



CITY MARKETING
STRATEGIES FOR CITIES TOWN CENTRES & PRECINCTS

The Future of Tourism in Penrith Valley

August 2004

City Marketing Pty Ltd facilitated two workshops with Penrith Valley tourism operators to identify a cooperative approach to developing tourism in Penrith Valley.

Thirty two businesses participated in these workshops on 25th May and 1st June 2004 at the Sydney International Regatta Centre.

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TARGET MARKETS

Participants identified many potential target markets and agreed that the priority markets were:

- Self-funded Retirees
- Corporate (due to high yield)
- VFR
- Sports (leverage off events)

VISION

"Penrith Valley – a destination in its own right"

Not just because people are visiting friend and relatives or are on their way to the Blue Mountains

GOAL

To grow tourism visitation and extend the average length of stay by cooperatively promoting Penrith Valley's diverse experiences.

STRATEGIES

- Strengthen cooperation between tourism operators.
- Encourage ownership and usage of the brand.
- To communicate with locals the experiences that Penrith Valley offers.
- Improve Penrith Valley promotional materials.
- Develop event strategy.
- Progress the development of an enhanced visitor information centre building.
- Develop a business tourism marketing plan.
- Develop a sports tourism marketing plan.
- Develop a strategy to encourage unique attractions that complement the region's present adventure tourism strength.

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WHO IS DOING WHAT FOR TOURISM IN PENRITH VALLEY

Participants placed an emphasis on the need for co-operation amongst stakeholders, and the need for tourism operators to be well-informed about the activities and products of other operators. In this context City Marketing concludes it is vital to identify clear roles for all stakeholders in marketing and developing tourism in Penrith Valley.

There appears to be a general misconception that a non-existent organisation called 'Penrith Valley Tourism' has a leadership role in developing and marketing tourism. Operators alternately praise the efforts of 'Penrith Valley Tourism' to date, or encourage 'Penrith Valley Tourism' to improve communication efforts, or develop new collateral material, or better co-ordinate events.

It seems that tourism operators have interpreted Penrith City Council's active role as brand custodian and developer of promotional material to mean that Council is the appropriate 'champion' or 'leader' of local tourism.

Tourism operators within Penrith Valley are fortunate that Council does regard the tourism industry as an important driver of economic and cultural success. This regard for the industry has assured that tourism is a high priority for the City Marketing Unit of Penrith City Council.

However, Council's role as a regulator and provider of infrastructure should never be mistaken for an ability to act as the 'champion' of a particular industry or of particular operators within that industry. The Australian Local Government Association describes the functions of local government as:

- infrastructure and property services, including local roads, bridges, footpaths, drainage, waste collection and management;
- provision of recreation facilities, such as parks, sports fields and stadiums, golf courses, swimming pools, sport centres, halls, camping grounds and caravan parks;
- health services such as water and food inspection, immunisation services, toilet facilities, noise control and meat inspection and animal control;
- community services, such as child care, aged care and accommodation, community care and welfare services;
- building services, including inspections, licensing, certification and enforcement;
- planning and development approval;
- administration of facilities, such as airports and aerodromes, ports and marinas, cemeteries, parking facilities and street parking;
- cultural facilities and services, such as libraries, art galleries and museums;
- water and sewerage services in some states; and
- other services, such as abattoirs, sale-yards and group purchasing schemes

The experience in other areas with a strong tourism industry suggests that operators themselves need to form into a cohesive, well-organised group with clear goals and objectives. An operator-driven tourism group becomes the 'leader' and instigator of tourism initiatives, lobbying and encouraging all other stakeholders (including Council and/or other government agencies) to provide support, funding, infrastructure and/or resources.

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WHO SHOULD BE DOING WHAT FOR TOURISM IN PENRITH VALLEY

Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation (Tourism Task Group) – should become the ‘voice’ of the industry

Penrith Valley appears to lack a universally recognised tourism industry leader or ‘voice’ with the capacity to represent the industry and effectively lobby for growth.

We believe that the Tourism Task Group (TTG) of the Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation (PVEDC) is an ideal candidate for this role.

The TTG is part of an existing, funded, incorporated legal entity (the PVEDC), with access to the resources of that legal entity. Presumably it has access to the legal protections (including insurances) that already protect the PVEDC.

