



Selwyn District Strategic Events Plan



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Introduction

Selwyn District Council recognises that events contribute towards making Selwyn a great place to be. Events can bring about a wide array of social, economic, and cultural benefits. Successful events not only give residents a sense of pride in Selwyn, but can also help create interest and raise awareness of Selwyn's unique offerings. Events are a useful way of attracting people from outside the District.

About the Strategic Events Plan and its purpose

The purpose of this strategic plan is to steer Selwyn District Council's approach to supporting events within the District. A framework provides an architecture for how events can be evaluated on their individual merits and how a balanced event portfolio can be cultivated.

The strategic direction identified in the Plan is designed to endure over the next 10 years, although some operational elements of the Plan will need to be reviewed and adjusted at more regular intervals.

The focus of this strategy is on events that will bring economic benefits to Selwyn. These benefits will primarily come by attracting people to Selwyn, although may also occur because an event helps create enduring business and consumer relationships. Many of these events will be of a larger size and may include those that are commercially orientated.

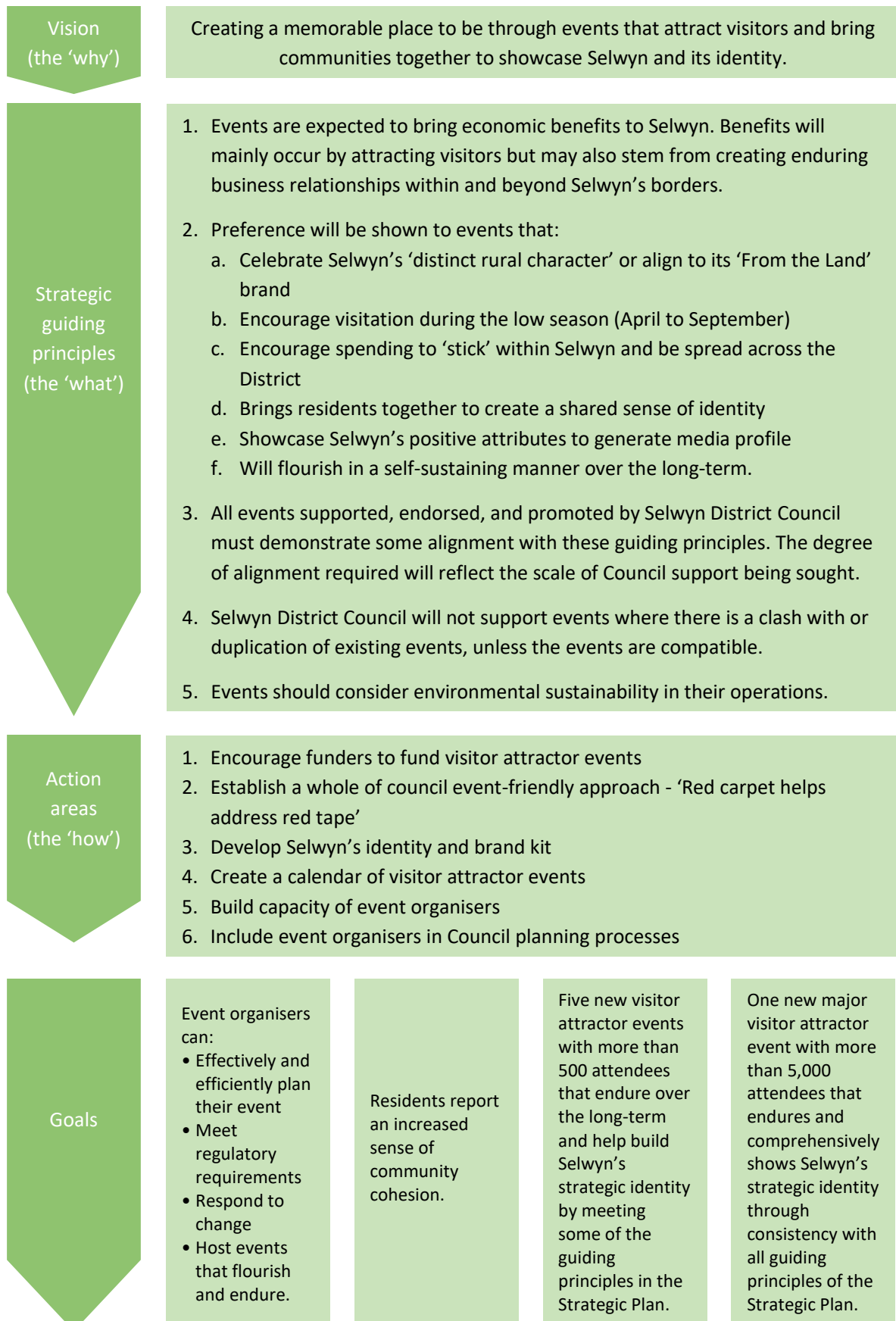
It is assumed that the Council's status quo approach to supporting community events will continue, and that mechanisms for supporting other events will be done in a way that is consistent with community aspirations.

Development of the Strategic Events Plan

The Strategic Events Plan sequentially addresses the following:

- 1) **Strategic and funding context:** A baseline overview of the current strategic and funding context for events.
- 2) **Types of events currently occurring in Selwyn:** Stocktake of the events that occur in Selwyn.
- 3) **Practicalities that can influence future growth:** Overview of infrastructure, demand patterns and other operational practicalities that shape the opportunities for future growth in visitor attractor events.
- 4) **Identifying 'drivers for change':** Guided by the context research, these are the things that can be addressed to help achieve a long-term success for events in Selwyn. Stakeholder conversations were held to test the 'drivers for change' and identify further challenges.
- 5) **Strategic guiding principles:** The strategic guiding principles address the 'what' – they describe the types of events that Council wants to support to achieve its vision.
- 6) **Actions and tactics:** Actions are about the 'how' and describe the Council's role in encouraging events to flourish that are aligned to the strategic guiding principles of the Plan.
- 7) **Appendix: Toolkit for decision-making and evaluations:** This section provides an overview of the types of details that need to be captured in applications and decision-making processes for accessing funding, as well as in post-event evaluations.

