

AUSTRALIAN CELTIC FESTVAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

DOCUMENT AUTHORISATION

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General Manager

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PURPOSE

The purpose of the Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan 2021-2025 reviews the vision, main event objectives and addressed the four (4) key strategic areas to focus on, being

- 1. Sustainability;
- 2. Visitor Experience;
- 3. Marketing and Promotion; and
- 4. Operation, Infrastructure and Governance.

The vision, values and main event objective of the Strategic Plan have been revisited and a customer value proposition has been created. The vision provides the overarching direction for the event. The vision for the Australian Celtic Festival is to provide the most authentic Celtic cultural experience in Australia.

APPLICABILITY

The Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan 2021-2025 refers to opportunities for volunteers and businesses to continue to be involved in the Festival. The Festival has become an integral part of the event calendar and provides the community and visitors with an opportunity to socially integrate, share and enjoy this unique Festival.

OUTCOMES

The Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan 2021-2025 is designed to ensure continual improvement as to the sustainability, operation, infrastructure and governance of the Festival. It also outlines the key themes to be addressed each year to ensure a positive visitor experience which is aligned to the values of the Festival.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Refer to Strategic Plan for any specific outlined Roles and Responsibilities.

DEFINITIONS

Refer to Strategic Plan for any specific outlined definitions.

POLICY STATEMENT

Please refer to the Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan for content and statements.

LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Relevant Legislation, Regulations and Industry Standards include:

• There are no legal implications for this plan.

Relevant Council Policies and Procedures include:

VARIATION AND REVIEW

The Australian Celtic Festival Strategic Plan 2021-2025 shall be reviewed every by 2025, or earlier if deemed necessary, to ensure that it meets the requirements of legislation and the needs of Council. The term of the Strategic Plan does not expire on the review date, but shall continue in force until superseded, rescinded or varied either by legislation or a new resolution of Council.



AUSTRALIAN CELTIC FESTIVAL STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2025

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGIC PLAN IS TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON THE DIRECTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CELTIC FESTIVAL OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS.

THE PLAN OUTLINES THE VALUES, VISION & CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION THAT WILL SET THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FESTIVAL CONTINUING TO BE AN ICONIC CELTIC EVENT IN AUSTRALIA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY STRATEGIC AREAS & CORE THEMES

SUSTAINABILITY

GROWTH

REVENUE STREAMS

LOCAL INTEGRATION

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

AUTHENTICITY & DIVERSITY

SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

MARKETING & PROMOTION

CONTINUAL OPTIMISATION

ENGAGEMENT & REACH

BRANDED COMMUNICATIONS

OPERATION,
INFRASTRUCTURE
& GOVERNANCE

CP MASTER PLAN

ACF WORKING GROUP

OPERATIONAL PLAN

THE PURPOSE OF THIS
STRATEGIC PLAN IS TO SET
AN AGREED DIRECTION
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN
CELTIC FESTIVAL FOR A FIVEYEAR PERIOD AND IMPROVE
ITS STATUS AS THE PREMIER
CELTIC FESTIVAL IN
AUSTRALIA AS WELL AS
ENSURING STAKEHOLDERS
OBTAIN THE BEST RETURN
ON THEIR INVESTMENTS.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS & INPUTS

- In May 2020, Glen Innes Council reviewed the previous Strategic Plan 2010 2020 from Destination Research and Development and looked at all the proposals that worked and what didn't, what we achieved and what we didn't achieve as forecasted.
- This plan involved open dialouge between the community, key stakeholders, council and consultant accrued data via pre and post event workshops, on-line feedback forms, event observation and on-site interviews.
- This information was workshopped with key stakeholders from Council,
 Friends of the Festival and The Australian Standing Stones Members Board
 Chairperson
- Various areas of the current event were examined along with relevant reports, strategies, event operational plans and documents sited opposite.

