



MAITLAND
Hunter Valley

Strategic Plan 2007 - 2009

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

For many years the City of Maitland was portrayed as a blend of stately mansions, grand civic buildings and churches of the 19th century attractively sited within lush green river flats, distant blue tinged mountains and the Hunter River. To some degree this core message remains a powerful theme in our tourism marketing and strategic strength. Increasingly, however, Maitland is becoming seen as being much more than a heritage town in an attractive setting.

Maitland City's "Hunter River Country" tourism branding was introduced in 2001 as the combined result of a review of the operation and effectiveness of the former Maitland Tourism Forum and a belief – general amongst the tourism industry within the City – that a major alteration in strategic direction and leadership was required to take tourism within Maitland to the next stage in its development.

The decision to move from the former branding – "Heritage Centre of New South Wales" – to Hunter River Country arose out of a series of meetings held in 2000 and 2001 and from findings derived from a major survey of tourism operators which dealt, amongst other issues, with our tourism strengths as a City and the contribution of our tourism branding to the viability of the industry.

In the survey tourism operators overwhelmingly expressed the view that our strengths / attractions in tourism went beyond "heritage" and included features such as our location within the Hunter, the river as a geographical and historical "shaper" of our community, the diverse lifestyle opportunities we offer, our hinterland, proximity to wine country and the potential for experiential as opposed to passive visitor activities. Operators were particularly concerned by the perception that "heritage" as a tag was limiting and had appeal to a relatively narrow sector of the possible visitor market.

By expanding our focus to "Hunter River Country" it was felt that a great range of possibilities could be opened up and considerable industry enthusiasm generated without – importantly – abandoning a focus on those aspects of architectural heritage that had previously been promoted.

The change in positioning from "Heritage Centre of New South Wales" to "Hunter River Country" was an exciting development that facilitated significant growth in our tourism industry and its contribution to the wider community. This was particularly the case given that it coincided with Council's assumption of control of major tourism events and the resultant increased capacity of those events to generate visitor numbers and tourist expenditure.

In early 2006, however, it was considered time to take our tourism branding into a next stage of its development.

Principally this imperative for change related (and still relates) to regional tourism initiatives promoted by both Hunter Tourism and Tourism NSW and which impact on current and likely local tourism strategy. These initiatives have been articulated in a range of documents produced by Tourism NSW and Hunter Tourism and have the following objectives:

- *To provide a new strategic marketing direction for the Hunter Region, enabling the Region to both effectively target and communicate to visitors, and to identify product development opportunities in line with market needs*
- *To identify ways to attract new and/or growing markets (intrastate markets, interstate markets, international markets, business tourism, cruise tourism, events) and examine potential linkages both within the Hunter Region and with neighbouring Regions*

- *To prioritise infrastructure and development opportunities that will have maximum short to medium term impact for the Region*
- *To improve the conversion process through information distribution and visitor services*

Key recommendations from these documents include:

- *Establish five Product Zones to increase tourism business by promoting their cluster of experiences to targeted consumer segments*
- *Focus on Newcastle Airport as a key opportunity to build interstate visitation*
- *Adopt a standardised and integrated regional approach to distribution and sales through the “Hunter Tourism Exchange”*
- *Restructure Hunter Tourism including the Board and operational structure*

For Maitland the principal impact of these external strategies was to remove our local government area as a discrete area for “beyond our region” marketing and to incorporate it in a broader product zone called the Hunter Valley. This change was endorsed by Maitland City Council and our local tourism industry as a logical step given issues of resourcing and the practicalities of marketing spend in metropolitan markets.

The Hunter Valley

The Hunter Valley destination is essentially an expansion of Hunter Valley Wine Country to include the wine areas of Singleton, Muswellbrook and Dungong and all of the Maitland local government area.

The intent of the Hunter Valley was to expand the Wine Country experience to help it “reinvent and reposition and move upwards on the product life cycle”. Benefits – aside from this reinvigoration – were include brand strength for the less well known wine areas and the opportunity for Maitland to create a new profile based on its individual character and the contribution of that principally “heritage” and cultural character to a wider and previously stagnating Hunter Valley experience.

Has it worked?

The term “Hunter Valley” has enormous market power with – in the consumer’s mind – it being synonymous with wine, fine dining and a short break destination from Sydney. While visitation to the Hunter Valley peaks and troughs (as it does to all destinations) it remains sufficient to justify enormous capital and operational expenditure on tourism accommodation and attractions within Wine Country.

This strength in the core Hunter Valley experience – the Wine Country experience – is to a very large degree the most inhibiting factor in the development of a new and inclusive “Hunter Valley” destination.

There is no verifiable evidence to suggest, for example, that consumers in markets such as Sydney need or particularly want the addition of an historical or “heritage” perspective to a short stay concentrating on fine wine, food and – increasingly – big ticket musical events. There are also practical restrictions on travel during such short stays (random breath testing, etc.) that tend to lock visitors into the wine precinct.

The strength of the Wine Country experience makes any substantial presence for Maitland and its attractions difficult to achieve in broader marketing such as that facilitated by Hunter Tourism and Tourism NSW. Imagery is inevitably Wine Country based and text heavily and understandably skewed to the core experiences of that area. The cost of participation in such marketing tends to be substantial, and few if any Maitland based tourism businesses are able to participate in Hunter Region and Tourism NSW campaigns. The weight and power of Hunter Valley or Hunter Region marketing to

which Maitland contributes either directly or indirectly (through funding of Hunter Tourism) therefore generates little benefit to tourism within our local government area.

2. OUR TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

ACCOMMODATION

At November 2007 there were eight motel / apartment accommodation properties within the Maitland local government area were registered with Maitland Tourism:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| • Country Comfort Monte Pio | 46 Rooms | Rutherford | 3.5 Star |
| • Endeavour Best Western | 23 Rooms | East Maitland | 3.5 Star |
| • Maitland City Motel | 33 Rooms | Rutherford | 3 Star (self rated) |
| • Molly Morgan Motor Inn | 38 Rooms | East Maitland | 3 Star (self rated) |
| • Old Maitland Inn | 40 Rooms | Rutherford | 3.5 Star (self rated) |
| • Quest Apartments | 32 Rooms | Maitland | 4.5 Star (self rated) |
| • The Bradford | 58 Rooms | Rutherford | To be Rated |
| • Windsor Castle Motel | 15 rooms | East Maitland | 3 Star |

These motels in total comprised 285 Rooms

Until 2006 the only style of accommodation available in the Maitland CBD was pub stay properties (four). This situation – and to some extent the broader face of tourism in the city – changed, however, with the opening of the 4½ star, 32 Quest Apartments complex.

The suburbs and villages within Maitland, including Bolwarra, Morpeth, Phoenix Park, Gosforth, Lochinvar, Luskintyre, Rosebrook, East Maitland and Lorn, had eleven bed & breakfast properties operating at November 2007. Each of these with between 1 and 5 rooms available. There is also the Hunter Tennis Resort at Raworth with nine rooms.

There were a further two self-contained properties at Luskintyre and Rosebrook that each had 3 – 5 cottages. One serviced apartment complex comprising five units was available at East Maitland.

