

Eurobodalla Nature Based Tourism Feasibility Study Summary Report



Prepared for
Eurobodalla Shire Council

Inspiring Place
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*Image credit above: Dee Kramer Photography
Image credit front cover: Eurobodalla Shire Council*

Context

Eurobodalla Shire Council recognised that the preparation of a Eurobodalla Nature Based Tourism Feasibility Study would be a vital step towards encouraging further investment and growth in the nature-based visitor market. The Council was successful in receiving funding for the project from the Australian Government's 'Regional Jobs and Investment Packages' program.

The objectives of the project were to:

- › guide the development of nature-based tourism and related recreation activities across the Eurobodalla region and to develop cooperative agreements with state-based agencies;
- › formalise opportunities for local and state government agencies to work in partnership with private operators to maximise opportunities for nature-based tourism within the Eurobodalla region;
- › identify opportunities for further investment and development with government and private sector proponents;
- › identify ways to reduce 'red-tape' and ultimately improve the flow on effect of increased tourism opportunities and spending; and
- › provide opportunities for visitors and locals to participate in active nature-based recreation – potentially mountain bike paths, walking trails, eco-tourism accommodation, and marine activities.

Acknowledgements

The project was conducted with the valuable input and guidance of a Project Steering Committee consisting of staff from the Eurobodalla Shire Council.

The consultant team also wish to acknowledge the important contributions that other stakeholders made from all levels of government (state, regional, local), local nature-based tourism operators and Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) towards the project.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used in the Study:

BMP – Batemans Marine Park

DNSW – Destination NSW

DPC – New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet

DSNSW – Destination Southern NSW

ESC – Eurobodalla Shire Council

FCNSW – Forestry Corporation of NSW

LALCs – Local Aboriginal Land Councils

NSWDI – NSW Department of Industry

NPWS – NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

OEH – Office Environment and Heritage

RMS – Roads and Marine Services



Image credit: Destination NSW

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1 / Key Outcomes

The Study has identified eight infrastructure projects and two key strategies for growing nature-based tourism within Eurobodalla. The benefits are:

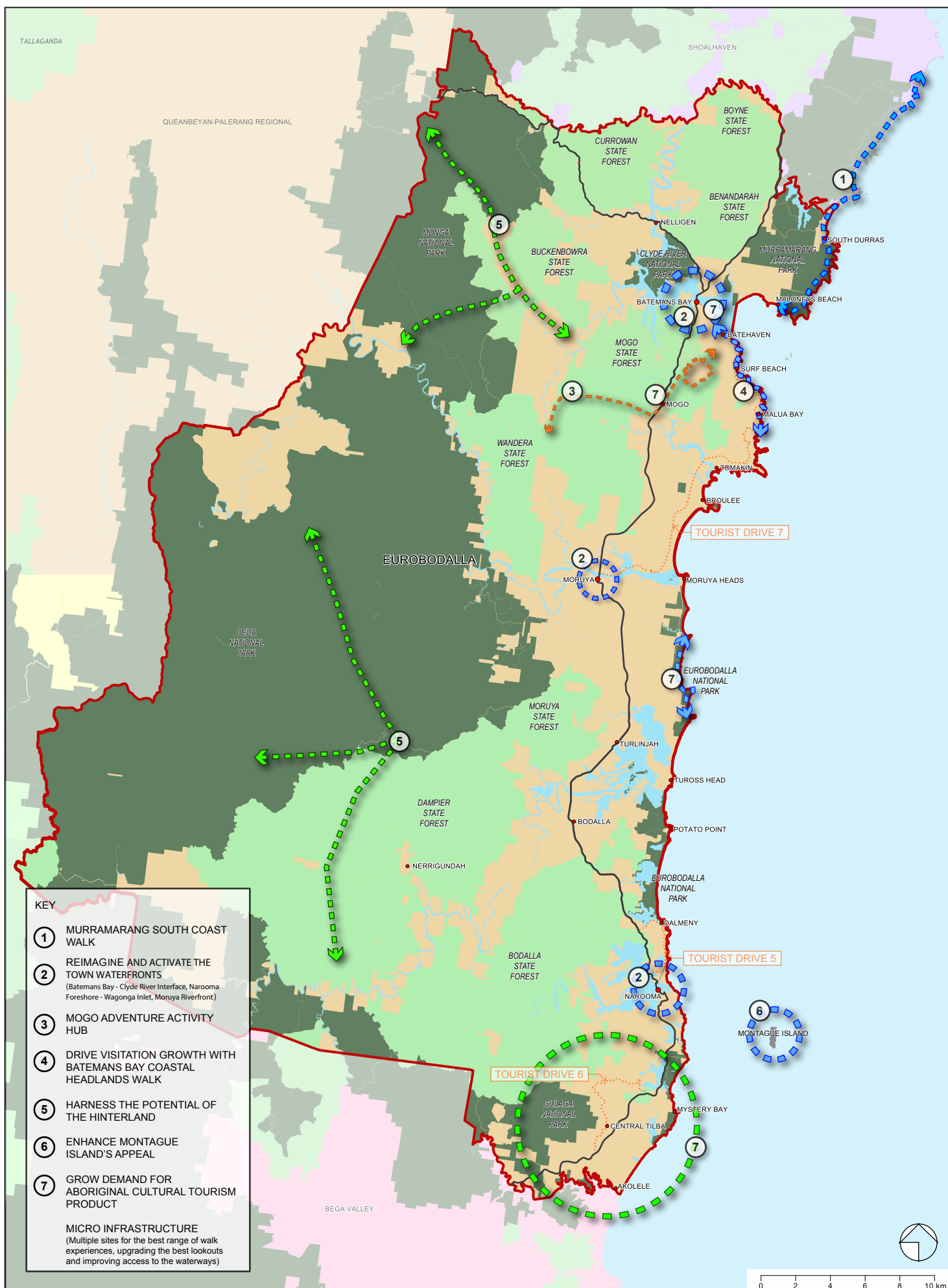
- › the projects are likely to be a catalyst for encouraging initial market interest and then help support the development of other tourism activities in the future;
- › the potential exists for both the public and private sector to invest in the development of the nature-based tourism product;
- › the projects build upon the points of difference between Eurobodalla and other destinations;
- › the potential to disperse the benefits across Eurobodalla;
- › the potential to help showcase nature-based tourism and its value and contribution to local communities and businesses needs and aspirations;
- › the opportunity for involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in the development of the leading experiences including local government, LALCs people, user groups, conservation bodies and local business;
- › the opportunity to start integrating and linking these experiences with other products in Eurobodalla; and
- › enhancing the sustainability of managing visitor impacts at these natural attractions.