- Visitor Experience
- Marketing & Media
- Viability, Partnerships & Sponsors
- Governance & Succession
- Infrastructure & Operational
- 2019 ACF Debrief
- Tourism Research Institute
- Destinations NSW Economic Value Resources
- Destinations Country & Outback Event Visitation Fact Sheets
- 2010 2020 Destination Research & Development Jo Mackellar & Ros Derrett ACF Strategic Plan
- ACF Strategic Action Plan 2018
- ACF Sponsorship Prospectus 2020

THE VISION PROVIDES THE OVERARCHING DIRECTION FOR THE EVENT: TO PROVIDE THE MOST AUTHENTIC CELTIC CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

MAIN EVENT OBJECTIVE IS TO BECOME THE ICONIC EVENT OF CELTIC CULTURE AND CEREMONY AT THE AUSTRALIAN STANDING STONES.

THIS IS SUPPORTED BY ENSURING WE HAVE A SET OF EVENT VALUES THAT UNDERPIN ALL ELEMENTS OF THE FESTIVAL.

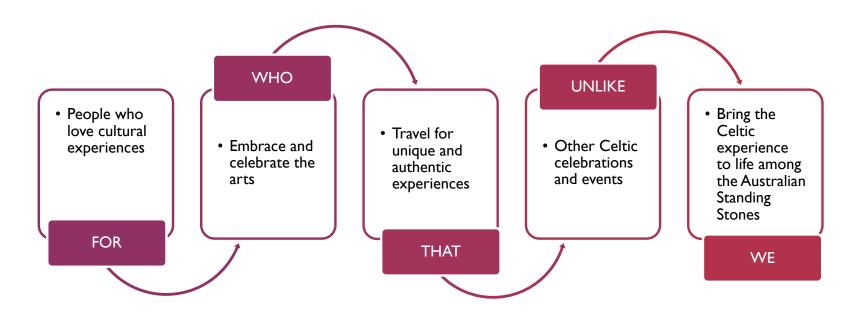
THE CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION PROVIDES A CONSISTENT POSITIONING TO ENSURE THAT THE EVENT OFFERS DISTINCTION OVER OTHER EVENTS.

VISION, VALUES & MAIN EVENT OBJECTIVE

VISION

TO PROVIDE THE MOST AUTHENTIC CELTIC CULTURAL EXPERIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

CUSTOMER VALUE PROPOSITION



THE AUSTRALIAN
CELTIC FESTIVAL IS A
CULTURAL AND ARTS
EXPERIENCE AMONG
THE AUSTRALIAN
STANDING STONES.

CORE VALUES



Celebrating our Local Celtic Heritage



Representing Celtic traditions, diversity & practices



Providing a unique & authentic experience



Continual improvement, invention & best practice event management

MAIN EVENT OBJECTIVE

To become the iconic event of Celtic Culture and ceremony at the Australian Standing Stones.

THE AUSTRALIAN CELTIC
FESTIVAL HAS BECOME A
REGOCNISED SIGNATURE
EVENT IN THE NEW ENGLAND
NORTH WEST REGION SET
AMONG THE AUSTRALIAN
STANDING STONES AND
OFFERING A UNIQUE CELTIC
EXPERIENCE FOR ALL AGE
GROUPS.

THE CELTIC FESTIVAL INCORPORATES MUSIC, DANCE, FASHION, RE-ENACTMENTS, PARADES, PIPE BANDS, CLANS AND POETS.

EVENT BACKGROUND

EVENT ORIGIN

- The event was first staged in 1991 inviting varied Celtic clans together to celebrate history and Celtic identity and has continued for 29 years. (2020 was the only time this event has been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic).
- The Festival is a Celtic celebration incorporating dance, artisans, literary events, food, fashion, educational symposiums and historical Celtic traditions from pipe bands, jousting to strongman events including a historical re-enactment village held at our iconic megaliths of the Australian Standing Stones
- The eight Celtic nations the ACF acknowledges are Asturias, Brittany, Cornwall, Galicia, Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland & Wales and each year alternates the focus on one or two celebrated nations.
- The event was managed by a volunteer 355 committee of council whom took the event from an idea to a well-run cultural experience attracting visitors to the town from far and wide.