There is also a proposal for the development of a French style village at Lochinvar.

Future Directions

The Quest Apartments addressed the need for quality, business standard accommodation and meeting facilities within the Maitland CBD area. Likewise developments at Rutherford (the Bradford) and a possible development at Thornton will meet the demand for accommodation that has emerged from the industrial and commercial development that has occurred in those two areas. The Quest Apartments have also established a niche with the corporate market previously the domain of the 3.5 star properties. The opening of the F3 - Branxton link will also impact on the performance of the Highway Motels.

To survive in the short to medium term, the established highway motels will need to diversify their market base. The coach market is a potential opportunity. At present, with relatively high occupancy rates, motel operators have been reluctant to accept coach bookings but as occupancy rates fall, operators may be more receptive to accepting coach bookings. The product base in Maitland and the surrounding area is highly suitable for the coach tour market. Maitland is also strategically located for long-haul coach tour groups coming to or from Sydney.

Other impacts in regard to accommodation could include:

- Far more choice for consumers wishing to visit the Hunter – resorts, boutique hotels, eco-lodges, sporting facilities etc.
- Increased competition for regionally generated conferences and meetings, with properties being willing to negotiate to 'buy' business
- Competition for the up-market B&B's and boutique properties in Maitland – the new resort properties are likely to offer promotional packages to create awareness and build market share
- Possible discounting by properties to build or maintain market share. Room rates in Cessnock are currently high in comparison to surrounding areas, resulting in some loss of price-sensitive business to budget and mid-priced accommodation properties in the surrounding area (primarily to Maitland). This market could potentially remain in Wine Country if significant discounting occurs
- Possible change in booking policies. The majority of properties in Wine Country require a minimum two nights booking for weekends. Maitland currently attracts Wine Country visitors who only wish to stay for one night. The minimum stay policy may change as Wine Country properties compete for occupancy
- Increase in visitation to the region, in particular an increase in international visitors, both FIT and Groups. There may be opportunities for 'unique' attractions in Maitland City to be included in travel itineraries (eg wildlife viewing at Walka Waterworks, shopping at Airds)
- Less 'overflow' business from major Wine Country Events
- Increased marketing of both Hunter Valley Wine Country and individual properties as operators compete for patronage. While this will raise the profile of the Hunter, the flow-on benefits to Maitland may be limited.

2. OUR TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

ATTRACTIONS

It is important to understand the role of attractions in influencing trip behaviour. Attractions can be broadly classified as:

- Attractions the tourist makes the purpose of their trip (anchors).
- Attractions the tourist 'must see' when in the area.
- Attractions people will visit because it reflects a personal interest – an historic building or site, an art gallery, a wilderness area etc.
- Attractions the tourist will see if they have time.
- Attractions the visitor may see if they have time while in the area.

The attraction hierarchy largely relates to 'time to experience', an attraction that takes less than half an hour may make a minimal impression on the visitor, while an attraction which requires two hours or more to appreciate, enjoy and experience makes for a more memorable experience. It is the impression left on the individual, and the extent they remember the experience, discuss it with their friends, and consider returning, which makes an attraction successful.

Maitland City currently has one high profile anchor attraction (Morpeth), an emerging anchor attraction (the Maitland Gaol) and a number of signature events (for example Hunter Valley Steamfest) which have wide-spread market recognition and draw visitors into the City. Maitland's other attractions are primarily local attractions that tourists / travellers may visit if they are interested in them and / or if they have time while in the area.

Our Region's Attraction Base

The Hunter Region and Port Stephens have a very high profile within the marketplace. The iconic destinations and attractions within the Hunter are:

- **Hunter Valley Wine Country** - Wine Country is focused on the Pokolbin area in Cessnock LGA and extends into Singleton Shire. There are also wineries in the Upper Hunter and around the periphery of the core Wine Country area, in Maitland City and at Gresford in Dungog Shire which are 'loosely' affiliated with Wine Country. Wine Country is a high profile, mature destination offering an extensive range of cellar door and winery experiences, dining, accommodation and health spas, specialty tourism shopping, showcase gardens, championship golf courses, tours, events and recreational activities.

Visitors to Wine Country are usually destination specific and there is limited movement into other areas within the Hunter. Due to the scale and intensity of the development in the area, Wine Country is now perceived by some segments of the market as being over-commercialised, over-crowded and not providing value for money. These market segments are looking for alternative locations.

Maitland is attracting some Wine Country visitors who are looking for a more affordable / value-for money experience than is available within the Pokolbin area. Anecdotal information indicated that Hunter residents seeking a 'wine' experience are tending not to patronise the commercial, high profile wineries, and instead are increasingly seeking out the smaller, boutique wineries around the periphery of Wine Country. The Gresford Wineries, and to a lesser extent the wineries in Maitland City, appear to be attracting this market.

- **Newcastle City** - As the major regional city, Newcastle has a very strong business market. Tourism to the city is growing, with key attractions being the beaches and spectacular coastline, harbour foreshore areas, historic buildings and sites (including Nobbys and Fort Scratchley) and events and activities. The Honeysuckle precinct is emerging as a significant visitor activity node. Newcastle now attracts around one million visitors per year.
- **Port Stephens** - Port Stephens is a high profile coastal destination attracting 800,000 - 900,000 visitors per annum with longer stays in self-catering accommodation being a feature. Key attractions are the beaches and waterways and activities such as fishing, dolphin and whale watching. Port Stephens has a strong holiday market, with this market potentially a day-trip market for Maitland City. Visitors to Port Stephens are already an important market for Morpeth.
- **Barrington Tops** - While the Barrington Tops area has a very high profile in the marketplace, this has been relatively slow to translate into visitation. The sheer size of the area, limitations on access and lack of product have tended to constrain growth in visitation. Gloucester has emerged as the primary gateway to the Barringtons, with product and infrastructure now coming on-line to meet market demand. Dungog Shire is the gateway to the southern end of the Barrington region, with the main attractions being the Williams River and the Allyn River area. In comparison to Gloucester, visitor infrastructure in the southern area is very limited.

The Hunter Region Tourism Plan identifies five key destinations (or product zones) within the region:

- The Hunter Valley
- Barrington Tops
- Newcastle
- Lake Macquarie
- Upper Hunter

Maitland falls within the Hunter Valley. This destination incorporates Wine Country, Maitland and Singleton. The purpose of the Zone is to diversify the experience and product base offered by Wine Country to include the rural and heritage attractions and localities with the objective being to increase the appeal of the area in order to broaden the market base and encourage repeat visitation.

