



Barossa Regional Events Strategy: 2014- 2016 Summary

“By working together to become a leading event host destination in Australia.”

By 2016 we will collaboratively achieve:

- **An annual event calendar which is consumer focused and uses key underlying themes of food, wine & heritage.**
 - **The Barossa Vintage Festival on its way to reclaim its lead in Australian Food & Wine Festivals, with three other events which have Hallmark capability identified & developed along this path.**
 - **Consumer intimacy and connecting with them through events will provide a point of difference for our region.**
 - **Best practice operational event models for Councils & the regional event community.**
 - **Strategic alliances developed outside the region including with Adelaide based events.**
 - **A growth in business events by maximizing this opportunity.**
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Background:

Benefits of regional events are well documented globally, profiling examples of cultural connection, community strength and pride and showcasing local industries. This is important since events can act as a catalyst for community vibrancy, economic growth and tourism appeal.

The Barossa region has had a long history of growing and hosting authentic and successful events. Locally 95% of respondents believe that events are extremely or very important to the future of the region, with additional analysis revealing that the events industry is highly competitive and likely to become even more so. The development of an integrated Events strategy for the Barossa region was identified to chart the future place and success of events.

This initiative is important from a community and tourism perspective and has aligned a number of key regional stakeholders including Barossa Grape & Wine Association (BGWA), Barossa Council, Barossa Food, Light Regional Council, RDA Barossa, SA Tourism Commission (represented by Events South Australia) and Tourism Barossa.

The Goal of this Strategy:

Through implementation of this strategy the goal is to gain an increase in the number of high quality, professionally managed events which are true to the region's story, celebrate community and generate positive economic activity and benefits. Just over half of the event suppliers being currently used are local businesses based in the region, so the economic benefit by achieving the strategy's goal is significant.

What can we learn from other Event Destinations?

Event host destinations which are leaders have a number of common successful characteristics:

- They approach and plan regional events like a portfolio of products, ensuring that the annual calendar works together having an overall attractive mix of events for consumers. This mix of local, regional and hallmark events whilst having different purposes together adds great value to the region as a whole. By working together on a regional basis like-minded events are clustered together which creates more consumer excitement and engagement, maximises often limited marketing budgets and overcoming events competing for dates in the calendar.
- When considering new events or established ones, market research is undertaken to really understand the opportunity. The Wangaratta Jazz Festival provides an excellent case study of this. Developed by the local businesses working in collaboration, various event concepts were tested against required outcomes to come up with the end product.
- All events benefit from consumer feedback to ensure they maintain relevance and freshness especially in the light of competitive events. Energy is allocated to a culture of continuous improvement and innovation and a range of cost effective feedback and evaluation methods exist today to support events in achieving this.
- Well placed, mobile or shared infrastructure for events is also important as it has a significant budget impact, especially in the start-up stage. Cost of set-up and event equipment such as stages, sound & lighting, were highlighted as barriers for hosting events in the Barossa.
- Finally the right culture and alignment is critical. All stakeholders exhibit a spirit of co-operation, can clearly articulate everyone's roles & responsibilities so that the collective resources are maximised, learn from and support each other and focus on continual improvement with the consumer being at the heart of all decision making.

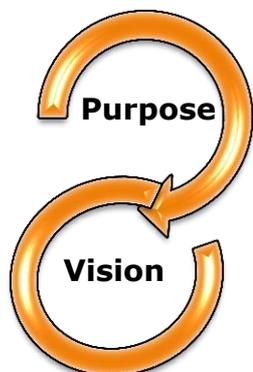
What's the opportunity for the Barossa region?

The region needs to use its positive brand strengths to deliver what the consumer wants and there is no doubt that it should be "in the business of events". To maximise the opportunity for the region we must increase the number of stand-out Hallmark events which is currently limited. This can be achieved by growing current events into regional leaders, or attracting new proven events into the region and implementing them with a "Barossan twist" so that they become unique and a reflection of your region from a consumer view point.

Umbrella themes which should underpin every event in the region are food, wine & heritage. Additional focus opportunities include the arts, music and the emergence of sport. To get the greatest leverage these focus areas should be clustered.

With Brand Barossa at the heart of the events strategy, it is the hook by which to talk to consumers about the wider region, which is not defined by geographical boundaries but by a sense of quality, produce and people that can be trusted to deliver on the experience.

The Barossa region can take a leadership role in consumer intimacy, providing a competitive point of difference. With an established and consumer led brand which has elements such as rich earth, established wine, artisan food and regional characters, it is a perfect asset on which to leverage. Give events an earthy "Barossan twist" which is authentic, desirable and provides a point of difference for consumer connection.



To execute Brand Barossa with a total dedication to consumer intimacy: connecting people, produce and heritage, through festivals & events.