Strategic Events Plan at a glance



Strategic and funding context

This section provides a baseline of the current strategic and funding context for events in Selwyn.

Selwyn District Council's role in community events

Selwyn District Council's existing events focus is on supporting community events to foster community identity and participation, and to encourage the use of community facilities.

Council staff assist organisations with planning and meeting the regulatory requirements for community events. This assistance includes dedicated support within the Council's Community Development Team, which can be used for general guidance, or connecting to other necessary Council services (such as those relating to building consents, traffic management, liquor licensing, food safety, and waste minimisation). Alongside this planning support, Council also hosts a range of capacity building workshops to increase knowledge among event organisers.

In addition to planning and capacity building support, a small amount of funding is available for event support grants via the contestable Selwyn Community Fund each year. Applicants to the Selwyn Community Fund must contribute to one or more of the following goals:

1. To increase participation in physical activity across all ages
2. To increase participation, engagement and enjoyment for all
3. To celebrate and promote Selwyn's uniqueness
4. To build community capacity, collaboration, awareness and understanding
5. To create and promote opportunities for volunteering
6. To encourage visitors
7. To encourage initiatives, activities and approaches that build community spirit, a sense of neighbourliness, belonging and connectedness.

The Fund is a key mechanism for the Council to financially support community groups doing positive things. Although larger, commercially orientated events are not the primary focus of the Fund, a few do already access funding provided they demonstrate that they can encourage visitors to Selwyn.

Events Marketing Fund

In 2020, Council ringfenced \$50,000 of unspent money from the Selwyn Community Fund and repurposed it to support the promotion of key events over the 2020/2021 financial year. The purpose of the Events Marketing Fund was to target Christchurch residents to visit Selwyn. This grant was aimed at events that could attract large numbers from outside of the district and therefore benefit the local economy. The Events Marketing Fund is a discretionary measure that has been continued in the 2021/22 financial year with a budget of \$100,000.

The marketing and design package and programme was arranged by Council with content supplied by the event organisers. The events promoted were generally included as part of the "Meet us in the Country" campaign, with this slogan on the marketing collateral. This campaign provided an opportunity to promote Selwyn's strong rural identity and character to urban locals and visitors, to bring them to the country to enjoy various experiences and products.

Domestic marketing post lockdown has been highly effective. A July 2020 travel survey by Research First showed one third of people said domestic travel marketing had prompted them to do something new.

Future funding context

For the years to June 2023, Selwyn District Council has been fortunate to recently access funding (via ChristchurchNZ) from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment's (MBIE) Regional Events Fund. The funding has supported the development of the Strategic Events Plan and also provides seed money over the next two years to help progress towards achieving strategic outcomes in the Plan.

The funding will be allocated as follows:

- **2021/2022 – \$35,000** of seed funding for new event development. New events may be events that are being held for the first time, or the development of a new element to an existing event, where the recipient agrees to:
 - Demonstrate how the event relates to the Strategic Events Plan.
 - Demonstrate how the event will act as a visitor attractor to the District.
 - Provide a post event report by organiser to include:
 - I. Post event survey – how did people hear about the event, where did they travel from, how long did they stay in the district, on average how much did they spend.
 - II. National advertising and promotion – where possible show distribution figures, reach and engagement.
 - III. Activity that took place with local tourism operators – e.g. how many people stayed as a result of the event, duration of stay and average spend.
- **2022/2023 – \$30,000** of funding to be spent on capacity building for visitor attractor events that fit within the Strategic Events Plan.

Broader strategic context

The funding and resources available to support visitor attractor events beyond 2023 is unclear. However, this uncertainty should not get in the way of forming longer-term aspirations in this plan. Good strategic planning requires longevity that stretches beyond immediate funding horizons. As such, there are other strategic factors that have been considered in this plan's development.

These factors include, but are not limited to:

- **National:** New Zealand Major Events' [investment priorities and criteria](#) for assessing event applications. Although New Zealand Major Events primarily targets events of national significance, it is useful for Selwyn to ensure where reasonable that there is alignment with relevant factors in central government decision-making processes.
- **Regional:** ChristchurchNZ [Major Events Fund Guidelines](#) provide a framework for assessing which major events and festivals will be supported by ChristchurchNZ. The guidelines provide important context for Selwyn and relevant aspects of the guidelines can ensure consistency of Selwyn's Strategic Events Plan with the approach taken in its larger neighbour.
- **Local:** Selwyn District Council's [Long-Term Plan](#) includes community and economic development targets. Its development was also in part guided by engagement with the community regarding their vision and aspirations for Selwyn.

What types of events currently occur in Selwyn?

This section considers what events already occur in Selwyn.

Community events

The Council's support for community events has seen high levels of participation over recent years, which has continued despite COVID-19 interruptions:

- The 2020/2021 financial year is on track for record participation at community events. In the eight months to April 2021, there were 16,587 participants across 72 community events.
- In the 2019/2020 financial year, there were 16,755 participants across 66 community events.
- Before the COVID-19 pandemic, in the 2018/2019 financial year, there were 12,753 participants across 141 community events.

Major events

Alongside these smaller community events, there are also a range of major events that occur within Selwyn. An audit of existing events has identified at least 11 reoccurring ticketed events in Selwyn that cater for at least 1,000 participants, with five of these events attracting more than 10,000 attendees.

Some of the major events occurring in Selwyn have long histories and attract very large visitation. Selected examples include:

- The Selwyn Spring Show (hosted by the Ellesmere A&P Association) has been running for 150 years and regularly attracts crowds in excess of 20,000.
- The biannual South Island Agricultural Field Days has a 70 year history and usually attract crowds in excess of 20,000.