1991 – EVENT COMMENCED MUSIC, DANCE, ARTISIANS, FOOD, FASHION, EDUCATION

8 CELTIC NATIONS RECOGNISED AND CELEBRATED

HELD AT THE AUSTRALIAN STANDING STONES CREATED
AND
MANAGED BY
DEDICATED
VOLUNTEERS

EVENT EVOLUTION

- In 2018 the Council took over operations from the 355 Committee as a result of the event needing dedicated resourcing given it's growth over the years.
- Growth highlights in 2010, ticket sales amounted to \$87,500.00; tickets sales for 2019 were \$122,670.00, with the number of tickets sold being 3,287.
- Saturday attendance was approximately 2,900, and Sunday attendance was approximately 2,150, an 80% attendance for Weekend Pass holders.
- Based on 2019 ticket sales, the total attendance for the weekend can be estimated at 5,100 people. This number does not include children, nor does it include Festival contributors such as traders, performers, volunteers, and clan members.
- The Australian Celtic Festival is recognised as a Signature Event for the New England North West region

2010 – TICKET SALES REACHED \$87,500 2018 – COUNCIL-OPERATED, COMMUNITY SUPPORTED EVENT

2019 – TICKET SALES REACHED \$122,670

4-DAY SIGNATURE EVENT IN REGION

EVENT OPERATION & LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

OPERATING
BUDGET
\$200,000 (2019)

TICKET SALES
SPONSORSHIP
GRANT FUNDING

ARTISTS
ADMINISTRATION
SOUND & LIGHTING
EQUIPMENT HIRE
TRAFFIC & SITE
MANAGEMENT
MARKETING

LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT \$2.12 MILLION

THE EVENT HAS A NUMBER
OF ELEMENTS WHICH
PROVIDE A UNIQUE
PROPOSITION TO
PROSPECTIVE VISITORS.

IN A STRATEGIC SENSE, THE
3 P'S GIVE THE EVENT A
SUSTAINED ADVANTAGE
OVER ITS COMPETITORS AND OVER THOSE WHO
MAY INTEND ON ENTERING
THE MARKET

CORE ELEMENTS

THE PLACE

- Glen Innes is uniquely located on the crossroads of four major destinations. South East Queensland to the north, Grafton & Coffs Harbour to the east, Armidale to the south and Inverell to the west.
- Glen Innes has the natural advantage of being reminiscent to highland countries like Scotland, Ireland and Wales and is home to the Australian Standing Stones.
- Classified as a National monument, the Australian Standing Stones hold special significance to past participants and to many of the clans in Australia. The Stones provide a focus for Celtic ceremony, situated in Centennial Parklands overlooking the township. It attracts thousands of visitors throughout the year.
- During Autumn when the festival is in full swing, the natural beauty, distinct country landscape and colour is a major draw card to the region and to the festival.
- Glen Innes is a destination which is different from the hometowns of visitors from South East Queensland and Sydney, with distinctive country landscapes and cooler autumn climates than the coast.





PEOPLE – SPECTATORS

- Have a connection to a Celtic past.
- Their passion for Celtic tradition can range from a passing social interest to an expert level of fascination for all things Celtic.
- Enjoy an experience which allows them to see, taste and understand Celtic culture and history
- Often have Celtic family roots, an interest in Celtic music, or a social interest to find out what this event is all about.
- A high percentage have been to the event before, and others come with 'previous knowledge' of Celtic tradition gained from their own travel experiences or family traditions.
- Each year around 20% of attendees are first time visitors.



PEOPLE – PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANTS

- Integral to the success of the festival, participants makes up 10% of the total audience. It includes:
- Clan & Society members
- Pipe Bands
- Dance Troupes
- Musicians & Poets
- Re-enactment Groups and Performers
- Stall Holders
- Sporting & Strongman Participants
- Parade Participants
- Symposium Educators
- Buskers