Image credit: Destination NSW

Infrastructure Projects

Map 1 (on the following page) shows the general location of the recommended infrastructure projects. There are four categories of infrastructure projects.



Category 1 Market Ready Projects

There is one leading ‘market- ready’ project with the potential to be a significant visitor experience with the capacity to attract new people to Eurobodalla and also help re-position visitor’s perception of the area.

Murramarang South Coast Walk

- › ensuring the Shire can grow overnight visitation and visitor expenditure, as well as help reposition the Shire in the visitor’s mindset through this multi-day walk.

Category 2 Mid to Long Term Sustainability Projects

There are three projects with the potential to strengthen the long term sustainability of the local tourism industry, to ensure diversity and resilience:

Micro-infrastructure projects

- › includes defining the best range of walk experiences, upgrading the best lookouts and improving access to the waterways – highlights the many and diverse smaller scale infrastructure needs of the Shire that will be enablers for visitors (and operators) to engage in nature-based tourism. A considerable number of these require cross-agency decisions in terms of needs and priorities.

Maintain Montague Island’s Appeal

- › a well-known and appealing visitor location that has many experiences, both natural and cultural. However the long term sustainability of environmental and cultural aspects, new aboriginal opportunities and multiple agency permit processes means a holistic analysis of sustainable development as a contemporary visitor experience is needed.

Mogo Adventure Hub

- › an ideal central location for many formal and informal trails and tracks, for bike riding, walking, trail riding etc., but some prioritised improvement would substantively increase their visitor appeal.

Category 3 Mid Term Leveraging Projects

There are two projects where nature-based tourism can be leveraged as an explicit desired outcome to existing budgeted projects to lift the profile of nature-based tourism across Eurobodalla:

Reimagine and Activate the Town Waterfronts

- › helping re-focus the township around the highly appealing natural feature of its waterway as well as enabling small businesses to grow. The benefits arising from activation of the waterfront precinct are also relevant for the towns of Narooma and Moruya.

Drive Visitation Growth with the Batemans Bay Coastal Headlands Walking Trail

- › ensuring this recreational trail will also be appealing for visitors and improve the interpretation of the area encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore. Recent funding approval for the design and construction of Observation Point Lookout allows this component of the overall project to be considered as market-ready.

Category 4 Longer Term Positioning Projects

There are two projects with the potential to strengthen the key points of difference distinguishing Eurobodalla from other coastal destinations in the longer term:

Harness the Potential of the Hinterland

- › the potential to harness the eco-tourism development opportunities at selected locations within the State Forest and National Parks in the longer term.

Grow Demand for Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Products

- › the potential for significant growth and unrealised demand in tourism interest for Aboriginal stories of the world's oldest surviving ancient culture that lived sustainably with nature for over 50,000 years.

Support Strategies

Supporting Existing Tourism Industry Development

A series of actions have been recommended to support the growth of the existing tourism industry as well as new investment. Capacity building of the industry will help 'fast track' private investment. It will assist existing and potential operators to better develop products and experiences that meet existing and future markets. In doing so, it will be aligned with the community aspirations, creating positive social and environmental outcomes as well as economic. From an investor point of view, it will help minimize public perception of red tape and encourage job growth. Key actions are:

- › a mentoring program;
- › annual nature-based tourism forum;
- › seasonality issues program; and
- › improved collateral.

Building Cooperative Arrangements with Partner Agencies

This recommendation highlights the cross-agency support and work needed to activate and oversee the implementation of this Plan as well as support broader nature-based tourism projects in the area. Key actions are:

- › develop a Cross-Agency Nature Based Tourism Working Group; and
- › develop High Level Cross-Agency Agreements.



2 / Background



This Plan delivers on an Action prioritised in the *Eurobodalla Destination Action Plan 2018–2021*,

‘to develop a strategic and coordinated approach to tourism product and experience development to position Eurobodalla as an iconic nature-based tourism and regional food destination on the South Coast.’

Other State and regional plans and studies have also noted the potential for Eurobodalla to become a stronger nature-based tourism destination. Whilst Eurobodalla has the natural assets to become an outstanding nature-based tourism destination, there is also significant competition up and down the Eastern seaboard of Australia and coordinated work is essential if nature-based tourism is to deliver on desired economic, social and environmental outcomes.

The Eurobodalla Shire Council successfully applied for funds for this project from the Australian Government’s ‘Regional Jobs and Investment Packages’ program. The program is aimed at fostering investment in projects that will help diversify regional economies, stimulate long-term growth, deliver sustainable employment and enable applicants to enter new markets and territories.

The overall desired outcome from this project is to identify catalyst and shovel-ready nature-based tourism projects that can help to grow and diversify the economy and create sustainable operations.

The recommendations will help re-position Eurobodalla Shire in the minds of the visitor, as an attractive location for both public and private investment, and drive growth and ongoing improvement in nature-based tourism and hence contribute to the achievement of the longer term desired outcome.

The timing of this project is ideal with the NSW Government having reserved \$28 million of the of the Regional Growth Environment Tourism Fund for new or improved nature-based environment and infrastructure projects. A Southern NSW Nature Based Tourism Plan is likely to be developed within the next year allowing Eurobodalla to have projects

able to be elevated to regional importance, and this Study also delivers on the NSW South Coast Marine Tourism Strategy.

The consultants, supported by a Steering Committee consisting of Council staff, identified infrastructure, product and experience development projects able to be pursued in the short to medium term. All members recognised that building engagement and partnerships arrangements with key land managers, state-based tourism agencies, Local Aboriginal Land Councils, tourism industry and the local community is crucial to achieving this outcome. This Study specifically aimed to create a greater collaborative approach to the development and implementation of nature-based tourism initiatives in the Shire.