There are also a range of newer and specialty events that have grown quickly. Selected examples include:

- Hororata Glow (founded in 2018) and Hororata Highland Games (founded in 2011) both regularly attract 10,000 attendees.
- Selwyn Sounds, which started in 2017, attracts approximately 10,000 people.
- Selwyn Motor Festival, which started in 2017, attracts approximately 5,000.
- The inaugural Selwyn Beer and Wine Festival was held in February 2021, attracting close to 600 people, with ambitions to grow further and offer other food and drink experience events.

There are also a large range of smaller, one-off, and non-ticketed events that can offer visitor attraction benefits, as well as sporting events that pass through Selwyn (like the Coast to Coast).

Supporting and growing these existing events, as well as attracting new events that bring visitors to Selwyn is a key focus of the Strategic Plan.

Practicalities that can influence future growth

There are several practical considerations that will influence future development of events that attract people to Selwyn. These practical considerations include infrastructure to support events, seasonality within the events calendar, the demographics of target markets, and consumer preferences.

Stocktake of assets that support events

Good event infrastructure is essential for hosting events. Selwyn has a range of indoor facilities available for events, with the Council currently assisting with bookings for more than 30 venues. Most venues are small, but the new Selwyn Sport Centre (opened May 2021) has an events capacity of 2,500 people. Although the Sport Centre is primarily for sporting purposes, it can be booked for other types of events, particularly during shoulder season windows either side of the winter sports period.

Table 1 – Five largest community facilities available for bookings in Selwyn

Venue name	Events capacity (people)
Selwyn Sport Centre	2,500
Lincoln Event Centre	1,000
Rolleston Community Centre	600
Tai Tapu Community Centre	550
West Melton Community Centre	550

Alongside these larger venues, there is also Rolleston's new landmark library and community centre (Te Ara Ātea) and a range of private venues that can cater for events of several hundred people.

Outdoor venues play host to major events

The size of indoor facilities available in Selwyn District has been a challenge for event organisers looking to host very large events in the District. But many large events already occur in an outdoor environment, usually during the more temperate months when weather interruptions are less likely. For example:

- A field in rural Kirwee hosts more than 20,000 people at biannual South Island Field Days
- The Ellesmere Showgrounds hosts the Selwyn Spring Show which also attracts more than 20,000
- Hororata Domain hosts at least 10,000 people at Hororata Glow and Hororata Highland Games
- Lincoln Domain by the Lincoln Event Centre hosts 10,000 people to attend Selwyn Sounds.

It is important to acknowledge the highly valued role these open spaces play in enabling major outdoor events. Without outdoor facilities, the scale of major events on offer in Selwyn would be more limited.

Accommodation limits how much spending 'sticks'

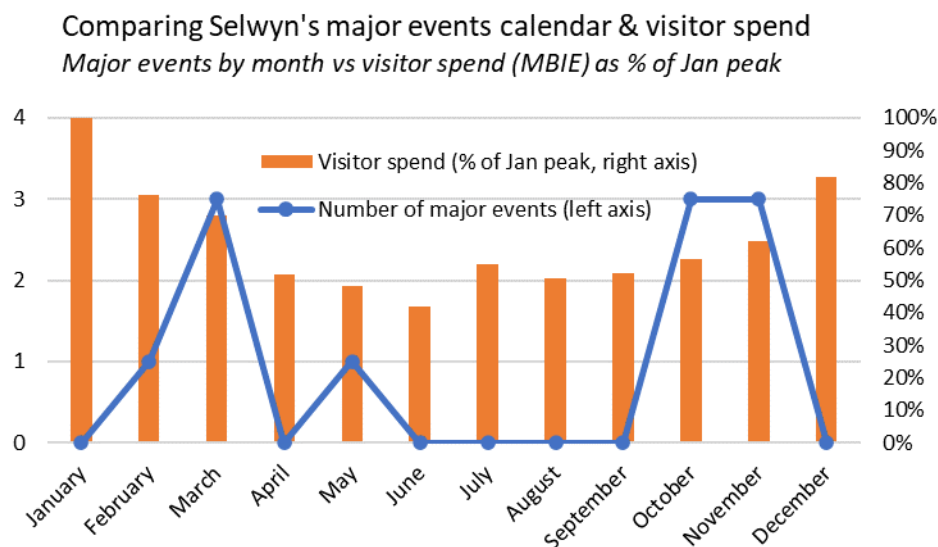
Alongside event facilities, supporting assets such as accommodation are also enablers for events. Data from MBIE shows that Selwyn has just over 500 stay units in commercial accommodation, while analysis of private accommodation shows there are close to 150 whole houses listed on Airbnb and Bookabach.

Selwyn's commercial accommodation capacity is one of the lowest in the South Island. The lack of local accommodation does not limit event organisers' ability to sell large numbers of tickets to visitors because people can stay nearby in Christchurch (8,700 stay units). Nevertheless, the situation still limits Selwyn's earning potential from events because less visitor spending immediately before and after the event sticks in Selwyn. Instead, many visitors will wine, dine, and shop closer to where they are staying out of district.

Most events occur in months when visitor spend is high

The major events calendar in Selwyn tends to concentrate on spring and late summer. As highlighted earlier, this occurs because of limitations to indoor capacity. Event organisers choose temperate months to minimise the risk of weather disruptions to their outdoor event. These months are also popular months for events in neighbouring districts.

Figure 1 – Overlaying Selwyn’s ongoing major events calendar with the seasonality of visitor spending



A comparison of the seasonality of events with visitor spending data shows that, apart from the summer spending peak, major events occur in months where visitor spending in Selwyn is above average.

To maximise the future benefits to Selwyn of any new visitor attractor events, it would be preferable to target from April to September when the events calendar is relatively uncluttered and visitor spending is low. Encouraging more events during the middle months of the year would minimise the risk of impeding existing events and provide welcome cashflow into the district during slower months. In practical terms, the colder winter months will be more suited to indoor venues, while April and possibly September are temperate enough to have scope for larger outdoor events. The new Selwyn Sports Centre will enable much larger indoor events (2,500 attendees) than has previously occurred in Selwyn (1,000 attendees).