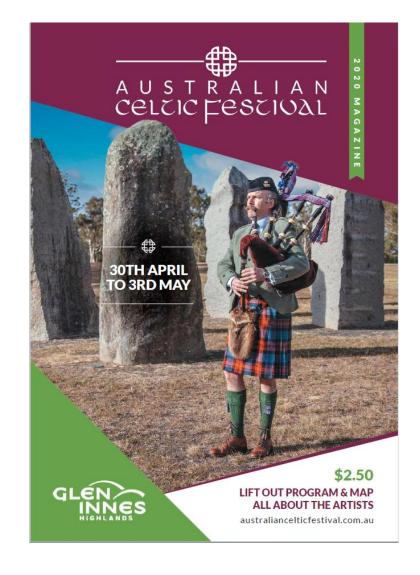


- Local and regional residents are comprised of residents from the Glen Innes Severn LGA and residents of Inverell, Tenterfield, Armidale, Guyra, Walcha & Uralla.
- Local resident passes sold in 2019 were 772, representing approximately 9% of the LGA population (2011 census).
- This number is an increase to the 7% LGA residents attending in 2010. Local residents are often supporting friends or family involved in the event and they often attend as a host to friends or family from elsewhere.
- Residents purchased 236 passes for their friends (2019)



PROGRAM AND TIMINGS

- Seeks to deliver against the event values
- Integrates on-site and off-site activities
- Provides and integrates competitions, ceremonies, traditional events, music, pipe bands and dance.
- The event is the Ist weekend in May taking advantage of the school holidays period, bi-annual May long weekend in Qld and the cool climate in the Glen Innes Highlands
- The program is evolving to become a collectable coffee table book



AVAILABILITY OF LOCAL ACCOMMODATION, SUSTAINING INTERESTED, KNOWLEDGABLE AND EXPERIENCED VOLUNTEERS.

OUR WEATHER CAN BE A CHALLENGE BUT ALSO A BENEFIT, GAINING NEW AUDIENCES, LOCAL INTEREST & ATTENDANCE, UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES.

KEY CHALLENGES

LOCAL AVAILABLE ACCOMMODATION

- The main challenge to the Festival attendance growth is the limitation of accommodation in the LGA and greater regional area.
- Accommodation is the highest cost for visitors to the festival, and securing accommodation is very difficult.
- Visitors who find accommodation in Armidale, Inverell, and Tenterfield are required to travel an extra 45 minutes to an hour to attend Festival events, and this limits the Festival and other events patrons can attend.
- We will continue growing our homestay partnerships, work with bus companies in the area to provide Festival travel between regional towns and the festival site and look at ways of increasing the availability of caravan and other camping options in the town environs.



VOLUNTEERS Country towns have difficulties in finding enough Volunteers to cover the many roles needed. The ACF will be exploring new ways of engaging more volunteers through approaching charitable organisations, developing school programs in work experience in hospitality, events and tourism modules. Regular callouts and communication for new residents and retirees. Look into an Ambassador program with more recognition and rewards for those who want to develop new skills or increase their community engagement

ATTRACTING NEW AUDIENCES

- The Australian Celtic Festival will research overseas and local trends incorporating new events to entice new and younger audiences to aspects of the festival.
- This can be achieved through engagement with schools and finding alternative venues to facilitate modern and experimental facets of Celtic entertainment.



WEATHER EVENTS & UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

- Adverse weather conditions are an ongoing concern having a successful event.
- Monitoring and having wet weather plans in place that can enhance or the very least substitute some of the program will help ensure stable numbers and enjoyment for our visitors, some who have travelled long distances.
- Due to the cancellation of the Australian Celtic Festival in 2020, we will implement strategies, to lessen the economic impact and have systems in place for ease of dismantling in collaboration with all key stakeholders.



ALIGNED WITH THE KEY
STRATEGIC AREAS THE
DETAILED ACTION PLAN
PROVIDES GUIDANCE ON
DEVELOPING AND
OPTIMISING THE EVENT
EACH YEAR.

DETAILED ACTION PLAN

KEY STRATEGIC AREAS

SUSTAINABILITY

GROWTH

REVENUE STREAMS

LOCAL INTEGRATION

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

AUTHENTICITY & DIVERSITY

SEAMLESS CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

MARKETING & PROMOTION

CONTINUAL OPTIMISATION

ENGAGEMENT & REACH

BRANDED COMMUNICATIONS

OPERATION,
INFRASTRUCTURE
& GOVERNANCE

CP MASTER PLAN

ACF WORKING GROUP

OPERATIONAL PLAN

EVENT OBJECTIVES

SUSTAINABILITY

- Achieve 5% incremental growth measured by total ticket sales -Baseline 4,298 (2019) tickets providing \$124,504 revenue
- Increase revenue streams to achieve event break even point
- Improve local integration and participation within and around the event

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- Provide access and education about our local Celtic Heritage to expand visitor experiences
- Ensure that the authenticity of the event is maintained
- Continually seek new ways to represent Celtic traditions, diversity and practices whilst maintaining focus on Celtic culture
- Continually optimise the event program to provide a unique and authentic experience
- Conduct visitor and participants survey's annually to address concerns and achieve high NPS scores.
- Ensure a seamless ticketing customer journey prior to and during the event.

MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Continually optimise the marketing strategy to leverage new trends and channels to achieve efficiencies in budget and resources against activity
- Continually engage previous and potential event attendees
- Seek opportunities to increase marketing budget through grants, partnerships and sponsorships
- Continually build the ACF brand through consistent execution of the brand guidelines
- Ensure communications are linked to the Glen Innes Highlands and GISC brand
- Ensure the ACF website is fit for purpose and optimised to accommodate a great user experience

OPERATION, INFRASTRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

- Leverage the Centennial Parklands Master Plan concepts to improve on-site infrastructure
- Review and optimise the site plan and site management for continual improvement
- Create an ACF Working Group with roles and responsibilities set against the operational plan
- Conduct supplier, sponsor, partner and key stakeholder survey's
- Event Operational Plan Optimised for continual improvement

SUSTAINABILITY

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVE / ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Achieve 5% incremental growth measured by total ticket sales - Baseline 4,298 (2019) tickets providing \$124,504 revenue.	I. Review ticket prices annually alongside promotions to drive up ticket sales.	MED	2021-2025
	2. Utilise NEHC partnership to create packages to boost ticket sales and utilise NEHC towns accommodation & transport services.	ME	2021
	3. Improve the online ticket sales journey to increase ticket conversion and reduce abandoned carts.	ME	2021-2025
	I. Seek additional revenue streams through grants.	MED	2021-2025
Increase revenue streams to achieve event break even point.	2. Utilise VIC merchandising budget to purchase ACF branded products for sale via the SHOP and On-site stand. Profit allocated to ACF revenue for ACF branded products.	TEO	2021-2025
	3. Convert more major sponsorships and seek in-kind partnership opportunities.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Improve local integration and participation within and around the event.	I. Maintain partnerships with local venues to provide complimentary entertainment, activities and experiences.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
	2. Create initiatives to encourage visitors to the main street for the benefit of local businesses.	MED / ME	2021-2025

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVE / ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Provide access and education about our local Celtic Heritage to	I. Leverage local interest/cultural groups — Caledonian Society, Land of the Beardies History House Museum for content creation.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
expand visitor experiences.	2. Building local partnerships to deliver local workshops/talks.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Encure that the authoricity of the event is maintained	I. Develop Partnerships with Clans/Societies to improve authenticity and connection to Celtic culture, audiences and advocates.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Ensure that the authenticity of the event is maintained.	2. Maintain a strong relationship with Australian Standing Stones Management Board.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Seek new ways to represent Celtic traditions, diversity and practices whilst maintaining focus on Celtic culture.	I. Expanding the Symposiums – new workshops/education/experts.	TEO / ACF Working Group	Bi-annually
	2. Develop communications/material for distribution during the festival.	ME	2021-2025
	3. Introduce and expand a new area of Celtic artisan crafts.	TEO / ACF Working Group	Bi-annually

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVE / ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAME
Optimise the event program to provide a unique and authentic experience and attract new audiences.	I. Review event program ensuring a wholistic approach is taken underpinned with authenticity and diversity of culture, craft and art.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Conduct visitor and participants survey's annually to address concerns and achieve high NPS scores.	I. Conduct an annual visitor survey, analyse and present finding in the event debrief.	MED	2021-2025
	I. Review and optmise the online purchasing ticket journey.	ME	2021-2025
Ensure a seamless ticketing customer journey prior to and during the event.	2. Continually improve the procedure and experience of collecting tickets and promotional packages.	TEO	2021-2025
	3. Improve the signage and process of entering the festival site to reduce waiting times and streamline entry and exit.	TEO / ACF Working Group	Bi-annually