The project has been undertaken in four stages. Initial research on the current visitor experience, aspects around the visitor economy including trends and competitor positioning and discussions with Council staff enabled the development of a background paper that was used during stakeholder discussions and to support site visits during November 2018. An Insights Report was then prepared outlining the identified challenges and the opportunities to harness and grow nature-based tourism to achieve the desired outcomes. These initial ideas were then subject to further investigation and analysis by the consultant team and consequently reviewed and refined prior to the preparation of the draft Eurobodalla Nature Based Tourism Project Report in February 2019. Additional comments from key stakeholders on the Draft Report were sought in March 2019, enabling the finalisation of the Report.

The team recognised that the natural and cultural elements make the Shire a special place for its community, significantly contribute to why visitors

choose to travel and stay there. The overlap is particularly true for the many holiday home owners and repeat visitors from nearby locations who enjoy the recreational activities and outdoor activities that abound here.

This overlay between improving the liveability of the Shire and growing nature-based tourism, was evident in earlier studies and ensured that the actions listed in this Report are well aligned with wider work including the *Far South Coast Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022*, *Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2018-2020* and *Eurobodalla Destination Action Plan 2018-2021*. The Shire has recently developed a new tourism brand positioning statement based on attracting active explorers looking to escape the city and reconnect in a more natural environment. A creative marketing strategy underpins the delivery of the Eurobodalla tourism brand “Freedom to unleash your natural spirit”.



Image credit: Destination NSW





3 / Recommended infrastructure projects

Murramarang South Coast Walk

There is one leading ‘market- ready’ project with the potential to be a significant visitor experience with the capacity to attract new people to Eurobodalla and also help re-position visitor’s perception of the area.

The Murramarang South Coast Walk is a planned four-day coastal walking trail within Murramarang National Park and Murramarang Aboriginal Area, commencing at Maloneys Beach within the Eurobodalla Shire and extending 39km to Bawley Point in Shoalhaven Shire. Maloneys Beach is only 15 minutes travel time from Batemans Bay by the Princes Highway and via Cullendulla Road.

The walk traverses a spectacular coastline with a diversity of landscapes, coastal vegetation, cultural heritage sites, rock pools, wildlife and secluded beaches. The walk includes two recognised ancient sites – the rock formations at Wasp Head South

Durras and the meeting of colliding geological formations at Myrtle Beach that date back 300 million years or more.

The walk connects five small coastal villages where there is a mix of accommodation choices for walkers and day visitors. The walk may be done as a multi-day trip or broken into separate day walks.

The project has the potential to become a leading nature-based tourism product for the region. The success of the project will substantially improve the visitor economy particularly through increased visitors, longer stays and increased spend. The walk will also support local services, a range of tourism operators, transport and associated businesses. It will complement existing tourism activities with the potential to become a significant experience contributing to the marketing and promotion of Eurobodalla.

The project is currently being planned, developed and managed by NSW National Parks Wildlife Service with \$3.64 million funding by the NSW Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund Program.



Image credit: Destination NSW

Micro-Infrastructure Projects

This project will help reposition Eurobodalla as a diverse coastal adventure playground. This project focusses on implementing micro or small-scale infrastructure that will assist tourism operators, provide information tailored to needs of visitors and deliver improved access to nature-based tourism experiences within Eurobodalla. The micro-infrastructure may include defining the best range of walk experiences to match visitor requirements, upgrading the best lookouts and improving access to the waterways with facilities such as floating pontoons.

Currently there is a plethora of trails, lookouts, activities, scenic drives and information about each that the visitor (and locals) use. However, it is difficult to sort through and assess which options have significant experiential elements, are well maintained and have good associated visitor infrastructure and which are more simple, self-guided, exploratory options.

The Eurobodalla waterways provide excellent opportunities for growing nature-based tourism including kayaking, canoes, boat cruising, house boats, sailing, sea plane tours, camping, paddle-boarding, fishing, nature study, visiting oyster farms and vineyards. However, there is very limited infrastructure to support access and deliver outstanding experiences for visitors. The diversity and range of the waterways provides another important tourism positioning distinguishing Eurobodalla from other competitor destinations in nature-based tourism.

This should be considered as a long term project for implementation but with the capacity to commence with some achievable micro-infrastructure investments in the short term. The short term projects include:

- › select the best walk experiences within Eurobodalla by assessing priority for upgrading 2-3 of the short walks with infrastructure and facilities to better meet visitor expectations within the next 3 years;

- › planned upgrade Observation Point lookout which will also enhance the overall visitor experience of the Batemans Bay Coastal Headlands Walking Trail in the short term;
- › an activated waterfront at Batemans Bay; Narooma and Moruya; and
- › add in floating pontoons in waterways, based on priorities identified in the Marine Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy, that will assist tourism operators with providing immersive visitor experiences around the waterways.

The project requires Eurobodalla to facilitate a collaborative partnership with land managers (e.g. NSW NPWS) and marine waters managers (e.g. BMP) for approval to jointly assess the impacts, benefits and approval process of the proposed micro-infrastructure projects.