Visitors to Selwyn are mainly in the drive market

Audiences for further growth in events in Selwyn are likely to be predominantly domestically focussed. As such, it is useful to be aware of where people typically come from to visit Selwyn.

Domestic visitor spending totalled \$78 million in Selwyn during 2019 immediately before Covid, according to MBIE’s Monthly Regional Tourism Estimates. This spending was predominantly from people in Canterbury or at a driveable distance from neighbouring regions. The North Island market only accounted for 30% of visitor spending, with most of this out of Auckland and Wellington.

These visitor spending statistics are consistent with feedback from a range of event organisers, who identified Christchurch residents and those within a driveable distance of Selwyn as being their key markets for visitor attraction.

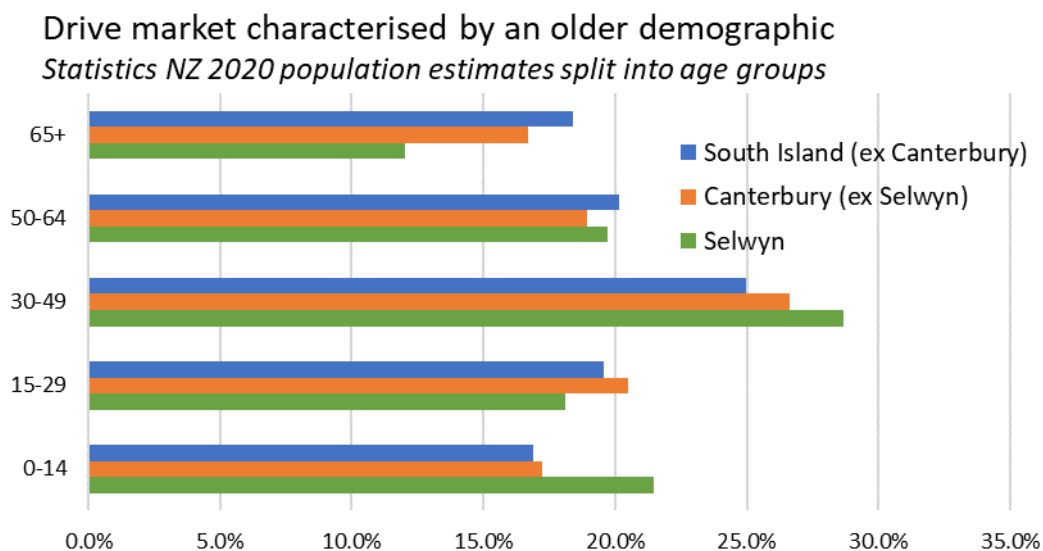
Table 2 – Origin of domestic spending in Selwyn, 2019, MBIE

Origin of visitor to Selwyn	Share of domestic visitor spend
Canterbury	46.9%
Otago	7.9%
West Coast	5.6%
Rest of South Island	9.1%
South Island total	69.3%
Auckland	10.2%
Waikato	4.9%
Wellington	4.5%
Rest of North Island	11.0%
North Island total	30.7%

Demographics and income of people in Selwyn's drive market

Given that most domestic tourism to Selwyn is predominantly from markets within driving distance, it is important to understand the demographics and incomes of people in this target market.

The demographics of Selwyn's drive market are characterised by a higher share of people aged 65+. A similar proportion of people in the drive market are in their fifties to Selwyn. By comparison, Selwyn's local market has a higher prevalence of people in their thirties and forties with young children. Selwyn's population has grown rapidly over recent years, largely driven by migration from Christchurch.

Figure 2 – Demographics of Selwyn residents compared to rest of Canterbury and rest of South Island

Selwyn's bigger share of people in their peak working years is reflected in higher average incomes. MBIE data shows that in 2019, average annual household incomes in Selwyn were \$128,700, compared to \$104,700 across Canterbury. All other regions of the South Island had household incomes of \$90,000 to \$95,000, with only Southland (\$102,100) pushing above \$100,000.

But incomes are only one factor that explains the means of people in Selwyn's drive market. Older people in nearby areas will often have high levels of savings to draw on to fund recreational activities. Statistics New Zealand data shows that people aged 65+ have twice the net worth of people in their forties.

What do visitors to Selwyn want to see and experience?

Alongside an understanding of who visits Selwyn, it helps to know what experiences these people are seeking. After all, any further growth in visitor attractor events in Selwyn will be contingent on how effectively the events appeal to the consumption preferences of the target audience.

A March 2021 online study by Research Insights of Cantabrians' tourism perceptions showed that:

- 58% are considering alternative holiday destinations
- 65% agree that Canterbury has excellent holiday options
- 57% are more likely to consider Canterbury since COVID.

Subsequent focus group discussions with Christchurch residents regarding Selwyn highlighted the appeal of experiencing natural attractions. Of relevance to Selwyn's events sector was the importance of:

- Experiencing local/rural produce – artisan products
- Country day trips
- Local shows
- Staying in rural accommodation
- Rural experiences.

It is no surprise, given these stated preferences that visitation to the Council's 'From the Land' website almost tripled over the first eight months of the 2020/2021 year.

The consumer preferences that have been revealed in Selwyn are consistent with other research into domestic tourism by other national organisations such as Tourism New Zealand and Tourism Industry Aotearoa. For example, Tourism Industry Aotearoa's December 2020 Domestic Visitor Satisfaction Survey showed that people who travelled to Canterbury, the Coromandel or Northland had the highest levels of satisfaction with their trip. Older travellers tended to be the most satisfied. The natural environment and appreciation for rural areas were frequently cited rationale for positive influences on their experience.

What do locals want for Selwyn?

Event organisers must not only be mindful of appealing to visitors, but they must also be careful that the events they put on are consistent with community aspirations. That way, events will not only enhance economic value, but also support building a sense of identity and fostering wellbeing within the District.