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Optimise the marketing strategy to leverage new trends and channels to achieve efficiencies in budget and resources against activity	I. Review success of previous marketing plan for the annual event debrief taking learnings forward	ME	2021-2025
	2. Monitor media trends and leverage the experience economy to attract new audiences	MED	2021-2025
	3. Leverage participant groups to share marketing content and expand reach	ME	2021-2025
	4. Leverage broader tourism activites to attract International visitors to the festival	ME	2021-2025
	5. Leverage a broad channel mix to optimise spend and return on marketing investment	ME	2021-2025
	6. Seek and utilise influencers to improve reach and interest in the event.	ME	2021-2025
Continually engage previous and potential event attendees	I. Deliver a monthly newsletter to ACF subscribers and share through relevant and available channels utilsing ASSMB and Caledonian Society for content	TEO / ME	Monthly
	2. Continually inspire and leverage the CVP through social and digital channels	ME	Monthly

MARKETING & PROMOTION

Build the ACF brand through consistent execution of the brand guidelines.	I. Ensure all marketing and promotional material leverage the brand to improve awareness and recognition.	ME	2021-2025
Ensure communications are linked to the Glen Innes Highlands and GISC brand.	I. Leverage the event to promote the Glen Innes Highlands brand.	ME	2021-2025
	2. Ensure on-site materials are available to promote Glen Innes Highlands to visitors and participants.	ME	2021-2025
	3. Include GIH benefits in information packs and other event collateral.	ME	2021-2025
	I. Seek funding to re-design the ACF website.	MED	2021-2025
Ensure the ACF website is fit for purpose and optimised to accommodate a great user experience.	2. Ensure the ACF website is continually updated with relevant information.	ME / TEO	2021-2025
	3. Continually optimise website to ensure effective SEO to drive natural search results.	ME / TEO	2021-2025
	4. Integrate social media channels into the website.	ME / TEO	2021-2025
Seek opportunities to increase marketing budget through grants, partnerships and sponsorships	I. Utilise the sponsorship prospectus to increase marketing budget - allocate 20% revenue from sponsorship to fund further marketing	ME / TEO	2021-2025
	activity and/or deliver sponsor benefits.		
	2. Apply for available grants and seek joint grant funding opportunities with NEHC and DCNO/DNSW	MED	2021-2025
	3. Ensure sponsorship opportunities represent value for money and benefits are 100% delivered and reported back to sponsors. Leverage	MED	2021-2025
	this to seek recurring and future sponsorships.		

OPERATIONAL, INFRASTRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

	I. Ensure that the new pathways are aligned with the requirements of the ACF site map, underground infrastructure	MED	2021-2025
	2. Leverage the new building with new toilets to provide a better visitor experience and contribute to less expenses for the festival	MED	2021-2025
Leverage the Centennial Parklands Master Plan concepts to improve on-site infrastructure	3. Leverage the skywalk when constructed to inspire new ways to create a unique experience for the event.	MED	2021-2025
	4. Leverage the new carparking when constructed to improve pedestrian access and safety through revising the Traffic Management Plan	TEO	2021-2025
Review and optimise the site plan and site management for continual improvement	I. Review the site plan for optimal utilisation to drive a great experience for visitors and participants.	GISC / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
	Review and reduce costs of site management through training of volunteers	GISC / ACF Working Group	2021-2025

OPERATIONAL, INFRASTRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

Create an ACF Working Group with roles and responsibilities set against the operational plan	I. Establish the working group covering key areas of event management	GISC	2021
	2. Update the operational plan to include Working Group tasks and reponsibilities	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
	3. Utilise working group to create thorough run sheets, procedures and other event documentation for ease of succession planning	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Conduct supplier, sponsor, partner and key stakeholder survey's	I. Conduct the survey's for reporting through the event debrief	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
	2. Review key operational solutions each year via debrief across ticketing, stages, site, program, volunteers and planning	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025
Event Operational Plan Optimised for continual improvement	I. Ensure the annual operational plan is representative and inclusive of debrief solutions and timings and activities are updated to reflect learnings, roles and responsibilities as they evolve.	TEO / ACF Working Group	2021-2025

