

BEGA VALLEY COMMERCIAL LAND STRATEGY

INTERIM REPORT - FINDINGS OF STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS

TATHRA, 28 AUGUST 2019

1. *What are the natural advantages and strengths of the commercial centre?*

- Strong sense of community and a sense of place with limited potential for residential growth
- The natural environment, whale watching tours, surrounded by nature and national park
- Local produce
- Adventure tourism - formal mountain biking trails are well used all year round, 400 to 500 cyclists at a time from the ACT and traditional markets who shop, eat and stay overnight
- Blend café collaborates to provide services to tourists. An example of innovative ways to manage tourist needs and commercial reality. Co-operation between restaurants and shops – Tathra is best promoted as ‘the little town who does’
- Heritage buildings, the wharf, the pub, indigenous history
- New accessible playground, camping area, toilets and paths to the river and around the headland
- Repeat visits by regular tourists

2. *What, if anything, is challenging development of the commercial centre?*

- The zoning of Hobbs corner. This is a basic campground under a Crown lease which is available school holidays only. It adjoins B2 zone at bottom of hill and can accommodate 32 families
- Trading hours. Business trading hours are restrictive especially during winter and are less than required by visitors. We need to engage and co-operate about opening hours. Those that stay open suffer from others closing during peak periods
- Tathra is still impacted by the fires. There are two major accommodation businesses closed both with Crown land leases, i.e. the motor village with 700 sites and Wambiri which was used by school groups, surf clubs to accommodate adventure tour groups. There is uncertainty about the future use of these properties
- Connectivity of commercial areas. No continuous safe access from top commercial area to the bottom commercial area and to the wharf. This is holding commercial development back
- The surf club adjacent the commercial centre is under-utilised
- Lack of signage, information and directions for visitors to accommodation and shops. (It was noted that Council is preparing a wayfinding strategy)
- Lack of clarity about process to gain approval to use public land for events and festivals

- There has been demand over the last 3 years for commercial/retail space at the lower commercial area but there are vacant shops at the upper commercial area. Over a hundred enquiries have been received for retail premises on the flat over that period and there is a lack of commercial land

3. *Given the natural advantages and strengths, how could growth of the commercial centre be encouraged?*

- Project being planned for a tourist info board in lieu of tourist info centre. Need to include a story board and interpretative information about the fires and Tathra's achievements and history
- Need clear signage, e.g. for touring vehicles near wharf, to direct tourists, advisory (project commencing to address wayfinding signage)
- Marketing – Sapphire Coast Tourism doing a good job but need to collaborate as a shire and not just market individual towns. The market is trending towards short stays to address seasonality of tourism. Events and markets would attract day and overnight visitors
- Provide more diversity in retail shops – clothing and footwear, handmade and local artworks

4. *What development principles or approaches are necessary to underpin growth of the commercial centre?*

- Connectivity needs to underpin commercial growth and land use, e.g. bus and pedestrian links from top to bottom
- Formal acknowledgement of tourism as an industry underpinning economic development. Need to understand that tourists are part of the economy and need to be serviced
- Branding 'its in our nature' therefore avoid plastic and concrete. Develop in sympathy with existing character, e.g. consistent look for town and the retail sector using timber and subdued colours to match the wharf. Don't spoil the environment

5. *What are some incentives to stimulate development of the commercial centre?*

- Reduce red tape for approvals and use of community land to hold events and festivals
- Establish a mini-bus service to transport visitors around town on a voluntary, co-operative basis
- Utilise the surf club as commercial space