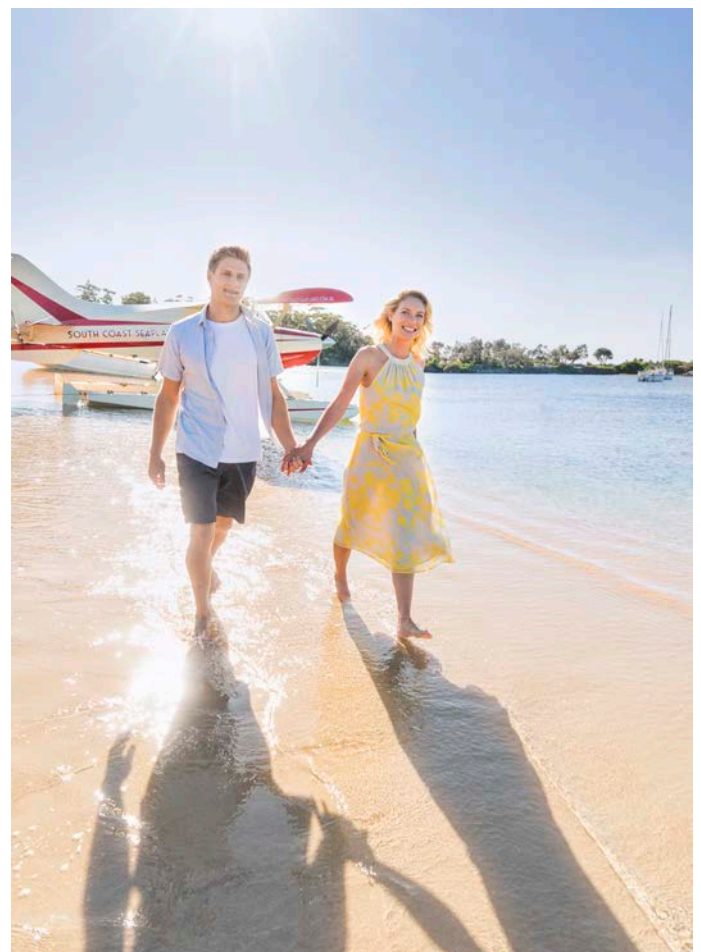


Image credit: Destination NSW

Enhance Montague Island's Appeal

Montague Island (Barunguba), off Narooma, offers three land tours (morning, afternoon and evening penguin tours), overnight accommodation in lighthouse keeper cottages and snorkelling and scuba diving with seals. The island is also a highlight feature for scenic flights.

Multiple agencies currently influence the visitor experience and impact the operators. All on-island land-based activities are managed by NSW NPWS. These tours focus on educational aspects and are run by volunteers managed by Parks as the Island is gazetted 'Nature Reserve' which does not allow for commercial tourism. Commercial boat operators sell visitors an island transfer or a snorkel/ scuba/ fishing or scenic ride in surrounding waters and all boat operators require a Batemans Bay Marine Park permit (5 current operators). The Crown owns Narooma marine infrastructure that is used by most commercial tour boats for departure. Significant aboriginal sites also exist on the island and there is interest by the Aboriginal community to build tours relevant to these sites.

The recommended project is to undertake a cross-agency and industry review.

This would include the development of a shared vision for the Island and an ongoing management framework that respects and supports each Agency's jurisdiction, responsibilities and resourcing capacity, identifies impacts one Agency may create for another Agency, and enables improvements in sustainability outcomes, as well as adaptive management approaches as appropriate.

Sustainable management planning and performance measures need to be put in place to ensure the quality of the experience, the environment and wildlife, and cultural heritage (both aboriginal and lighthouse keepers) does not decrease.

Stakeholder consultation with operators would be an integral component to understand their issues, and aspirations / plans.

The *Southern NSW Destination Management Plan 2018-2020* identified the need for NPWS to consider ways to improve the Montague Island visitor experience.

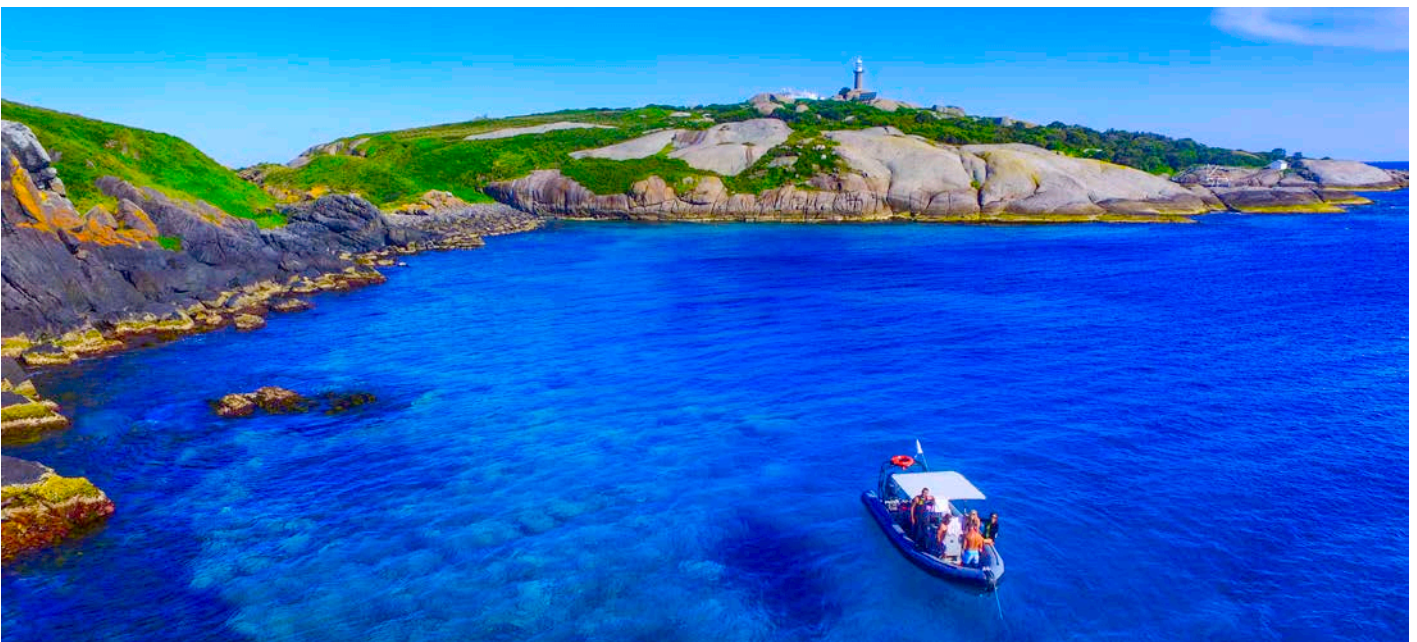


Image credit: Destination NSW

Mogo Adventure Hub

There is the opportunity for Mogo, located just 10kms to the south of Batemans Bay, to become a defined adventure hub that cater for a range of trail-based pursuits, trail events and connections. Mogo is a small historic village with a role as a visitor service hub with tourist shops on the Princes Highway.

The Mogo State Forest extends to the eastern side of the village and provides a natural bushland for a range of recreational trail use including mountain bike riding, motorised bike riding, four-wheel driving, horse-riding and cross-country running. The State Forest and adjoining Monga National Park also cater for nature study, picnicking, bushwalking and other outdoor activities.

The Mogo sportsground was used in the past for the Angry Doctor Ride – 25km, 50 km and 100km trail event between Mogo and Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens making use of the culverts under the Princes Highway to link with the Mogo State Forest and existing mountain bike trails¹. Similarly the Mogo Resurrection Ride started from the Original Gold Rush Colony in Mogo and used similar trails. The staging of a new MTB event in late 2019 signals further potential for developing an adventure hub around Mogo.