A community charrette event was held during the development of the Selwyn District Long-Term Plan 2021-2031 where Selwyn residents were asked about their vision for the District. A key theme that emerged from this event, that is relevant to the Strategic Events Plan, is:

District identity, including the tension between wanting urban lifestyle but maintaining rural character

This theme was reinforced in a subsequent online survey, where high proportion of respondents said that retaining Selwyn's 'distinct rural character' is very important over the next 10 years.

Residents also expressed a desire for the Council to encourage clean, healthy businesses to the district, celebrate culture, and bring communities together, with a specific emphasis on supporting youth.

Identifying ‘drivers for change’

The previous sections give an overview of the context for events in Selwyn. From these considerations, it is possible to identify opportunities for future growth, as well as challenges. These themes are ‘drivers for change’ – the things that can be addressed to help achieve long-term success for events in Selwyn.

What are the ‘drivers for change’ for events in Selwyn?

The following five key ‘drivers for change’ were identified.

Enhancing the low season

Most events in Selwyn are held between October and March, during times of year where visitor spend is already at its seasonal peak. But there is an opportunity to target growth in events during the quieter period from April to September. Targeting events through the middle of the year is beneficial because it would bring visitor revenue into Selwyn during seasonal ebbs, with less risk of encroaching on existing events or crowding out other visitor activity by putting pressure on accommodation and attractions.

Balancing the scale of events with venue capacity

The capacity of indoor venues will influence the scale of events that drive future growth. Selwyn’s indoor venues can cater for new mid-sized events of 500 to 2,500 people. The scope for growth in large-scale events (up to 10,000 people or more) is more limited because they need to occur outdoors. Some existing large-scale events may increase their size by better targeting visitors, but any new large outdoor events face a short window when they are feasible each year. Weather considerations mean avoiding the coldest winter months, with April and September the most logical gaps in the calendar to aim for.

Accepting your target market for visitors

Visitors to Selwyn come mainly from Christchurch and other parts of Canterbury, followed by other South Island regions within a driveable distance. The populations of these areas tend to be older than in Selwyn. Events must be mindful that these are the most prominent and realistic markets to attract visitors from. It is not to say that an event can’t attract a more youthful demographic, or grow its North Island reach, but it is more challenging to entice people to visit that aren’t the typical Selwyn visitor.

Meeting consumer preferences for authentic experiences

Research into consumer preferences, particularly those of people within Selwyn’s target market, have emphasised that visitors want experiences that connect them with the outdoors, the identity of rural communities, and food provenance. These preferences align with residents’ desire to retain a ‘distinct rural character’ and existing ‘From the Land’ branding. Curating events that target these preferences will find it easier to attract visitors and demonstrate sustainable use of Selwyn’s natural resources.

Make spending ‘stick’

For event attendees who need to overnight, a lack of accommodation capacity in Selwyn means that many choose to stay in Christchurch. The consequence of this behaviour is that much of a visitor’s spend does not remain in Selwyn. An opportunity to overcome this challenge would be to encourage multi-day or multi-area events that had a series of activations across the District. Such a strategy, would encourage repeat spend over multiple days, could spread a higher number of attendees across venues of limited size, and would better showcase different unique features and experiences across Selwyn.

Capturing a sense of place and identity

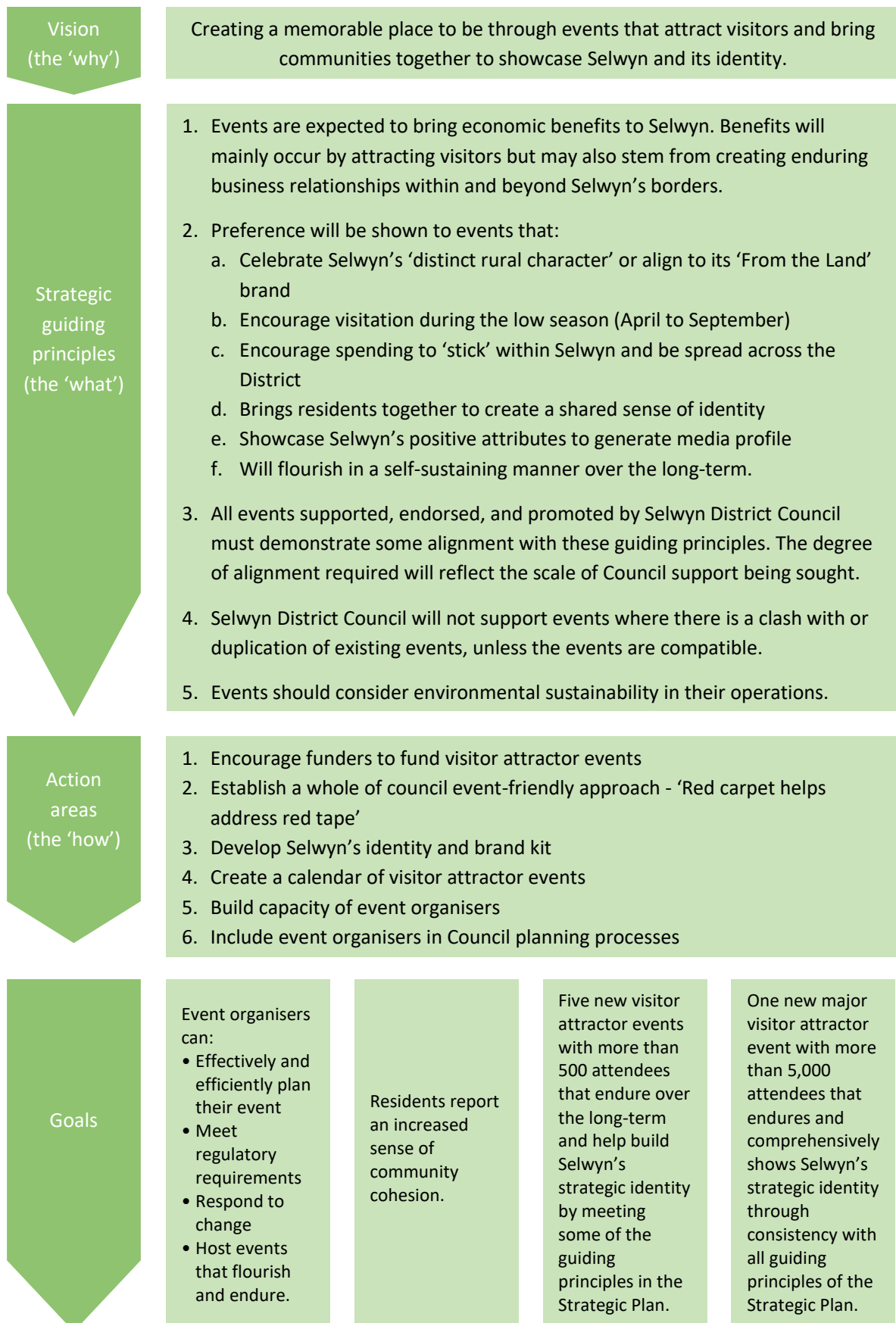
Selwyn has experienced fast population growth, mainly due to migration from Christchurch. Rapid growth has created opportunities but has eroded Selwyn's sense of community, with many new residents continuing to foster strong ties to Christchurch. Visitor attractor events, that celebrate Selwyn's unique character, can also strengthen connections among residents. Alongside improving wellbeing, a better sense of Selwyn's identity can also have spill-over benefits such as: making locals champion Selwyn experiences to friends and family, creating opportunities to spend locally, and raising awareness of rural areas. The latter is important given half of Selwyn's jobs are in rural areas and face skills shortages.