Maitland's Attraction Base

The attractions and activities available in Maitland City are summarised below:

Type	Attraction	
Anchor Attraction	Morpeth	
Unique Attractions	Maitland Gaol Walka Recreation and Wildlife Reserve (Walka Water Works) Airds of Lochinvar	
Heritage Product	Streetscapes and buildings (most especially Maitland, Lorn and East Maitland) Maitland Gaol Morpeth / Morpeth Museum Mindaribba Cultural Centre Paterson / Court House Museum (in Dungog Shire Council area) Rail Motor Society	Historic Houses (most of which are not open for inspection) Walka Waterworks - industrial heritage Guided heritage tours - Maitland & Morpeth Self guided heritage walks - Maitland, East Maitland, Lorn and Morpeth Tocal Homestead Grossmann / Brough House
Shopping	Morpeth - specialty retail Maitland CBD Green Hills	East Maitland - antique / renovation outlets Maitland Markets Airds of Lochinvar
Tours & Trails	Maitland Walking Tours Morpeth Guided Tours Hunter Wine Trails Heritage Education Tours	Hunter Tours Tiger Moth joy flights (Russell Field) Scenic flights (Russell Field) Balloon Flights (Wine Country)
Wineries	Morpeth Wine Cellars, Morpeth Tranquil Vale, Luskintyre	Lovedale Wineries* Wyndham Estate, Branxton*
Agriculture / Agricultural Tours	Phoenix Park -- seasonal produce, millet brooms Hunter Harvest – Farm-gate trail Luskintyre – wine and olives	Biodynamic Farming – Phoenix Park
Arts, Craft, Antiques	Maitland Regional Art Gallery Morpeth and Lorn galleries	Central Maitland and East Maitland antique store precincts
Parks, Gardens, Recreation Areas	Walka Recreation and Wildlife Reserve (Walka Waterworks) Maitland Park Hunter River Foreshore Reserves	The CBD Riverwalk Bolwarra Lookout Reserve Tucker Park - Paterson*
Fine Dining / Themed Dining	St Helena Restaurant, Lochinvar Shenanigans Irish Pub, Arnott's Bakehouse Restaurant	Old George & Dragon, East Maitland Mansfield, Maitland
Natural Attractions	The Hunter River	
Activities	Russell Airfield - joy flights / flight training Golf - Heritage Green, Maitland, East Maitland Equestrian activities - Lochinvar	Battlezone Laser Skirmish – Maitland Gaol

Type	Attraction
Events	Hunter Valley Steamfest Bitter and Twisted, Morpeth Maitland Fair Markets Hunter Young Designer Awards Tocal Field Days Tocal Open Day Blues and Tattoos Festival Hunter Valley Caravan Camping & 4WD Show Morpeth Honey Festival Morpeth Novelty Teapot Festival Morpeth Fiery Food Maitland Show & Rodeo Maitland Garden Ramble Maitland Triathlon Groovin' the Moo

* Located just outside the Maitland LGA boundary

Proposed / Future Attractions

Additional attractions being considered for Maitland City include:

- Morpeth Regional Art Galley - Further development of the Gallery complex includes establishment of a Sensory and Sculpture Garden, café and artist workshops and galleries
- Lochinvar French Village - Themed village - eateries, arts and crafts, entertainment and specialty retail

City Wide Issues

- Maitland City does not have a major, iconic tourist attraction. It does however have a number of signature events which have a high profile in the marketplace
- Maitland's attractions are not visible to travellers moving through the area. Travellers actively have to inquire about what is available and then seek it out
- Attractions are dispersed rather than clustered. Morpeth is the only tourism precinct in the City. It is not 'easy' to move from one attraction to the next
- Most of the attractions are small businesses with varying opening days and hours. The main attraction, Morpeth, only trades fully 4 days per week
- Visitors have difficulty finding the attractions and support facilities. Signage is relatively ineffective and maps available for tourists are limited
- The Hunter River is not visible nor is it readily accessible. There are virtually no visitor facilities and infrastructure available along the River other than at Morpeth

Heritage

One of Maitland's strengths is its rich heritage. This presents in its towns, villages, buildings and streetscapes. The City has more than 200 heritage listed buildings with key heritage assets including:

- Maitland Central area - historic buildings along High Street and Heritage Mall, Grossmann and Brough Houses, Maitland Railway Station and clusters of historic dwellings. Grossmann and Brough Houses are managed by the National Trust and are open for inspection (limited hours).
- Lorn - tree-lined streetscapes and historic dwellings.

- East Maitland - clusters of period dwellings and commercial buildings including the former East Maitland Immigrants Home.
- Villages of Morpeth and Largs within the City and Paterson, just to the north.
- Stately rural homesteads - Tocal, Windermere, Closebourne House (St John's Centre), Anambah, Aberglassyn, St Helena, Dalwood and Dunmore. Tocal is open for inspection on weekends and at other times by appointment, with Windermere House also available for inspection by appointment.
- Industrial sites - Maitland Gaol in East Maitland and Walka Waterworks .

In the past, heritage was the central theme for the promotion of Maitland City. This was not particularly successful as Maitland does not have a 'must see' heritage icon (for example, Port Arthur) nor are the heritage assets concentrated or readily visible or accessible. Maitland's heritage, in isolation, is not a sufficiently strong a tourism attractor. Rather, it needs to be integrated with the broader asset base of City and surrounding area.

Morpeth

The historic village of Morpeth is Maitland's main tourist attraction. Visitation is estimated to be in the order of 7,000 to 10,000 visitors per week, including 10 coaches per week. Thursday is typically coach day, with the town primarily attracting day-trip coaches from the Lower Hunter and Central Coast areas. Most of the visitors to Morpeth on Thursdays are seniors, while on weekends Morpeth mainly attracts day visitors from the surrounding region, visitors staying in the region and people attending local events, functions and activities.

Main issues are:

- The strong and growing demand for residential development in the city – including housing for the aged – is creating pressure for the opening up of the land surrounding Morpeth. Whether this is advisable given the perceived importance of the integrity of Morpeth's historic curtilage and vistas is debatable
- Business opening hours - the main trading days in Morpeth are Thursday to Sunday with all businesses open on these days. From Monday to Wednesday it is estimated that around 45% of the businesses in town, including the largest outlet - Campbell's Store, are closed. During School holidays most of the businesses trade seven days per week. The variable opening times renders it difficult to effectively market and promote the town
- Morpeth's position as a specialty retail village is being challenged by the development of other 'tourist' villages in the Lower Hunter. The Hunter Valley Gardens village is proving very popular with visitors to Wine Country and two of the proposed resorts in the Cessnock area include the development of an arts and craft village. The proposed French Village at Lochinvar is also a potential competitor
- The variable quality of the retail mix - some operations have moved away from the quality end of the market, with an emphasis on local and Australian products, to low cost imports sold at relatively high prices
- The village area is small and constrained. Car parking is a major problem, particularly during peak times
- A number of the eateries have not kept pace with trends in the café and restaurant sectors. While this may be adequate for the seniors market, other market segments are likely to be looking for more 'modern' eateries

- Morpeth operates primarily as a 'stand-alone' entity. It is not well integrated with other product within the City and surrounding area
- Divisions exist both within the business community and with the broader community in relation to tourism and events in the town. Recent evidence would suggest that Morpeth is no longer a viable event location for any event other than small, off the street activities.

For Morpeth to remain competitive over time it needs to be aware of the concept of 'product lifecycle'. Morpeth as a product appears to have peaked and according to some commentators is in decline. The town needs to look at how it can revamp and re-invent itself.

The Dairy Factory site on the northern side of the town is potentially a prime site for tourism development. The site has river frontage and there is potential space for boutique accommodation, function and meeting facilities and / or retail and dining outlets. This potential needs to be taken into account in future tourism planning for the village.