The stated objectives of the TTG are to:

- Assist the growth of tourism businesses in Penrith Valley
- Develop a strategy to attract or grow new opportunities in Penrith Valley
- Support local tourism through lobbying for appropriate infrastructure
- Establish a program in collaboration with Penrith City Council to promote the growth of tourism in Penrith

However, the TTG acknowledges that support, advice and input from operators has been limited to date. This lack of input limits the TTG’s confidence that it speaks authoritatively for the industry. It also limits the TTG’s credibility with infrastructure and funding providers.

The reasons for this lack of operator input are unclear. It may be that the organisation is still too young to have drawn a strong membership base, that tourism operators are unaware of the ability of the TTG to represent their interests, or that tourism operators would prefer a representative body at arms length from the PVEDC.

Should this last be the case, there is nothing standing in the way of operators forming an alternative representative body, other than the will and determination necessary to form such a body.

We have structured our Plan Forward on the assumption that the industry will support the notion of the TTG aggressively seeking the mantle of industry leader. However, our recommendations could equally apply to an alternative incorporated representative body.

WHO SHOULD BE DOING WHAT FOR TOURISM IN PENRITH VALLEY

Penrith Valley Tourism Operators – should support their industry ‘voice’

The number of attendees at the two workshops, and their various anecdotes of participation over the years suggests a high level of operator passion and enthusiasm for the industry. Individual operators appear committed to the concept of co-operation and to the ability of co-operation to achieve significant outcomes in the future.

At this stage this commitment has not been translated into an operator driven tourism industry voice.

We are reasonably confident that Penrith Valley operators will fall in behind a strong industry voice, once that voice has been identified to them. The role of individual operators should be to:

- Create, support and provide input to their representative body – TTG/PVEDC (or other)
- Read communications from Council and TTG/PV (or other)
- Share news and information with other tourism operators, through informal networks and through the TTG/PVEDC (or other)
- Identify issues of importance for the TTG/PVEDC (or other representative body) to raise with Council and other levels of government.
- Participate in and fund cooperative campaigns

It may prove necessary for workshop participants to inform their industry colleagues of the potential benefits of uniting under a single representative body and assist motivate them to join.

Like some who attended the workshops, other industry operators may hold the view that there exists an organisation called ‘Penrith Valley Tourism’ with the ability to represent them and lobby on their behalf.



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WHO SHOULD BE DOING WHAT FOR TOURISM IN PENRITH VALLEY

Penrith City Council (City Marketing Unit) – ongoing enabler in response to industry demand

The City Marketing Unit of Penrith City Council has, over the years, played an active role in developing the Penrith Valley brand and associated marketing collateral, and in the establishment of the Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation.

To some extent this very active tourism role is unusual in local government. It must therefore be regarded as a role 'at risk'.

Individual Council officers work within a Council's strategic framework, priorities and budget, and under the political guidance of the day. Without demonstrated need and support from the tourism industry itself, future changes to the political will or complexion of Penrith City Council, or to the Council's budgetary or strategic priorities, have the potential to reduce or even eliminate tourism as a priority for Penrith City Council.

On the assumption that the local industry does unite behind an effective representative body able to represent the industry to Council (and other government agencies) to maintain tourism as a high priority, we consider it appropriate that Council maintain the following activities;

- Brand custodian and strategy monitoring
- Develop plans for new market opportunities in consultation with local businesses eg business tourism, sport tourism, events
- Provide general visitor information – Penrith Valley Experience, information centre
- Cooperate with other levels of government to facilitate the growth of the tourism industry in Penrith Valley.

ACTION PLAN

- The actions based on suggestions made at the second workshop are set out on the following pages. The participants indicated as leading the recommended activity were suggested at the workshop and are subject to acceptance and adoption by the relevant body.