Mogo is well positioned to become a service centre for an adventure hub that utilises the Mogo State Forest and nearby attractions. The new project is seeking to connect the outdoor trail opportunities and to utilise the existing facilities and/or install new infrastructure that will help position Mogo as the adventure hub. There are many examples around the world of small villages where the visitor economy has benefited significantly from being a mountain bike hub e.g. Derby and Maydena in Tasmania Thredbo, Mt Buller, 7 Stanes (Scotland), Whistler (Canada) and Rotorua (New Zealand).

The project would need to be staged to allow further investigation, feasibility assessment and attract funding support.

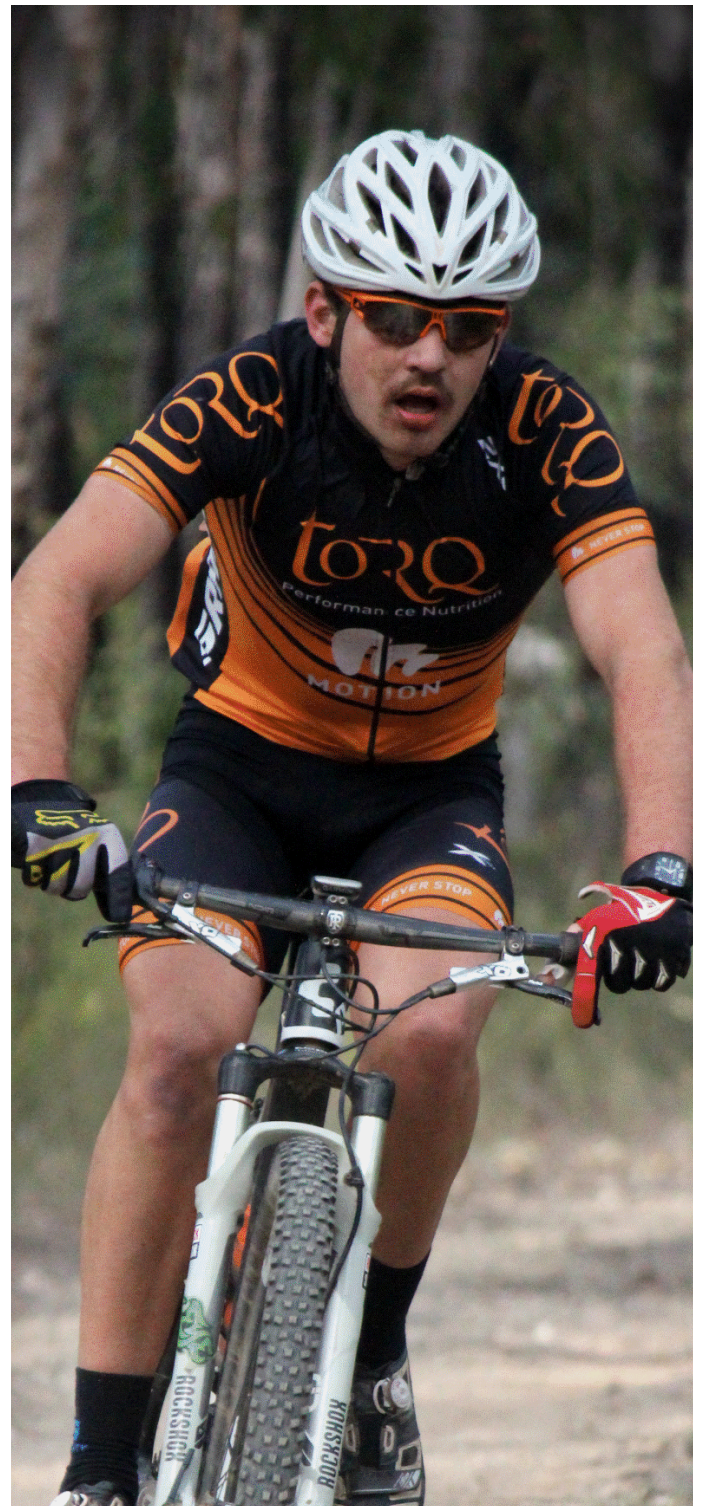


Image credit: Eurobodalla Shire Council

¹ The event operated between 2009 – 2012 with up to 800 riders involved (source Eurobodalla Shire Council Mountain Bike Trail Audit Report). Partnership agreements with FCNSW will be required to manage and maintain the trails.

Reimagine and Activate the Town Waterfronts

The Nature Based Tourism Study identifies the potential to reimagine and activate the waterfront precincts to benefit both visitors and the local community at Batemans Bay, Narooma and Moruya. The Study uses the Batemans Bay waterfront interface with the Clyde River as a case study.

Batemans Bay is the northern gateway into the broader Eurobodalla Shire and regional centre offering significant accommodation, retail and dining experiences. As the nature-based tourism industry underpins the local visitor economy, it should have a strong presence at the gateway.

A number of major infrastructure projects are underway with the new bridge alignment across the Clyde River into the town centre and redevelopment of Mackay Park. These projects provide a catalyst opportunity to establish a defining regional gateway and to showcase functions of nature-based tourism offerings in Eurobodalla, such as local produce, tour group packaging, Aboriginal arts and culture displays.

One of the *NSW South Coast Marine Tourism Strategy* Strategic Directions is exploring opportunities for harbour activation in major hubs such as Batemans Bay through the enhancement of working waterfront space, moorings, storage, support services and amenities. It is proposed that this investment will enhance coastal touring experiences and growth in expenditure.

It is crucial that the potential opportunities to activate the waterfront, town centre and civic and community facilities be assessed in the early stages of these major infrastructure investments at Batemans Bay. This will require some initial master planning to ensure that activation of public and private land gives high priority to creating attractive, dynamic and functional spaces that will attract visitors and support the local community.

Whilst there are major investment projects in progress for Batemans Bay, it is an ideal time to consider the opportunities to strengthen and grow the nature-base tourism industry.

