced numerous challenges in becoming a recognised tourism destination in South East Queensland. Such challenges include: lack of understanding within council of the importance and benefits of tourism (tourism is not currently included in council planning); the region has a poor service economy in that there are few large tourism businesses, and; tourism is not linked to the region's Economic Development Strategy.

In order to overcome these challenges, the Logan City Council has:

- incorporated tourism into their new Economic Development Strategy
- recognised that tourism, lifestyle and city image are linked
- established a strong sustainability platform
- focused on precinct development and cross-sectoral linkages (industrial and eco-tourism)
- developed programs in workforce capability and knowledge economy to foster innovation
- bottom-up, top-down linkages.



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Eurobodalla Shire, NSW

Eurobodalla Shire is situated on the South Coast of NSW, approximately four hours south of Sydney. The shire has a population of approximately 35,000 with the main towns being Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma. The region receives approximately 1.2 million visitors per year and plays host to 2.5 million visitor nights.

Until 1995, tourism development was the sole responsibility of the local council and despite its great potential, it was under-utilised with little investment made in marketing and product development. In 1995 however, council recognised the shire needed a 'new' industry to contribute to its economic stability. Due to its potential, the under-utilised tourism industry was identified as that industry.

In building the tourism industry, Eurobodalla Shire Council:

- developed a vision for the tourism industry
- replaced the bureaucratic approach to tourism with a vibrant commercial strategy
- hired an experienced tourism manager who provided vibrant, visionary, decisive leadership for Eurobodalla Coast Tourism
- created a development strategy focussing on business performance
- recognised the need for increased financial resourcing and as a result increased the tourism budget by \$100,000 (to a total of \$500,000) for the first year of the Plan. In 2003 funding was \$722,000.

Tourism is now managed by council in partnership with the Local Tourism Organisation – Eurobodalla Nature Coast Tourism. In making these changes and implementing the Tourism Development Plan, the region now has:

- substantial growth in visitors and investment
- the reputation of being a year round destination
- a local tourism board (Eurobodalla Coast Tourism) of eight industry experts and two Councillors who assume the management role
- a partnership with neighbours, Shoalhaven and Sapphire Coast, to deliver the highly successful destination marketing strategies for the whole of the NSW South Coast.



EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

Good Government, better living