Win in events with collective focus on all three growth horizons, using Brand Barossa and excellence in consumer intimacy as the drivers of success.

To achieve this vision, these Key Objectives need to be achieved:

1. Align stakeholders to create a positive culture of success through implementation of this events strategy.
2. Deliver by 2015 a comprehensive consumer focused annual event calendar, using a portfolio & clustered approach. Key umbrella themes which should underpin every event are food, wine & heritage.
3. As the regions current Hallmark event, re-establish the Barossa Vintage Festival as THE authentic Food & Wine Festival in Australia so that it maintains its leadership role.
4. Deliver consumer intimacy and connection through the regions events in a range of forms which over time provides a competitive edge; and
5. Develop a sustainable funding model using the 3 horizons of growth for events. Collective resources are allocated to defend & extend core events and build successful events of the future.

The actions required to achieve these objectives:

Actions for each of these key objectives have been identified and dependent on the resources these can be progressed either with an investment in people with specific skills/roles, or by implementing projects which build the event-ready capacity of the region. These actions include:

1. Create a framework to continue to drive the culture & strategic growth objectives for events in the region.
2. Complete a review of the Barossa Vintage Festival and develop a strategic plan for the next 6 years identifying the event's long term potential.
3. Agree the Hallmark/lead event portfolio for the region and utilise these as living case studies for future event excellence. Build on umbrella themes with a goal of having one true Hallmark event per quarter by 2020.
4. Adopt a consumer focused, portfolio & clustering approach to event calendar development.
5. Grow consumer intimacy capability by engaging expertise for the region.
6. Put consumers at the heart of all decision making for event development, including upfront consumer testing and feedback.
7. Implement best practice models for Councils and the local events community to foster event development and growth.
8. Develop strategic alliances outside the region – link with Adelaide and beyond.
9. Acknowledge and maximise the opportunity for business events to grow. Deliver a point of difference through corporate customer intimacy.

What could the event portfolio look like for the Barossa?

The key to a good event portfolio is one that is balanced in terms of genre and target market, and where events of similar themes are brought together to add more excitement from the consumers perspective.

Based on the current regional event calendar some possible examples of how umbrella themes and clustering of these might work are outlined below.



February to April - Key Theme #1

- Wine takes **centre stage**, with opportunity to link to Adelaide eg Festival, Fringe, WOMAD
- Main events currently- Vintage Festival, Barossa Under the Stars.

May to July - Key Theme #2

- Main event currently - none, a gap exists.
- Opportunity - Design or develop a festival eg leverage Open House but add a modern twist.

August to October - Key Theme #3

- Artisan Focus - Food and art.
- Main events currently - Gourment Weekend, SALA - deliver SALA with a Baorssa twist.

November to January - Key Theme #4

- Seasonality and Sport (Inital focus on cycling). Leverage new cycle trails.
- Main events currently - Tour Down Under, Day on the Green - activate community/seasonality.

How can individual businesses apply this strategy?

Whilst this strategy has been developed at a regional level, there are numerous ways that individual local businesses can apply these insights to achieve a return. An initial range of suggestions follow:

- Review the annual events calendar and consider which events may attract a similar target market. If there is good alignment develop ways that the business can be involved in the event e.g. if within the event area, extend opening hours to match event visitors; develop specific packages for event attendees e.g. food & beverage combo's, discounts for ticket holders at their store.
- Transport options within the region may be a concern for visitors so consider pooling demand with other operators to offer combined transport options (at a charge) to visitors.
- Include the details of key regional events in your own marketing and promotion eg websites, newsletters. You provide your consumers with new news about what's happening in the region which may encourage them to come and visit you for another time.
- If you host your own events, review the event calendar to see if you can cluster these within larger events. At a minimum you should review your event and ensure the key umbrella themes of food, wine & heritage are covered off. Consider linkages with other events of a similar nature which are held in other regions especially Adelaide, as they may create good connections for consumer demand.
- Let staff know about key regional events, so that they are able to talk about them to visitors, creating a level of consumer intimacy.
- Get involved in the regions Hallmark events in either a small or big way. It can be as simple as dressing your store, being a venue for an event, or sponsoring.
- Create specific products which celebrate the regions people, produce and heritage and include them as part of the event e.g. Clam Chowder in San Francisco.
- If your business isn't within the event hub, take your business to the event by setting up a mobile shopfront in either a small or sophisticated way.

In Summary

While the events industry is highly competitive and likely to become even more so, this strategy leverages the strength of the regional consumer brand. Through the leadership of the event steering group, it will be important to execute this brand with a total dedication to consumer intimacy: connecting people, produce and heritage through festivals & events. The region must be "in the business" of events, and invest in success for now, and growth in both the medium and long term.