Existing event organisers' perspectives

Conversations were held with a range of organisers of existing major ticketed events. The conversations with stakeholders broadly supported the 'drivers for change' that had been identified. They were also useful for highlighting challenges in hosting events, and to learn about opportunities for improving the success of events in Selwyn. Some common themes that emerged were:

- When hosting events in outdoor spaces, significant time and money is spent hiring and setting up equipment, such as fences, signage, and staging. A voice in Council's open space planning would be appreciated, as would access to small grants for capital investment in equipment.
- It can be difficult to quickly see what events are happening in Selwyn and neighbouring areas. There is a worry new events might clash with existing. Several organisers suggested that the curation of a public calendar would be a helpful resource and could also be used in promotions.
- Evaluating the broader economic and socio-economic benefits of an event is difficult. Organisers are unsure what to include in surveys and how to pull together a summary of the impacts the event has had on Selwyn. This capacity gap affects compiling business cases for funding.
- Money is tightest in an event's first year and initially there is a lot of risk. Seed funding helps give confidence to take the plunge. Established events do not have the same general funding need but do appreciate targeted funding support for specific purposes identified by the event.
- Marketing assistance is valued, particularly in situations where the event is targeting a new market or angle to the event. Many organisers see value in marketing collaboration with Council when it serves a joint purpose, such as promotion of Selwyn's 'From the Land' brand. But there is a lack of marketing capability among some events, particularly in the digital space.
- Regulatory interactions with council can be complicated. Council staff are very helpful, but it is sometimes a challenge to connect with all the appropriate people across different teams. Alongside navigation support when event applications are made (such as a single case manager), a streamlined way of being directed to regulatory functions (eg. resource consents, health and safety, liquor, traffic management) for permits and discretionary support would help. Targeted capacity building could also improve organisers' understanding of their regulatory requirements.
- Public transportation is very important for many events. Transport helps reduce drink driving and driver fatigue, and it can also overcome infrastructure bottlenecks in areas not intended for large traffic flows. Busses are used to entice people from Christchurch into unfamiliar surrounds.
- Waste management is complex to get right at major events and can prove to be costly. Many organisers would appreciate a sharing of knowledge to help them more effectively manage their waste, reduce costs, and minimise the footprint of their event.

Strategic Events Plan at a glance



Strategic guiding principles

This section gives strategic principles to guide Council's support for events that bring economic benefits.

Vision

The vision describes 'why' we want to attract people to Selwyn for events. It is consistent with Selwyn District Council's overarching purpose and values.

Vision:

Creating a memorable place to be through events that attract visitors and bring communities together to showcase Selwyn and its identity.

Strategic guiding principles

The strategic guiding principles address the 'what' – they describe the types of events that Council wants to support to achieve its vision. The principles are consistent with the challenges and strengths identified earlier. The specific actions taken by Council to support events may evolve over time, but they will always be guided by these principles. The guiding principles are designed to endure over the next ten years.

Strategic guiding principles:

1. Events are expected to bring economic benefits to Selwyn. Benefits will mainly occur by attracting visitors but may also stem from creating enduring business relationships within and beyond Selwyn's borders.
 2. Preference will be shown to events that:
 - a. Celebrate Selwyn's 'distinct rural character' or align to its 'From the Land' brand
 - b. Encourage visitation during the low season (April to September)
 - c. Encourage spending to 'stick' within Selwyn and spread across the District
 - d. Brings residents together to create a shared sense of identity
 - e. Showcase Selwyn's positive attributes to generate media profile
 - f. Will flourish in a self-sustaining manner over the long-term.
 3. All events supported, endorsed, and promoted by Selwyn District Council must demonstrate some alignment with these guiding principles. The degree of alignment required will reflect the scale of Council support being sought.
 4. Selwyn District Council will not support events where there is a clash with or duplication of existing events, unless the events are compatible.
 5. Events should consider environmental sustainability in their operations.
-

Actions and tactics

This section is about the ‘how’ – it outlines the actions and tactics that Selwyn District Council can take to encourage events that demonstrate alignment to the strategic guiding principles (the ‘what’).

