

## 8.4 Australian Tourism Council's Advocacy Group

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT  
TO 20 FEBRUARY 2019 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400067, A0820020

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Development on the Australian Tourism Council's Advocacy Group; and**
2. **decline initial membership of the group as it already participates in various tourism networks and working groups.**

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### Executive summary

The purpose of this report is to consider an invitation to become a member of the Australian Tourism Council's Advocacy Group (ATCAG).

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil.

### Detailed report

Council has received an invitation from Byron Bay Council to join the Australian Tourism Council's Advocacy Group (ATCAG). Attached is a copy of the fact sheet outlines the proposed activities of the group and the four key issues that will form the basis of the working group's activities.

ATCAG is a newly established organisation and the initial membership charge is \$1,100 per Council per year. The ongoing amount is yet to be determined by the group and any research or communications activities undertaken will require members to contribute to these costs in addition to membership fees.

Council recognises the efforts of Byron Bay Council and others who are involved in establishing the group and the issues that the ATCAG will be focused may have some relevance to the Mid-Western Region. However, the recommendation of staff is to decline initial membership for the following reasons:

- Council already participates in a number of tourism networks and broader economic development working groups (such as Destination Country & Outback, RDA Orana, Orana Joint Organisation) and these forums provide opportunities to address relevant issues in co-operation with regional NSW stakeholders and neighbouring councils;
- The total investment required on an ongoing basis is uncertain at this stage i.e. future membership costs will depend on the research and activities the group undertakes;
- Meaningful participation in group activities and meetings will involve the commitment of staff resources, which will require increased resources in this area or redirection from other tasks.

## Community Plan implications

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Building a Strong Local Economy</b>
Goal	An attractive business and economic environment
Strategy	Promote the Region as a great place to live, work, invest and visit

## Strategic implications

### Council Strategies

Building a Strong Local Economy is a key theme in the Towards 2030 Community Plan. Promoting the region as a great place to live, work, invest and visit is a key strategy under this theme.

### Council Policies

Not Applicable.

### Legislation

Not Applicable.

## Financial implications

Initial membership of the group is \$1,100 for one year. Council will also be required to contribute to additional costs for any research and communication activities undertaken by the group, which at this stage are unknown.

If Council wishes to participate in the group, the costs of both membership and ongoing activities would need to be funded from unrestricted cash.

Budget Year	Operating Performance Ratio	Own Source Revenue	Building & Infrastructure Renewal
2018/19	✘	-	-
Future Years	✘	-	-

## Associated Risks

The main risk in joining ATCAG is that the full cost of membership (both with ongoing activities and staff resources) is unknown at this stage. There are no risks associated with not joining ATCAG, as Council already participates in various tourism networks and working groups.

JULIE ROBERTSON  
DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT

23 January 2019

*Attachments:* 1. ATCAG Fact Sheet.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER



## **Australian Tourism Council's Advocacy Group (ATCAG) FACT SHEET**

### **Introduction**

When it comes to managing tourism, LGA's across Australia share many of the same challenges including growth of holiday letting, peak season traffic and congestion, and impacts on our infrastructure. These challenges impact on achieving manageable visitor numbers across destinations, by way of declining visitation or over popularity.

We know that we can be more effective at engaging State and Federal Government and receiving support by working together and advocating with one voice. When councils band together, we speak with a louder voice and our proposed solutions can be easier to hear and harder to ignore.

By sharing information, knowledge and experience, councils can learn from each other to build resilience for communities in tourist destinations.

### **Background**

In December 2017, over 50 councils took part in an initial meeting to consider the many and varied challenges facing LGA's as a consequence of tourism and its impacts. The meeting presented many challenges and a follow-up survey was used to establish the top four issues councils shared (see below). It was proposed that an advocacy group be established to lobby governments to address the critical issues faced by the broader group of councils Australia wide.

### **About the group**

Based on the survey results and meeting, the preference is an action based group with a focus on research and advocacy. An overarching group, chaired by Byron Shire Mayor Simon Richardson, will provide a coordination and support role for the working groups, governed by a Terms of Reference to be agreed upon during the ATCAG's meeting.

The ATCAG will meet bi-annually and all member councils will be invited to attend these meetings. Working groups will be established and a chair and secretary will be nominated for each working group at the first meeting of ATCAG.

Working groups will comprise of elected members, CEO's or a combination.

## The issues

**These four issues will form the basis of the working groups to action:**

**1. Tourism impacts on infrastructure**

Road, water, waste, toilets, beaches, tourist attractions and Crown land transfers, loss of national parks tourism.

**2. Lack of Public Transport**

Inland and regional tourist destinations facing declining visitor numbers that they say are linked to reduced bus and train services.

**3. Increases to holiday and short-term rentals and impacts**

Airbnb, holiday letting, impacts on affordable housing for local communities, conflicts on housing and issues-affordability, between residents and visitors.

**4. Creating sustainable tourism opportunities and Agritourism**

Looking at opportunities and current regulations/restrictions in place and work with operators and government to develop Agritourism.

## Joining Investment

Byron Shire Council is delighted to offer initial administration and financial support for the inaugural meeting. In order to achieve its goals, the group will need to raise funds to cover administration and communication costs.

**The Annual Investment will be:** \$1,100 (Inc. GST) initial membership charge, per Council, per year with an ongoing amount to be determined by the group. The membership period is calendar year and commences on 1 January 2019.

If the working group commissions research or undertake a communications campaign, those costs will need to be covered by working group member councils and with support from the majority of participating working group members.

## Join ATCAG

For more information, or to join, contact:

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Tourism Officer

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