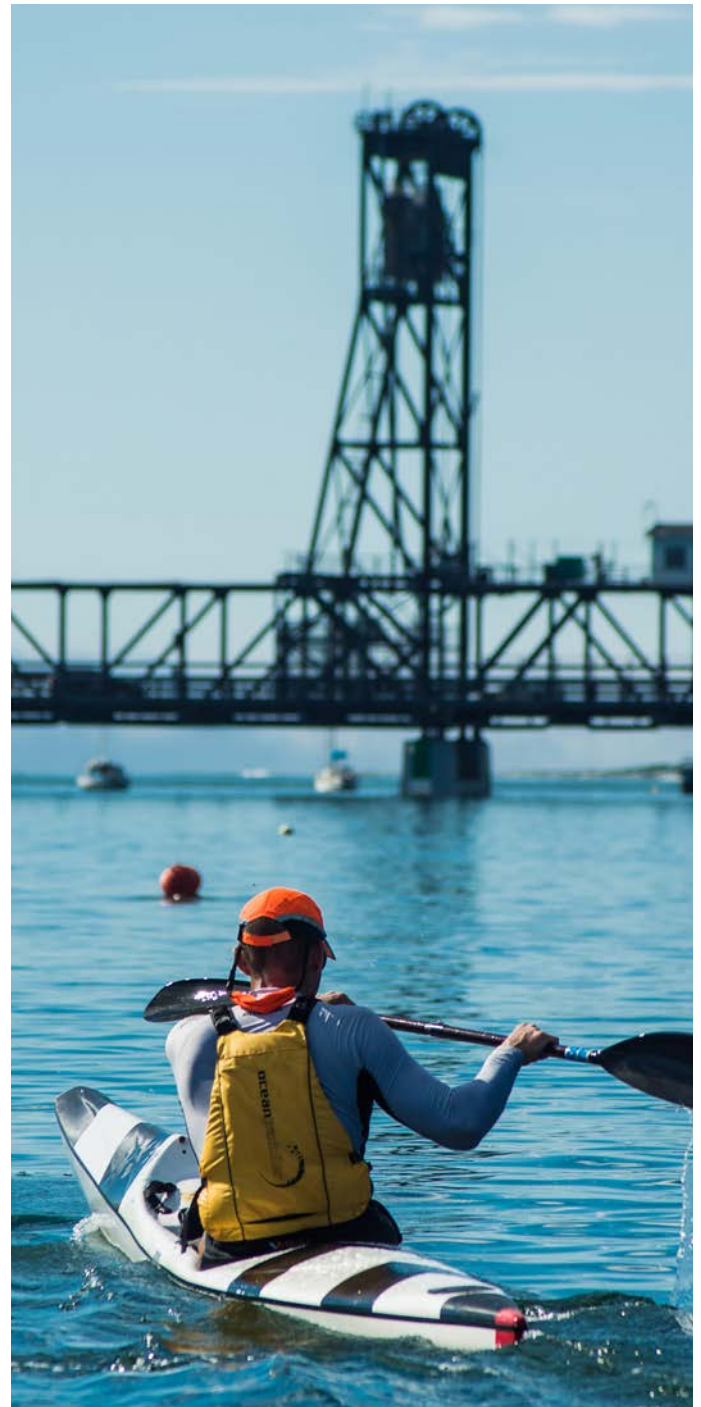


Image credit: Destination NSW

Drive visitation growth with the Batemans Bay Coastal Headlands Walking Trail

The Eurobodalla Shire Council commissioned the preparation of a concept plan for the Batemans Bay Coastal Headlands Walking Trail, a 23 km long walk between Observation Head and McKenzies Beach.

There is considerable diversity of native flora, fauna habitats, geological sites, coastal landscapes and heritage features to attract visitor interest. The walk and particularly the headlands, provide sweeping ocean views and the opportunity for observing whales passing down the coast. Whilst the primary user market will be local residents and especially

those living close to the walk, it will appeal and attract interest from some visitors staying overnight in Eurobodalla or from day visitors interested in undertaking shorter segments of the walk.

The vision for the trail is to provide a continuous, clearly legible, signposted and readily navigable walking track that would appeal both to residents and visitors. The walk experience can be enhanced by targeted investment in the provision of visitor infrastructure and facilities such as directional signage, arrival facilities at the starting point for the walk, creative design of the lookouts, interpretation of the key features and stories and promotion of the best experiences to suit different markets.

The Council is seeking grant funding of \$3.6 million towards the staged implementation of the walking trail. Funding for upgrading visitor arrival and facilities at Observation Point has been approved.



Image credit: Eurobodalla Shire Council

Harness the potential of the Hinterland

Over 70% of the land in the Eurobodalla Shire is managed as National Park or State Forest. The majority of this land is located within the eastern hinterland – Mogo State Forest, Boyne State Forest, Monga National Park, Deua National Park, Buckenbowra State Forest and Wandera State Forest.

The Hinterland is known for its natural wealth by many locals but it largely remains unvisited by most travelers, despite the diverse richness of the natural, historic and cultural values that exist.

The Hinterland provides an extensive natural environment with the capacity to attract greater numbers of outdoor recreation enthusiasts and nature-based tourism visitors. Currently there are a range of designated tracks for recreational use, a number of small-scale camping areas, a few lookouts and interpretation of historic features and natural sites.

The project recognises there is potential to harness the eco-tourism development opportunities at selected locations within the State Forest and National Parks in the longer term e.g. eco-lodges, adventure trails and tours.

The potential for development of nature-based tourism opportunities within the Hinterland needs to be closely aligned with achieving long term management of the natural and cultural values, including planned resource use and management plans. Planned development and promotion of Hinterland experiences should be undertaken in line with resourcing to manage increased visitor use and impacts.

This project is not considered to be ‘shovel- ready’ and will involve working cross-agency to review policy and management frameworks before selecting initial sites that have the capacity to provide a mix of quality nature-based tourism experiences ready for niche visitor markets.