The Council’s role in events

The Council’s role in supporting events that bring economic benefits to Selwyn is varied and may include one or more of the following:

- **Owner/Provider:** Council provides quality public spaces and venues that are used to host events, and other supporting infrastructure and services that enable events to successfully operate.
- **Facilitator:** Council supports events by providing a regulatory and advisory role (eg. consents, traffic management, liquor licensing, waste management advice, etc). Council will also give advice to event organisers to help them understand broader considerations.
- **Funder/leader:** Council provides funding support to events organised by others via contestable funding schemes. Council also champions and advocates for events, regardless of funding.
- **Promotor/communicator:** Council communicates and promotes events through its channels.

The Council is not seeking to expand its role to directly deliver events that are commercially focussed or primarily aimed to attract visitors. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the Council will continue its status quo role in delivering community-focussed events, as will supporting organisers of such community events.

Actions for progress

The following actions have been identified. They describe how the Council can encourage events to flourish that are aligned to the strategic guiding principles of the Plan. These actions have been informed by the challenges, opportunities, and practicalities identified earlier, as well what other councils do.

These actions are a recommended starting point and should be reviewed again within the next two years. Some of these actions may be able to build on existing processes used to support community-focussed events.

Table 3 – Recommended initial actions for Council

Action	Description of what this action area should include
Encourage funders to fund visitor attractor events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage funders to make available funding for visitor attractor events. Funding should target at events that can show alignment to the strategic guiding principles in this plan. Funded events may be new events aimed at attracting visitors, or the development of a new element to an existing event which will bring in additional visitors to Selwyn. • Suggested protocols and a toolkit for making funding decisions, and for event evaluations to be performed, are provided in the final section of this plan. • Funding presently confirmed for 2021/22 and 2022/23 is based around the two tranches of funding (\$35,000 and \$30,000) allocated to Selwyn District Council from MBIE (via ChristchurchNZ), as well as Council’s \$100,000 Events Marketing Fund allocation in 2021/2022. However, Council should ensure that there is funding responsiveness to consider event bids or unexpected event opportunities that arise once the existing confirmed funding budget is allocated.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of ongoing funding available from Council for visitor attractor events should be held within 24 months to support progress towards this plan's goals and strategic guiding principles beyond 2022/23.
Establish a whole of council event-friendly approach - 'Red carpet helps address red tape'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility that Council wants to support visitor attractor events. This will involve both improved website content and systems to navigate event organisers through council processes. There is also a need to ensure events and their benefits are acknowledged and supported by all parts of Council. Website improvements targeting visitor attractor events will include Selwyn's story and value proposition for events, a calendar of visitor attractor events, what support is available, documentation on application processes, etc. To streamline navigation through council processes, there should be a dedicated contact for visitor attractor event inquiries. This contact point will facilitate cross-organisational liaising between event organisers and regulatory processes, funding, and key infrastructure and venue providers. Protocols should be established with other council teams regarding their levels of service to events and any discretionary funding that they might have. To support the contact point, an automated event application system should be developed for organisers to submit applications and keep track of progress. The latter is particularly important for events engaging multiple council teams. All events can expect access to some level of service from Council, but those that are requiring more support will need a higher level of alignment to the strategic guiding principles of this plan. Usage data from the event application system will enable measurement of demand for various council services. This data can inform internal reviews of resourcing requirements across council to support events.
Develop Selwyn's identity and brand kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Events Plan should be proactively socialised with prospective and existing event organisers, funders, and suppliers to guide alignment. Event organisers should be made aware of relevant Selwyn branding and messaging (eg. 'From the Land') and encouraged to use these branding tools. Marketing support should be considered where marketing collaboration between an event and Council would serve a joint purpose to promote Selwyn's identity. Council should work closely with neighbouring tourism promotion bodies.
Curate a calendar of visitor attractor events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An online calendar of visitor attractor events should be created to help minimise clashes between events and to be used as a promotional tool. The calendar should be regularly updated and reviewed. The calendar can be pushed through council channels, and its promotion by partners encouraged, including those in neighbouring areas. Documentation to support the calendar should encourage new events to consider low season (April to September).
Build capacity of event organisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A regular series of capacity building workshops would bring event organisers together to increase professionalism and encourage working collaboratively. We don't just want to grow the size of events, but we want to develop people too. An initial series of capacity building events could be curated from challenges identified in the Events Plan, as well as any changes to the events landscape known to Council that may affect planning and delivering successful events. To ensure the relevancy of workshops, an annual survey of participants can be used to monitor quality and identify gaps for future workshops.
Include event organisers in Council planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event organisers depend on a range of council infrastructure and services to successfully deliver their events. To help ensure what Council provides factors in these needs, event organisers should be consulted with during relevant strategic and operational planning processes. Such areas of planning would include open spaces, road transport, waste minimisation, community development, etc.

Goals of these actions

The recommended actions above are intended to enhance the vision for visitor attractor events and support alignment to the strategic guiding principles. Measurement of this progress over the next two years will initially be based around the following goals:

Goals:

1. Event organisers of current and new visitor attractor events have the capability to:
 - Effectively and efficiently plan their event
 - Meet regulatory requirements
 - Respond to change
 - Host events that flourish and endure.
 2. Residents report an increased sense of community cohesion.
 3. By 2022/23, there are at least 5 new visitor attractor events with more than 500 attendees each that are supported/empowered and have the potential to endure over the long-term and help build Selwyn's strategic identity by meeting some of the guiding principles in the Strategic Plan.
 4. By 2022/23, there is at least one new major visitor attractor event with more than 5,000 attendees that is supported/empowered and has the potential to endure over the long-term and comprehensively showcases Selwyn's strategic identity by being consistent with all guiding principles of the Strategic Plan.
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The first two of these goals can be measured with targeted evaluation surveys, or the Residents' Opinion Survey could be used in the case of evidencing increases to residents' sense of community cohesion.