PLAN FORWARD

1. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Strengthen cooperation between tourism operators and promote the role of PVEDC as the voice of the tourism industry in Penrith Valley	PVEDC Tourism Task Group	Operators Council	Review current membership benefits for tourism operators in order to increase operator membership support.	Operators	July 2004
			Use local press to promote the role of PVEDC as the voice of the tourism industry in Penrith Valley.		
			PVEDC to produce monthly newsletter to every tourism operator in Penrith Valley inviting membership and disseminating news including council news.	Operators	Monthly
			PVEDC to coordinate quarterly tourism industry meetings focussing on an issue or opportunity.	Operators	Monthly
			Council to be invited to update.	Operators	Quarterly

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PLAN FORWARD

2. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Encourage ownership and usage of the brand	PVEDC Tourism Task Group	Council as brand custodian Operators	Council to audit usage of Penrith Valley Brand Through PVEDC and Council communications supply brand usage guidelines to tourism operators Council presentation of perception research and brand usage at first PVEDC quarterly meeting PVEDC to continue to encourage usage through communications such as monthly newsletter Council to undertake annual review of PENRITH VALLEY Brand usage	Operators Local residents	July 2004

3. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
To communicate with locals the experiences that Penrith Valley offers	PCC	Operators PVEDC Operators	Council to adapt Top 10 Free things to do in Penrith Valley as a mail shot for inclusion in Council rate notices PVEDC to encourage distribution of Penrith Valley tourism business information through more outlets including city businesses and tourism operators. Council to coordinate editorial style features in local press Council to coordinate and promote an annual open day at attractions in the Penrith Valley area to showcase the diversity of activities. PVEDC to encourage industry to support PVEDC to identify new experiences to be included	Local residents Local residents VFR Local residents Local residents	TBC Pre school holidays

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PLAN FORWARD

4. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Develop event strategy	PCC	PVEDC	<p>PCC to undertake an audit of events in Penrith Valley noting timing, type of event, how they communicate, who they are targeting</p> <p>PVEDC to identify new regional event ideas – eg Food and Wine Festival, Adventure Unlimited,</p> <p>PVEDC to identify events that match target markets and develop an appropriate communication strategy for events – local press, mailout</p> <p>PCC to distribute events calendar to rate payers, schools and community groups</p> <p>Maintain updated program of events on website/s</p> <p>PVEDC distributes and promote program to all members</p>		

5. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Progress VIC Development	PVEDC Tourism Task Group	Operators	<p>PVEDC to develop a structured argument for Council to prioritise investment in upgrading VIC, including a two staged approach to the Carpenter site. This position should clearly state the benefits to the local economy</p> <p>Under the PVEDC banner lobby Councillors as to the benefits of prioritising investment in upgrading VIC</p> <p>Use media if necessary to support their case (no petitions please!)</p>	<p>Councillors</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Councillors</p>	

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PLAN FORWARD

6. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Develop business tourism marketing plan	PCC	PVEDC	<p>PCC to undertake an audit of business tourism products in Penrith Valley and establish what business tourism organisers are seeking.</p> <p>Identify a brand message for this market and communicate it to meetings and events organisers</p> <p>Encourage operators to participate in sydneywideconferences.com.au</p>	<p>PCOs</p> <p>Corporate meetings organisers</p> <p>Event organisers</p>	

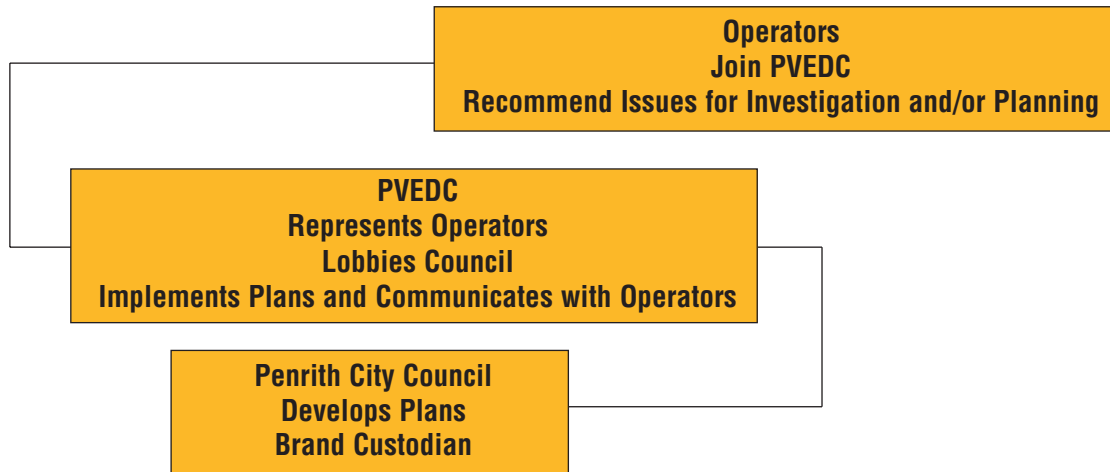
7. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Leverage sports tourism opportunities	<p>PVEDC</p> <p>Tourism Task Group</p>	<p>PCC</p> <p>Operators</p>	<p>PCC to undertake an audit of sporting events in Penrith Valley noting timing, type of event, size, how they communicate, who they are targeting</p> <p>PVEDC to identify ways in which tourism businesses can leverage off sporting events</p> <p>PVEDC to distribute and promote sporting event program to all members</p>		