Maitland Gaol

Maitland Gaol, at East Maitland opened in 1849. Initially the Gaol housed convicts, and later became a Maximum Security Prison. During its 154 years of operation the Gaol housed the most serious offenders including murderers, rapists and serial killers. Executions were undertaken at the gaol until 1897, with those executed buried on site. The Gaol is supposedly the most haunted gaol in Australia.

In 1998 the Gaol was closed and ownership transferred to Maitland City Council. In vacating the Gaol, the Department of Corrective Services removed many of the fittings leaving the interior of the facility in poor condition. Council initially leased the Gaol to a private operator to run as a tourist attraction. This was not successful and Council is currently managing the facility. Council management has seen a significant turnaround in the level of visitation and business generally, with the Gaol approaching self-sustainability.

Gaol operations are not subsidised by Council or the State Government.

The Gaol is open 7 days per week. Self-guided tours are available and guided tours and 'sleep-overs' can be booked. The guided tours are generally conducted by ex-inmates who have been trained as tour guides. The Gaol can be hired for functions and hosts the 'Cellar in the Cells' food and wine festival. Successful themed events are also run by Gaol management and include an annual Christmas program.

Visitation on all activities averages at 2,000 per month. Markets attracted include high school groups, tour groups and independent travellers.

The Gaol is a difficult venue to develop as a tourist attraction. Constraints include:

- Location - the Gaol is not highly visible to travellers moving through the region. While it is close to the main access route to Morpeth, signage is ineffective and visitors do not necessarily perceive the Gaol as part of the Morpeth product base. The residential location also limits the activities that can be undertaken at the Gaol, particularly noise and traffic generating activities
- The sheer size of the complex (5 wings plus other buildings) - with the issues being how to utilise the space effectively and the ongoing cost of maintenance
- The poor condition of the facility and the need for major investment to protect the asset and maintain the area. As most of the fitout has been removed, there is not a lot to look at other than buildings and spaces. There is currently no legally viable access to the top of the wall or the guard towers, which are significant points of interest

- New visitor and office facilities were opened in September 2007 and provide a substantially enhanced entry and sales point to the Gaol in combination with audio tours and other initiatives to be introduced by the end of 2007. These facilities will take the Gaol to a new level of visitor interpretation. More needs to be undertaken however to value add to the Gaol experience in order to cement it as a compulsory “site” in the Hunter tourism experience
- There is some market reaction against the Gaol including horror at the living conditions, revulsion against the crimes the inmates have committed, and so on. These aspects are, of course, the basis of its appeal for many others. The Gaol will, however, always be limited in its mass visitation potential by the facts of its past and the nature of its offerings.

Walka Recreation and Wildlife Reserve (Walka Waterworks)

Walka Waterworks is located approximately 1.5 kilometres north west of Maitland CBD. The Water Works is a 19th century water treatment and filtration plant. It is considered to be the most intact historical filtration plant remaining in NSW. Walka Waterworks is operated by a Trust.

The site covers an area of approximately 64 hectares, with the key features being (when fully operational):

- The Water Works building a large and imposing Victorian industrial structure with remaining ponds and tanks.
- Small museum within the main building
- Reservoir - used for passive recreation, model boats, canoeing and small sail boats
- Bushland area - being regenerated and interpreted - wildlife habitat with a 700 metre wheelchair accessible interpretative trail
- Picnic and BBQ facilities
- Miniature train - train rides operate on weekends and public holidays
- Camping ground with very basic facilities
- Landscaped gardens
- Walking trails
- Wildlife viewing - large variety of birds, kangaroos and wallabies
- Kiosk - Café.

Walka Waterworks attracts around 35,000 - 40,000 visitors per annum. Visitation is concentrated on weekends, peaking during public holidays and on special occasions such as Mothers and Fathers Day. Visitors to the reserve are drawn primarily from Maitland City and the surrounding region. The Waterworks is a very popular location for functions, group picnics and large events and is very popular for weddings, family reunions, corporate and social club functions and picnics and for events such as school cross-country competitions and scout jamborees.

The main Waterworks building has a number of large rooms that are used for functions and events. The rooms are however very basic with limited facilities which deter some potential users. Major refurbishment is required if the rooms are to realise their potential. There is also a large room upstairs which is not in use as it is not accessible. The views from this room are superb.

Walka Waterworks has significant potential to develop further as a tourist attraction. Opportunities presented by the site include:

- Utilising the waterworks building as a conference and function centre
- Providing on-site accommodation, in particular self-contained cabins and accommodation to support the conference and function activities
- Developing a small, quality caravan park for travellers (no permanent vans)
- Promoting the site as an event venue suitable for staging indoor and outdoor events, including very large events
- Wildlife viewing - to be marketed to the international market, including the group tour market, as part of a Hunter experience. As wildlife is more active late afternoon and early morning, the

experience fits well in terms of timing with winery tours to Pokolbin and the Dolphin and Whale Watching tours in Port Stephens. Developing this attraction will require protective perimeter fencing around the bushland areas to create an environment that can be cleared of feral animals and plants

Constraints that need to be addressed include:

- Lack of visibility and relative isolation from the main visitor activity nodes
- Lack of defined identity - very few people have any concept of what a 'water works' is or what to expect
- Poor connections with the Maitland CBD. The access road is narrow and convoluted with ineffective signage. There is no pedestrian or cycle link between the complex and Maitland CBD
- Lack of funds to undertake the investment required to develop the site and to refurbish and fit-out the buildings
- Up-market residential development has been permitted along the northern boundary of the site. Further development of the site and/or activities that could significantly increase use or generate noise are likely to be opposed by the surrounding community

In 2007 Maitland City Council took over as the sites trustee. Council will be developing a new Master Plan and Business Plan for the site. Until such time as planning is completed some activities and facilities at the Water Works will not be available to visitors.

Russell Airfield

Russell Airfield at Rutherford is operated by the Royal Newcastle Aero Club. The Airfield offers a range of activities that bring visitors into Maitland City.

These activities include:

- Landing strip for private and charter planes. Private planes often land at Rutherford to avoid inclement weather. Pilots and passengers will often stay overnight in the City motels.
- Flight training - people travel to the City to learn to fly or to 'clock-up' flying hours. The airport is also used by the essential services for flight training and related activities.
- Joy flights - Hunter Valley and Sydney.
- Tiger Moth joy flights.
- Occasional air show - which attract around 3,000 - 4,000 spectators.

There appears to be significant potential to develop air-related events centred on the Airfield.

While Russell Field has traditionally been the home for private flight training and 'tourist' related flying in the Hunter Region, this position is now being actively challenged by Cessnock Airport. Cessnock Airport is being positioned as the centre for Tourist Aviation within the Lower Hunter, with the emphasis on flight training, joy flights and charter flights. Quality accommodation (Mercure Hotel - 104 rooms plus meeting facilities) has been approved adjacent to Cessnock Airport and is expected to open in 2007. One operator from Russell Field is in the process of relocating to Cessnock Airport.