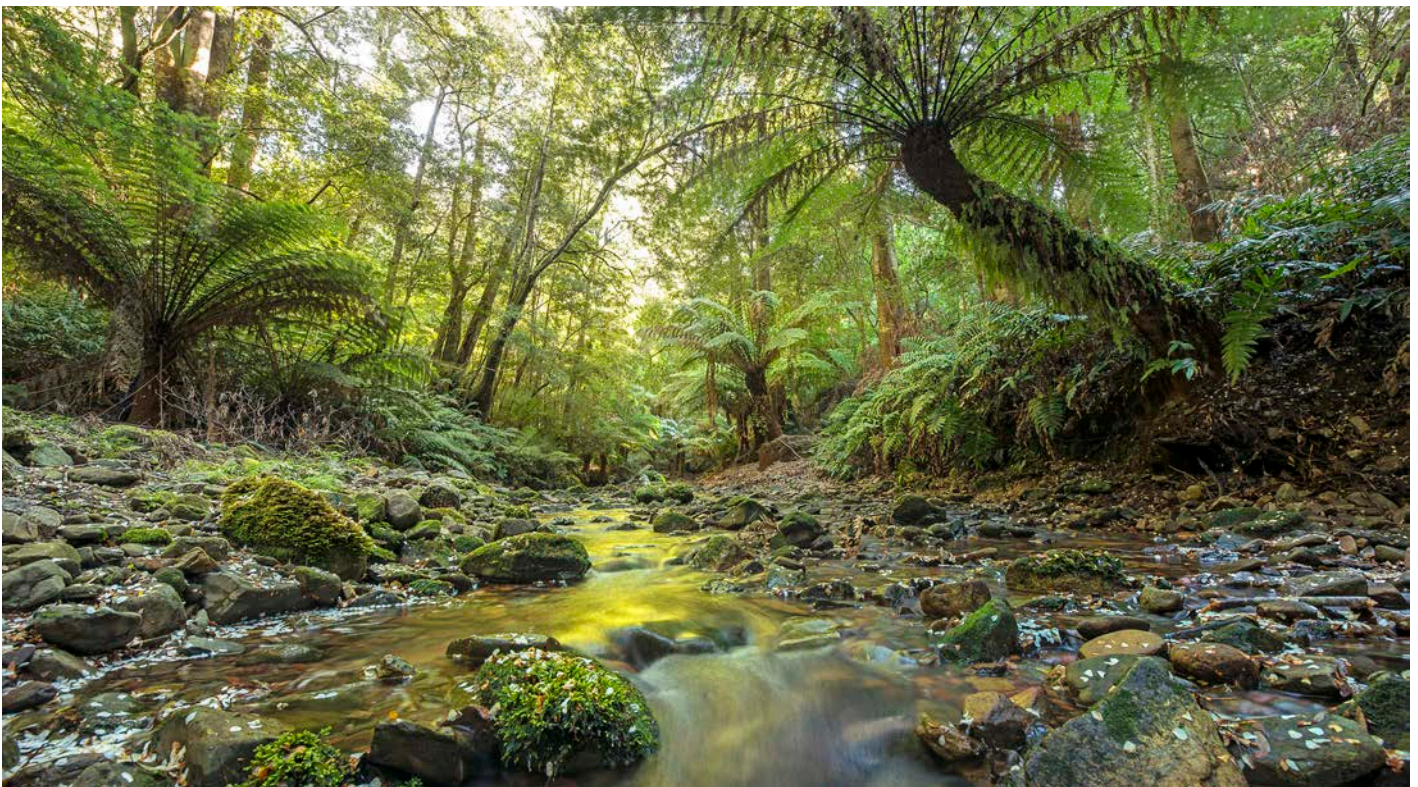


Image credit: Dee Kramer Photography

Grow demand for Aboriginal cultural tourism products

There has been significant growth in demand for Aboriginal tourism products in NSW over the past few years. Destination NSW has supported this through the *Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2017-2020* and the NSW Aboriginal Tourism Toolkit.

There are many models around Australia of Aboriginal cultural tourism products, infrastructure and services with lessons for Eurobodalla. Success factors involve balancing authentic cultural interpretation with commercial appeal that can generate income to cover operating costs over the year including off-peak times. Local Aboriginal ownership encourages entrepreneurship and quality customer service through recruitment, training and continuous improvement.

The Eurobodalla Shire has a unique nature-based Aboriginal tourism offering due to:

- › the large Aboriginal population and resources of the six Local LALCs);

- › it's predominantly natural landscapes with over 70% in national parks, State Forests and Crown land containing a wealth of Aboriginal cultural artefacts, archaeological sites, tracks, sacred sites and stories; and
- › the extensive research material, oral stories and artwork in the possession of the Council, LALCs and other local bodies and individuals which provide readily available material and content for interpretation.

Additionally, there are a few high quality but small tour operators who have tested and proven the market interest with the uniquely local stories they tell.

The Study indicated a range of potential projects within Eurobodalla including a Batemans Bay Aboriginal Cultural Experience, Mogo Art and Cultural Centre, working with Aboriginal operators to build greater capacity for delivery of the experiential product Bingi Dreaming Track and building linkages around a Gulaga Spiritual Experience Cluster as the place of ancestral origin and identity for the Yuin people.



Image credit: Destination NSW



4 / Recommended support strategies



Support existing tourism industry development

The *Eurobodalla Tourism Destination Action Plan 2018–2021* identifies priority actions required to drive and support the growth of the local tourism industry. This Study focuses specifically on those identified around the growth of nature-based tourism and identified the priorities as:

- › actions to address seasonality (leading to low profits little re-investment and seasonal staff);
- › the management of commercial operations requiring leases/ licenses/ permits across different regulated lands;
- › mentor assistance for selected existing and new operators with growth plans that can leverage and support the new opportunities this Study prioritizes and/or planned improvements in contemporary-style nature-oriented/ tailored/ personalised immersive experiential products;
- › collective marketing within the area and across the wider region; and
- › development of new visitor information (may be digital) to assist visitors quickly sift through the plethora of trail and nature-based tourism activity options and select the highlights, plus the activities best suited to their needs, physical skill, interests, time etc.