8. Strategy	Leadership	Participants	Activities	Target Markets	Timing
Develop a strategy to encourage unique attractions to the area that complement the adventure tourism strength.	<p>PVEDC</p> <p>Tourism Task Group</p>	PCC	<p>PVEDC to identify potential new opportunities</p> <p>PVEDC develop communication pieces to recruit and inform potential new business of opportunities in Penrith Valley.</p> <p>PVEDC to inform and lobby Council where necessary</p>	<p>Attractions, accommodation, tours</p>	Long term

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A STRUCTURE FOR THE FUTURE



EXAMPLES FROM OTHER REGIONS

Blue Mountains

- Council funds employees, Visitor Information Centre and some marketing
- Blue Mountains Tourism – members fees and coop dollars
- Commission from Visitor Information Centre

Hawkesbury

- Tourism association manages Visitor Information Centre and marketing. Partly funded by Council (staff costs but employed by Tourism Association)
- Pay rent for Visitor Information Centre Present a business plan each year for funds
- Funds raised from membership and coop
- Commission from Visitor Information Centre

Central Coast

- Independent from Council
- Raises all dollars and runs on membership fees and coop dollars
- Commission from Visitor Information Centre

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APPENDIX

Attendance at the Workshops – Tourism Businesses

BUSINESS NAME	REPRESENTATIVE
1. AAT Travel	Michael Xu
2. Applied Scholastics ELICOS School	Erin Stuart, Yu Yu
3. Aqua Golf	Bob Birch
4. Astina Apartments	Peter Onus
5. Bill Spilstead Centre for Canine Affairs	Tom Walsh
6. Blue Cattle Dog Hotel	Paul & Darlene Horne
7. Blue Mountains Honey Company	Steve Craig
8. Castlereagh Academy	Rev Richard Udy
9. Foundation for Creative Enterprise	Mavis Reynolds
10. Hog's Breath Café	Heike Tye
11. Home Lea Bed & Breakfast	Joyce Leavett-Brown
12. Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre	Valda Silvy
13. Mamre Homestead	Rosemary Anderson
14. McDonald's Emu Plains	Tony & Judy Bridges
15. Muru Mitigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre	Barbara McGee
16. National Parks & Wildlife Service (Bents Basin)	Ken Smith
17. Nepean Belle Paddlewheeler	David Wakeling
18. Oz Homestay	Elizabeth Walmsley
19. Panthers World of Entertainment	Tony Lackey
20. Panthers Nepean Shores	Carolyn Stinson, Jackie Forrell
21. Penrith City Centre Association	Amanda Craib
22. Penrith Lakes Development Corporation	Barbara McGee
23. Penrith Plaza	Amber Pardy
24. Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest	John Kirkman, Dimity Mullane
25. Penrith Showground Society	Sylvia Kissa
26. Ripples Leisure Centre	Christian Lima
27. Simply Skydive	Donovan Casey
28. Sojourners Rest B&B	Yvonne Reitsma
29. Sydney International Regatta Centre at Penrith	Kevin Flynn
30. Telstra Countrywide	Amanda Keating
31. UWS Observatory	Ragbin Bhathal
32. Vicary's Winery	Chris Niccol
OTHER ATTENDEES	
33. Penrith City Council	Paul Page, Geoff Shuttleworth, Peter Lang. Vanessa Erskine, Anthea Pearson
34. Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation	Jane Holdsworth, CEO Steve Willingale, Chairman Tourism Task Group