Aero club and operators based at Russell Field consider that there is a strong market for the Rutherford facilities and believe that there is potential to grow this market. They are however concerned that residential development in the area surrounding the airport will result in increasing restrictions on the airport operations. There is already an increase in noise complaints from residents moving into the area. There is reluctance to invest in additional facilities (eg accommodation for flight school trainees at the airport) without a guarantee that the airport has a long term future.

Scenic Drives

The northern floodplain and rural areas of Maitland City lend themselves to scenic driving. The villages are interesting, the scenery is attractive and there is a range of eateries and tourist oriented retail outlets in some of the villages.

The loop route along the Paterson River Valley via Maitland, Lorn, Paterson to Gresford and then up to the Allyn River area of Barrington Tops or across to Dungog and Clarence Town is developing as a popular day-trip for residents of the Lower Hunter Valley. There are also two smaller loops that are growing in popularity:

- East Maitland - Morpeth - Paterson - Maitland (more popular)
- East Maitland - Morpeth - Bolwarra - Rosebrook - Lochinvar (developing)

With the growing population base within the surrounding region there appears to be potential to expanding the drive product. Opportunities include:

- Developing tourist drives that start at key locations outside of the City and bring people into the City, in particular drives designed for the Port Stephens (Nelson Bay area), Lower Hunter and Central Coast markets.
- Working with Dungog Shire to develop the Paterson Valley loop as a 'signature' drive for the area.
- Featuring drives in the regional media. Newspapers and radio stations often have segments related to activities that can be undertaken in the region, for example, 'Great Weekend Drives', 'Out & About', 'Things to do with the Kids in School Holidays' etc.

Maitland Regional Art Gallery

The Maitland Regional Art Gallery has the potential to provide a local tourist asset for the City. Currently, the Gallery experience is limited and, for most visitors, is likely to be an activity they may do while visiting the CBD rather than being a reason for visiting the City or CBD area. Realising the potential of the Gallery will require:

- Continuing ability to attract high profile exhibitions and to effectively market these outside of the City
- Further expansion of the attractions and activities at the Gallery. At present the Gallery is perhaps a 30 minute experience for most visitors. The proposed sculpture garden will increase the product base however other activities (eg café) and workshops will be required
- Further strengthening of the Gallery and surrounding gardens as a venue for small functions (eg cocktail parties) and events
- Establishing a 'workshops' program with these programs packaged and effectively marketed to individuals and special interest groups outside of the City
- Bidding for 'arts' related conferences and meetings for the City

Maitland City Council has resolved to construct major new facilities at the Gallery. These facilities and the resources accompanying them will result in the above actions being carried out.

Maitland Markets

The Maitland Fair is an open air market with a large assortment of stalls held fourteen times a year on the first Sunday of the month (January excluded) and on the third Sunday of October, November and December. The Maitland Markets are the largest country markets in Australia, attracting over 600 stall holders who sell home made, home grown and home baked goods, craft, sewing, paintings, bric-a-brac, antiques, farm equipment and business promotion to over 30,000 visitors per month.

The Markets are held two minutes from the town centre on Blomfield Street.

There are significant opportunities presented by the annual influx of visitors to the City for the markets, which to date have not been capitalised upon. These opportunities need to be explored to maximise the economic benefit and enhance the visitor experience to the City. Packaging of a visit to the markets with other activities is an obvious possibility.

EVENTS

Maitland Council has been very successful in developing a strong calendar of events, including a number of signature events of State and regional significance. Events and activities are the main generator of leisure travel to the City and one of the main sources of business for the accommodation sector.

The flagship event for the City is Hunter Valley Steamfest, held annually in April, which is supported by key events including the Bitter and Twisted International Boutique Beer Festival (launched in 2007), Tocal Field Days, Hunter River Supershow, Hunter Valley Caravan Camping and Boat Show plus a series of smaller boutique events that cater largely to the local community.

It is estimated that events are the catalyst that brings over 250,000 visitors to the City annually.

Events should continue to be a major focus for the City. Events provide a reason to visit and are a 'call to action' that focuses attention on the area. Existing events in the City bring large numbers of both day and overnight visitors into the area and there is potential to develop this further.

On the down-side events are time consuming to organise and may not be profitable for the organising committee (although they generate significant benefits for the wider community).

Opportunities include:

- Providing assistance to the event organisers, particularly in the areas of ticketing, marketing and promoting the event
- Exploring opportunities for adding value to an event – for example, extending retail trading hours, setting up stalls at the event, street parade, local business expo, side-walk dining (extra tables and chairs to accommodate peak demand) etc
- Encouraging local organisations to establish small events. There are opportunities for clubs, such as the sporting and social clubs to bring visitors into town for tournaments and/or social activities. There is likely to be potential for some existing 'inter-club' tournaments to be 'packaged', combining the tournament/activities with accommodation, meals and some fun activities for the visiting players
- Developing new activities either as stand-alone events or as part of an existing event. For example:
 - Explore opportunities for inclusion of Maitland as an 'official site' for other major events held within the surrounding region
 - Cycling and marathon style events etc
 - Canoe - Kayaking, rowing, raft event - eg Maitland to Morpeth race
 - Sporting carnivals and events
 - Airshows and related events - based at Russell Airfield
 - Food and produce events at Morpeth as an extension to the Hunter Harvest trail.

- Targeting 'footloose' events that could potentially be held in the City. There are a number of long distance sporting events, (e.g. equestrian enduro rides, marathons, triathlons, cycling races etc) and special interest groups (e.g. veteran car & motor cycle clubs, 4WD clubs, card and board game clubs, arts & craft groups etc) that look for different locations to host their events. Ideal sites for these style of events include Walka Water Works, St Johns Centre at Morpeth and the Maitland Showground.

OUR MARKET SEGMENTS

Maitland City attracts a diversity of market segments with its primary markets comprising:

- Business related travel: This is the main mid week market and includes professional (medical, legal, education etc), corporate and government travel, sales representatives tradesmen and contractors. Business travel is focussed on Maitland CBD, with the industrial parks in the Thornton and Rutherford areas emerging as secondary centres.
- Event related travel: People attending events (for example, Steamfest), the monthly Maitland Markets, social functions and sporting activities in Maitland City and surrounding area. This is the primary weekend market and a key driver of demand for accommodation
- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market: The VFR market is concentrated on weekends and school holidays and is an important market for the City's attractions (most especially Morpeth, the Maitland Markets and the Maitland Gaol).
- Day-trip, self drive market - originating primarily from the Lower Hunter Region and the Central Coast.
- Highway traffic - both short stops and overnight stays. Travellers from Country NSW (the Dubbo and Armidale areas appear to be important generators) and Interstate often overnight in the Maitland area before travelling onto Sydney or Newcastle the following day.

Secondary and minor markets are diverse and include:

- Short-breaks leisure market
- Wine Country visitors
- Families - mainly during school holidays
- Coach tour groups - day trips, overnight stays, long haul tours
- International visitors (mainly self-drive)
- Education market - focused on CB Alexander College at Tocal and the St Johns Centre at Morpeth
- Flight market - generated by Russell Field
- Groups - craft groups, religious groups, social groups, scouts etc
- Family history seekers
- Equestrian market
- Relocates
- Wanderers (retirees and semi-retirees)
- Medical market - generated by Maitland Hospital and to a lesser extent by people having medical treatment in Newcastle.