The third and fourth goals relate to support, advocacy or funding that enables the development of new visitor attractor events and can be measured using the online events calendar. Splitting it into two different size categories reflects the fact that there is greater room for new events during the middle months of the year, a time when the potential size of events is limited by the capacity of indoor venues. It may be that indoor events could still contribute to goal four if they are hosted over multiple days or have activations spread across different parts of the district.

The goals above should be reviewed again by the end of 2022/23 in line with the suggestion that there is a review of long-term contestable funding and resourcing requirements across council to support events.

Appendix: Toolkit for funding decisions and evaluations

This appendix to the report provides a suggested overview of decision-making and evaluation protocols for visitor attractor events seeking funding through Council.

Included in this section are the following resources:

1. Guidance regarding what needs to be captured in applications for funding
2. Criteria and protocols for making funding decisions once applications are received
3. Expectations of what is included in post-event evaluations from events that receive funding through Council.

Making applications

The availability of any funding for visitor attractor events should be notified through Selwyn District Council's communication channels, including the Council's website.

Applicants should complete a funding application form and submit it, along with supporting information, by a specified closing date.

Events that are considering seeking funding from Council should consider their alignment to the Plan's strategic guiding principles, as well as other more practical considerations. Events that do not show strategic alignment are unlikely to be able to access funding, but could still receive support to navigate council services and attend capacity building events.

The strategic guiding principles are:

1. Events are expected to bring economic benefits to Selwyn. Benefits will mainly occur by attracting visitors but may also stem from creating enduring business relationships within and beyond Selwyn's borders.
2. Preference will be shown to events that:
 - a. Celebrate Selwyn's 'distinct rural character' or align to its 'From the Land' brand
 - b. Encourage visitation during the low season (April to September)
 - c. Encourage spending to 'stick' within Selwyn and spread across the District
 - d. Brings residents together to create a shared sense of identity
 - e. Showcase Selwyn's positive attributes to generate media profile
 - f. Will flourish in a self-sustaining manner over the long-term.
3. All events supported, endorsed, and promoted by Selwyn District council must demonstrate some alignment with these guiding principles. The degree of alignment required will reflect the scale of Council support being sought.
4. Selwyn District Council will not support events where there is a clash with or duplication of existing events, unless the events are compatible.
5. Events should consider environmental sustainability in their operations.

Alongside being strategically aligned, funding applicants must demonstrate an ability to successfully deliver a visitor attractor event. As such funding applications should include the following¹:

1. Information about the organisation running the event, including experience of holding events
2. A detailed description of the event, including what it is, who the target market is, when and where it will be held
3. The aims and objectives of the event
4. Level of funding being sought and what it will be allocated towards
5. An estimate of how many visitors from outside Selwyn (national and international) are likely to attend the event and how many days they would be in Selwyn
6. A business plan and marketing plan for the event, including any anticipated media exposure
7. An event budget, that outlines sources of revenue and also includes other forms of funding being sought or confirmed
8. Demonstrate strategic alignment against the Strategic Events Plan's vision and strategic guiding principles.

Making funding decisions

Funding applications received will be reviewed by a funding panel. The funding panel should comprise a mixture of Council representatives and, where appropriate, an independent representative.

The panel should convene after any funding round to make funding decisions and recommendations. Any funding decisions will be in accordance with existing delegations, with recommendations taken to Council if an applicant has sought funding that exceeds delegations. All applicants will receive written notification of their funding outcome.

The funding panel should review applications using a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) tool. A MCA tool allows panellists to score each funding application against a range of relevant criteria. An average score for the application is then estimated, which can be used in informing preferences between funding applications. Although each event should be evaluated on its individual merit, the panel should also have discretion to consider how a combination of different events contribute to a balanced events portfolio.

Criteria in the MCA tool should be based around both the strategic guiding principles, as well as practical considerations relevant to the delivery of the event in question. The scoring criteria used will depend on the specific fund being applied for, but in general terms, key considerations for panellists should be based around addressing questions such as:

- How closely aligned is the event to the strategic guiding principles of the Events Plan?
- What level of economic impact will the event deliver to Selwyn (eg. from visitor spend, additional business activity, or minimising leakage from the district)?
- To what extent does the event work towards environmental sustainability (waste, recycling, packaging, long-term behaviours, etc)?
- How will the event bring the community together and create linkages between people?
- How will the event celebrate and showcase Selwyn's unique identity and create pride?
- How does the level of funding being sought compare with other applications and is the event financially sustainable?
- Is the timing of the event occurring outside of peak months and have clashes with other events been considered?

¹ The following application details are consistent with ChristchurchNZ's Major Event Fund application form.

- Will the event generate a positive media profile for Selwyn (locally, nationally, internationally)?
- Has the proposal minimised residual risk (consider organisers' track records, staff capacity, operational plans, health and safety, etc)?
- Is there an expectation that the event will have longevity and have scope to grow?

Post-event evaluations

Recipients of council funding will generally be required to submit a post-event evaluation to Council. Events that do not submit a satisfactory evaluation report may have a portion of their funding withheld by Council. A satisfactory report is one that includes all information requested by Council as part of any terms and conditions attached to a funding agreement.

Post event evaluation reports will generally include the following information:

- Attendance figures, including a breakdown of the origin of attendees
- Average length of stay in Selwyn by visitors to the district
- Average daily expenditure across: accommodation, food and drink, transportation, entertainment, and retail
- Marketing and media achievements, including articles or mentions in local, national, or international media
- Other long-term economic benefits beyond visitor spending, such as any evidence of the creation of enduring business relationships within and beyond Selwyn's borders.

Most of the information in a post-event evaluation report will be acquired by surveying event attendees. Ideally, a representative survey of attendees would include a minimum sample of 100, although large events should target a bigger sample. A good maximum sample would be around 10% of attendees, as long as this does not exceed 1,000 survey participants. Surveys should be designed to be quick and short, while prizes can be offered to help boost response rates.