The leisure / short breaks market represents only a small proportion of the motel market, however it is a significant market for the smaller accommodation properties (guesthouses, B&Bs, cabins and cottages). Part of the leisure market includes 'wine tourists' coming to the area to visit Hunter Valley Wine Country. These tourists are often 'blue collar' workers from the Central Coast and Western

Sydney who choose to stay in Maitland City as it is more cost effective than accommodation in Wine Country and/or because accommodation in Maitland generally does not have a minimum two nights stay on weekends and public holidays.

The market segments attracted and visitation patterns vary to some extent throughout the City with these variations resulting from the attractions and accommodation available locally and the activities that visitors are looking to undertake while in the area.

Market Segments by Locality:

Locality	Primary Markets	Secondary/Minor Markets
Maitland, East Maitland, Rutherford (urban core)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional / corporate - legal, medical, mining etc ▪ Sales Representatives ▪ Tradesmen and Contractors ▪ People attending events, functions and activities in the area ▪ Day trippers - shopping and service related ▪ Highway traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day trippers ▪ Walking / social clubs arriving by train ▪ Coach tours - day and overnight ▪ Special interest - eg National Trust, Antiques ▪ Flight market - Russell Airport
Morpeth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coach tour groups - day trips - primarily retirees ▪ Self drive ▪ Seniors ▪ Day-trippers ▪ Event-related ▪ Large groups (principally St Johns Centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short-breaks
Paterson (just north of Maitland City)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Day visitors - country drive ▪ Barringtons through traffic ▪ Picnickers - groups and individuals ▪ Conference / meeting delegates at Tocal ▪ Tocal events and overflow during major events in the surrounding area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weddings & functions ▪ Coach tours - day ▪ Walking clubs ▪ Short breaks ▪ Car Clubs
Lochinvar Village and surrounding area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highway traffic ▪ Shopping at Airds ▪ Short-breaks ▪ Event related ▪ Blue collar workers & sales representatives (Hotel/Motel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Families - school holidays ▪ 'Wine & Food' tourists ▪ Equestrian market

Locality	Primary Markets	Secondary/Minor Markets
Rural areas (B&Bs, cabins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short breaks - couples ▪ Short breaks - groups of couples ▪ Event related 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International free and independent travellers (FIT) ▪ 'Wine & Food' tourists ▪ Families - school holidays

SOURCE OF VISITORS

Visitors to the City are drawn primarily from the Hunter Valley, Central Coast and Sydney. The primary and secondary sources for each of the main market segments are summarised below:

Market Segment	Primary Source	Secondary Source
Short breaks couples - up-market	Sydney - Northern Suburbs	Sydney (other), Newcastle, Central Coast
Short breaks – couples (mid & budget markets)	Central Coast, Western Sydney	Sydney (other)
'Wine & Food' tourists	Western Sydney, Central Coast	Lower Hunter, Sydney (other)
Groups of couples	Sydney, Central Coast	Newcastle - Lower Hunter
Families	Regional NSW, Sydney	Central Coast
Day trippers - FIT sight seeing	Residents of & visitors staying in Newcastle, Lower Hunter, Central Coast, Port Stephens Highway traffic	Other Hunter, Sydney
Day trippers - picnickers	Lower Hunter - mainly Newcastle	Other Hunter, Central Coast
Retirees - FIT self drive	Central Coast, Sydney	All NSW & interstate
Coach Tour Groups - day trips	Lower Hunter, Central Coast, regional New South Wales generally	Port Stephens, Great Lakes Shire, other Hunter, occasionally Sydney
Coach Tour Groups - overnight	Long haul tours (eg 14 day NSW tour originating from Queensland)	
Social groups - walking clubs	Newcastle	Central Coast, Lake Macquarie
Conferences & Meetings	Newcastle, Hunter Region	Central Coast
International	Mainly coming out of Sydney - visiting as part of a self-drive Hunter or North Coast trip	
Medical / health	Regional NSW, Upper Hunter	

Visitation Patterns

The main patterns of visitation to the City are:

- Business and conference-meetings related travel is concentrated mid-week.
- Weekend visitation is largely driven by events and activities within the City and surrounding area.

- Leisure related and VFR travel is concentrated on weekends with secondary peaks during school holidays.
- There is an underlying pattern of seasonality with visitation concentrated in the cooler months, peaking in autumn and spring. Due to the heat, visitation in summer is generally low.
- Other than for travel generated by events and activities within the area, booking lead times are generally short.

Reasons for Visiting

The main reasons for visiting the City appear to be:

- Business, work and/or to attend a conference / meeting
- Attendance at an event, function or activity within the City or surrounding area. This is the main reason for non-business travel
- The convenient / central location of Maitland as a base to visit the Hunter Region or, for NSW country travellers, to visit Sydney and/or Newcastle
- Maitland as a low cost / value for money alternative to staying in Wine Country, Newcastle or Port Stephens.

LIKELY CHANGES IN THE MARKETPLACE

Changes likely to occur in the marketplace that could potentially impact on visitation to Maitland City are summarised below.

Regional Changes

- Restructuring of the management and marketing of tourism within the region to address the current stagnation in domestic visitation and to diversify and build both domestic and international visitation
- Development of new accommodation within the Hunter that could result in growth in visitation to the region, particularly to Wine Country and Newcastle. An increase in the number of visitors staying in the Region also provides the opportunity to build day-visitation to Maitland City. Conversely, the expected oversupply of accommodation in the Lower Hunter in the short to medium term could result in some loss of accommodation business for Maitland
- Major population growth within the Lower Hunter and Central Coast areas - potential day-trip and short-breaks market for Maitland
- Major industrial and commercial development occurring in the Lower Hunter region within, and in close proximity to Maitland City. This is expected to generate increased business related travel as well as demand for meeting and function space and other services such as quality eateries
- Development of the Kurri Kurri link road, connecting the F3 Freeway to the New England Highway west of Branxton, by-passing Maitland City. Possible loss of Highway traffic is a challenge for Maitland City as well as an opportunity
- Increasing traffic congestion in Sydney and on the F3 Motorway rendering it difficult and time consuming to get into and out of Sydney may become a deterrent to the weekend and public holiday short breaks market

Maitland City

- Continued development of the commercial sector within Maitland CBD and the commercial and industrial business parks in the Thornton and Rutherford areas will strengthen and grow the business, conference and meetings and functions markets within the City
- Proposed additional development of quality accommodation in Maitland CBD and at Thornton, Rutherford and possibly Lochinvar which will meet market needs and expectations and provide opportunities for Maitland to diversify and grow its market base.

OUR POSITIONING

For travellers, particularly the touring market, the presentation of a town or village plays a major role on the decision to stop and visit. While most overnight stops and major attractions are generally programmed into an itinerary, the short break stop is often an impulse decision. If a town or area presents well and looks interesting, travellers will often decide to stop and have a quick look around. If the experience gained is positive, then there is a likelihood of repeat visitation or the traveller recommending the town to other travellers.

The key attributes and services that travellers seek are:

- Modern, clean, safe public toilets
- Information – directory, Visitor Information Centre (VIC), good directional signage
- Attractive parks with picnic facilities. Playgrounds are also important for the family market
- A safe, clean environment
- Food and beverage outlets – somewhere clean and inviting. City travellers in particular often look for a place where they can get a cup of 'real' coffee
- Retail services such as ATMs, newsagencies, service stations, Post Offices and cafés
- For the caravan market – a place to park their van legally and safely close to the shopping centre and have a disposal point for their grey waste

Maitland lacks a clear identity within the market place. While it is recognised as being one of the larger towns in the Hunter, it is generally not associated with any major attraction or activity. Maitland is not generally perceived as a tourist destination nor does it have a 'must see' status for visitors travelling through the area.

The main highlights and most attractive and interesting areas of Maitland City are not visible from the New England Highway and other major road corridors. The perception that travellers gain of Maitland from the highway corridor is one of a built-up urban area.

For north-bound travellers, the 'gateway impression' at the end of the F3 Freeway is a sprawling industrial area. As travellers progress west, up the New England Highway, there is a mix of low quality residential areas and bulky goods retail. The East Maitland area along the highway does not present well. There are some glimpses of the flood plains and rural scenery, but the areas appear to be run-down and neglected rather than actively farmed.

Likewise, Highway travellers arriving from the west are also greeted with residential and industrial sprawl as they move through the Rutherford and Telarah areas before reaching Maitland.

There are glimpses of interesting heritage buildings in East Maitland, however lack of landscaping, colour and activity tends to discourage travellers from venturing off the Highway to explore the area. In relation to Morpeth, there is no promotional signage along the Highway that informs travellers about what the village has to offer or encourages them to visit.

The recent improvements to the gateway entry points to the Maitland CBD do catch the traveller's attention, however it is possibly 'too late' to influence an impulsive decision to stop. Advance warning

and promotional signage is required on the approaches to the town. Many travellers may have already stopped at the facilities around the end of the F3 or at McDonalds and other fast food outlets at Green Hills or Rutherford. Encouraging them to stop again a 'few minutes up the road' is a major challenge.

The Visitor Information Centre and surrounding area presents well, with clean, accessible visitor facilities. The route between the VIC and the town centre is not, however, particularly attractive and would benefit from tidying-up and landscaping. There are some beautiful heritage buildings on the eastern periphery of the CBD with the area 'hinting' that Maitland has something to offer visitors. Visitors however find it difficult to access the Mall as the road network by-passes the CBD core.

The Hunter River, which should be a key feature of 'Hunter River Country' is also not visible to travellers or readily accessible. Other than Queens Park at Morpeth, the few reserves along the foreshore present poorly and visitors do not have the opportunity to enjoy the river environment.

The rural areas to the north of Lochinvar, Rutherford and Maitland are scenically very attractive, however these areas are rarely seen by visitors. There is no 'scenic route' through the area as an alternative to the New England Highway.

OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Our stakeholders are diverse and include:

- The ratepayers of Maitland City who fund – through Maitland City Council's annual management plan – the activities of Maitland Hunter Valley Tourism
- The communities of Maitland City and its hinterland which enjoy access to a diverse range of tourism experience and developing infrastructure such as restaurants and places of entertainment that are helped in their commercial viability and development by the contribution of tourism
- The tourism and entertainment industries of Maitland City
- Business generally within Maitland City that derives benefit from the profile tourism attracts for the City
- Maitland City Council
- Other local tourism associations and organisations such as Hunter Tourism
- Tourism New South Wales
- Finally, and most importantly, the tourists and event participants who sustain and encourage our tourism industry

OUR CHALLENGE

The challenge

To capitalise on the inherent strengths and address the weaknesses of tourism infrastructure and resourcing within and for our local government area and to foster the development, sustainability and contribution of tourism to our local economy and social infrastructure.

Our Vision

A vibrant and innovative tourism industry focused on the provision of a sophisticated and memorable tourism experience.

Our Mission

We will create and support structures, resources and mindsets to ensure the long term future, development, viability and contribution of the tourism industry and experience in Maitland, Hunter Valley.

BRANDING

Developing a brand – not just a logo and catchline but a positive and clear image of what we are and what we offer – is a powerful tool in our efforts to keep people visiting Maitland, investing in our city and deciding this is a great place to live and work.

A brand should have:

Truth

There is no virtue in presenting ourselves as something we clearly are not. So our brand must be grounded in truth. It must present an accurate, full and contemporary picture of our city and its directions **Complexity – and simplicity**

Our brand must capture the richness and diversity of our city but communicate this in a way that is simple, truthful, motivating and memorable

Aspiration

We must present a credible, compelling vision for the future. We have to stretch our imagination and our ambitions and think where we want to be tomorrow

and, Inclusivity

Our brand can't be 'all things to all people', but it should mean something to everyone.

Each individual should be able to relate to it in some way.

BRANDING STRATEGIES

We will implement a staged branding strategy that positions and drives Maitland, Hunter Valley as an exciting, vibrant and complex tourism experience by implementing the following initiatives:

Branding Initiatives	Performance Targets	Outcomes
<p>Establish within identified target markets our unique brand</p>	<p>Development of brand collateral that communicates both visually and in words the meaning, intent and potential of our brand positioning</p> <p>Cooperative strategy between the component members of the Hunter Valley destination (Maitland, Hunter Valley Wine Country and Singleton) to ensure that within-destination and whole of destination branding reflects individual identities and broader destination characteristics</p> <p>Identification of the characteristics of our tourism area / tourism branding through a drilling down into the brand to highlight brand components and a matching of product / brand components to market segments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our brand statement and imagery is communicated and is well known via all collateral including the Maitland Tourism website and sub-web sites, the Visitor Information Centre, our marketing activities and stationery • The Maitland Visitors Guide reflects Maitland's branding and is complementary to the branding and collateral of the wider Hunter Valley destination and the brand collateral of Hunter Valley Wine Country and Singleton • Creation, cross tabulation and utilization of a comprehensive database of brand components, relevant product, "champions" and resources leading to a personalization of the brand and its enhanced cut through in the market • Greater sense of ownership of brand and brand characteristics is promoted through awareness raising within local industry and individual product support and profiling activities by Maitland Tourism

Branding Initiatives	Performance Targets	Outcomes
<p>Establish within identified target markets our unique brand (Continued)</p>	<p>Development and implementation of mechanisms to assess the cut through of brand marketing activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of (relevant questions) in Community Survey reveals increased local awareness and appreciation of Maitland's qualities as a tourism destination • The degree of awareness beyond our city - as evidenced by mechanisms such as surveys and analysis of telephone enquiries - of Maitland as a key area within the Hunter Valley and Hunter Region is increased • Hits on web page, page impressions and length of stay increase as brand awareness is extended • Increased representation of identified target groups as evidenced by response to call to action initiatives, links through from websites, enquiries and bookings
<p>Foster the development and expansion of an industry partnership approach to the funding and implementation of marketing strategies</p>	<p>Awareness raising amongst industry members of the benefits and potential of cooperative marketing for the area as a whole and for individual businesses</p> <p>Targeted buy-in for Council initiated strategies</p> <p>Council support and buy-in to industry and segment generated marketing activities</p> <p>Development of strategic relationships with key media organisations to maximise the impact of expenditure on electronic and print advertising</p> <p>Implementation of a visiting journalist program (VJP) to encourage the development of media partnership opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of co-operative marketing activities undertaken; • Cooperative funding as a percentage of marketing expenditure • Development in conjunction with strategic media partners of a "suite" approach to marketing on a drip saturation basis • Equivalent advertising value (EAV) of coverage as a result of strategic media relationships and the Visiting Journalists Program (VJP)

<i>Branding Initiatives</i>	<i>Performance Targets</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<p>Investigate and action alternative strategic marketing alliances beyond the framework of the Hunter Valley with other destinations and regions to capture alternative market segments</p>	<p>Elimination of local government boundaries as a barrier to cross region promotion of tourism product and experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost effective and timely exposure of Maitland Tourism product to non traditional markets • Conduct of a staged series of reciprocal famils with other Visitor Information Centre staff from within target areas and enhanced ability of VICs to cross-sell and cross-promote local areas and destinations

OUR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

We will develop and implement strategies to broaden the range of product available. These strategies will include investment attraction, capacity building and resource development / infrastructure enhancement by implementing the following initiatives:

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Performance Targets</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
Encourage investment and reinvestment in tourism product	<p>Production and dissemination of a prospectus identifying potential investment areas and distribute in response to investor enquiries</p> <p>Cooperative strategy with local tourism industry members to encourage reinvestment and upgrading of their product</p> <p>Active pursuit of opportunities to work cooperatively with Maitland Gaol on marketing, event and infrastructure initiatives</p> <p>Identification of market sectors that could be developed and work cooperatively with operators to develop joint initiatives</p> <p>Cooperative partnership arrangements with the Morpeth business community</p> <p>Funding and implementation of a marketing review / town study of Morpeth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospectus distributed in response to enquiries received through the Visitor Information Centre and Council with known audience and enquirers having up to date access to information and resources • Number of enquiries and conversions reported to Council • Enhanced viability and range of tourism industry within wider City and Morpeth in particular
Produce resources to facilitate access to and awareness of local product and experiential opportunities	Development of resources such as webpages, walks, drives and networks to link and package product and to develop profile, awareness and a sense of critical mass	Enhanced visitor accessing of the broad range of local tourism product and consequent lifting of profile and viability of those resources

Visitor and Industry Partner Services

We will refine the scope, quality and impact of visitor and industry services to ensure the maximisation of positive visitor experience and the benefits of partnering with Maitland Tourism.

Initiatives	Performance Targets	Outcomes
<p>Maximise - through review and refinement of VIC physical structures, staff training, resourcing and signage – visitor satisfaction, repeat visitation and local spend</p>	<p>Review the nature, frequency and resourcing of the types of services provided by staff to customers including liquor licence</p> <p>Council support for an expansion of the VIC car park with particular focus on coach parking and car parking at high demand times</p> <p>Review of the nature, effectiveness and amount of signposting for the VIC and of wider tourism signposting in the LGA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better targeted resource allocation and income generation • Diversification of services and experiences offered within visitor centre • Merchandise sales • Open Day held resulting in increased awareness of Centre services as reflected in visitor numbers and sales • Referrals to industry partner services • Initiative to be included in budget papers for 2008/2009 Management Plan Review and implementation of database and information management systems • Diversification of services and experiences offered within visitor centre • Increased utilisation of Centre by coach companies • Increased level of satisfaction of visitors with services offered • Proposal for new VIC signage prepared and implemented as approved • Formal tourism input into wider Council signage strategy ensures enhanced tourism signage on Council and RTA roads, Council facilities such as parks and Council precincts and other tourism infrastructure

Initiatives	Performance Targets	Outcomes
Build – through a strong communications plan – relationships with tourism operators to maximise support for tourism initiatives	<p>Conduct of a formal risk assessment of the VIC and its environs and implement appropriate strategies for areas of identified risk</p> <p>Review of landscaping and related features in the VIC grounds to promote visitor amenity, enhancement of Centre security and to minimise maintenance costs</p> <p>Review interface with Café to encourage traffic flows, business for the Café and visitation to the Centre</p> <p>Review the nature of the annual tourism partnership prospectus, including an opinion survey from partners to ensure an ongoing effective relationship with tourism industry operators</p> <p>Communication of co-operative opportunities to tourism industry partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment completed and findings reported to management • Decreased number of reported security issues • Landscaping and security review completed and implemented in conjunction with signage strategy. Risk assessment completed and findings reported to management • Review completed and changes implemented in conjunction with wider shopfront review • Analysis of feedback from survey conducted and findings incorporated into new year prospectus where determined to be appropriate • Income generated from co-operative participation in tourism initiatives shows an annual increase

EVENTS

In February 2006 Maitland City Council endorsed the conduct of events as a means of facilitating the growth of our City's tourism industry and its wider marketing profile.

Maitland's tourism events are diverse in their nature but they have a common rationale, not always easily quantified, that in general comprises:

- Raising awareness of Maitland City and its tourism attractions and the encouragement of return, more extended stays
- Direct expenditure within Maitland's tourism and leisure businesses
- Development of strategic alliances with tourism and leisure businesses in the wider region
- Broad awareness raising of Maitland in regional, state and national markets

We will ensure the continuing contribution of events to the development of the local tourism industry, its sustainability and profile by implementing the following initiatives:

Initiatives	Performance Targets	Outcomes
Review and refine the role of events as a catalyst to the development of tourism within the City and its market profile	<p>Council endorsement of an updated approach to tourism and events strategy to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment and conduct of a sustainable and year round flagship tourism events program that recognises and gains value from the wider destination and region marketing calendar • Sourcing of opportunities for research information on the nature of our events and their economic and social contribution to the City • Development of a Business Plan to take to next stage of development, ensure ongoing market appeal, for Hunter Valley Steamfest • Investigation of opportunities for the creation of new events focused on antiques and heritage and music based festival for under 40s • Confirmation of Bitter & Twisted as the City's new flagship event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to verifiable quantitative and qualitative data on inputs such as events to tourism income generation and visitation • Discussions held with educational institutions to develop a joint program to research events • Tourism events managed by Maitland City Council achieve business planning benchmarks • Maitland input to the wider Lower Hunter events calendar • Framework for heritage / antique event developed including branding strategy with first event to be held in winter 2008 • "Bitter and Twisted" achieves performance benchmarks and is confirmed as an annual event

<i>Initiatives</i>	<i>Performance Targets</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>
<p>Review and refine support methods and structures to maximise the contribution, professionalism and impact of community initiated events on the city's tourism and marketing profile</p>	<p>Achievement by strategically identified community events of sustainability and at least a Hunter wide profile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a community events partnership prospectus • Formalisation of partnership arrangements with at least three community events • Industry recognition of Maitland community tourism partnership events as a resource in tourism industry development • Formal targeting of and collaborative strategy with sporting and community groups to identify, bid for and secure industry group key events