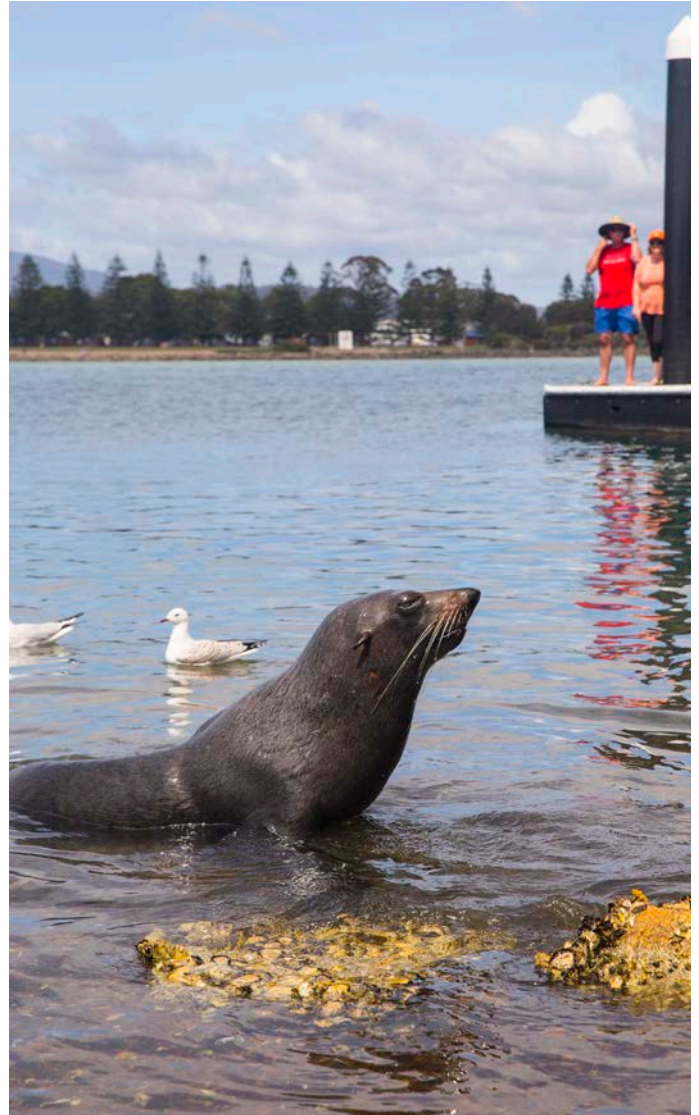


Image credit: Destination NSW

Build co-operative arrangements with partner agencies

The *Eurobodalla Destination Action Plan 2018-2021* recommended that strategic partnerships, including the establishment of MOUs with NSW and Australian government departments were required to support and fund the development of appropriate public infrastructure and facilities to enhance the visitor experience, community amenity and local economy.

A co-ordinated ‘whole of industry’ approach is required to provide a framework to encourage public and commercial investment in nature-based tourism within Eurobodalla. Two key priorities were identified:

- › develop a Cross-agency Nature Based Tourism Working Group that can act as a ‘clearing house’ for multiple tenure/ cross-agency developments, applications and issues to create more effective solutions; and
- › review opportunities for collective management approaches.

Importantly, a cross-agency nature-based tourism working group can result in improvements in sourcing competitive funds, with cross-agency agreement and support on the most critical areas requiring grants or funding.

As well as addressing short term projects and site-specific approaches, cross-agency collaboration can address longer term goals such as raising the quality of the visitor experience, focussing on agreed target markets such as higher yield overnight visitors and using different agency tools to consistently build a long term desired sustainable tourism industry around quality.

The second key recommendation is to undertake discussions at a senior level with NSW DPC (and possibly Treasury) about models, procedures and legislation to encourage inter-agency cooperation with Council around significant projects. Models from elsewhere can be examined to consider how best to put forward concepts as ‘influence ready’ together with the more traditional ‘shovel ready’ stage for a project seeking Government support.



Image credit: Destination NSW



5 / Action Plan

Category 1

Leading ‘market-ready’ project for Eurobodalla

1.1 Project: Murramarang South Coast Walk

Initiating Actions:

- › NPWS to progress implementation with funding under the NSW Regional Growth – Environment and Tourism Fund Program
- › Council to assist NPWS with advice for community engagement in enhancing the start of the walk from Maloneys Beach including helping to resolve concerns, options for parking, information, toilets, directional signage, information and interpretation
- › Work with operators to build and market existing product to further capitalise on this new infrastructure

Responsibility:

Lead Role

NPWS

Support Role

ESC, DPC

Timing:

Short term – next 1-2 years with staged implementation linked to funding

Category 2

Projects that strengthen the mid to long term sustainability of Eurobodalla as a nature-based tourism destination

2.1 Project: Micro-infrastructure projects

Initiating Actions:

- › Collaborate with land and marine managers to recognise the potential benefits of taking a more strategic approach to investment in smaller scale infrastructure projects (the Marine Infrastructure Asset Management Strategy will assist this process)
- › Select the best locations to deliver outstanding experiences for walks, scenic drives, lookouts, kayaking and bike rides within Eurobodalla
- › Identify the value-adding infrastructure and facilities that will lift the visitor experience
- › Prepare a concept master plan or activity impact assessment to meet planning and development approval
- › Seek funding opportunities to allow implementation across Eurobodalla
- › Work with operators to build greater capacity for delivery of the experiential product for the market that may utilise the infrastructure

Responsibility:

Lead Role

ESC

Support Role

NPWS, BMP, NSWDI, DPC

An Inter-agency Working Group be established to facilitate the implementation of the micro-infrastructure projects through the 10 Year Action Plan

Timing:

10 Year Action Plan to progressively upgrade existing infrastructure and to add new micro-infrastructure across Eurobodalla

2.2 Project: Enhance Montague Island's Appeal

Initiating Actions:

- Undertake a cross-agency and industry review and develop a shared vision for the Island
- Review of the Montague Island Plan of Management to be facilitated by NPWS needs to identify roles and responsibilities, resources and management strategies.

Two specific initial tasks are:

- Consult with operators to understand their issues, and aspirations / plans
- Review visitor numbers and pricing for agencies and operators to enable the creation of a transparent and fair system that delivers high quality outcomes with agreed vision and growth potential/ limits for managers and industry

Responsibility:

Lead Role

NPWS

Support Role

ESC, DSNSW, BMP, DPI, DPC

Timing:

Short term – next 1-2 years

2.3 Project: Mogo Adventure Hub

Initiating Actions:

- Consult with FCNSW about the proposed Mogo Adventure Hub and negotiate partnership arrangements for trail use including approvals, investment, maintenance etc
- Establish a mountain bike riders support group
- Undertake feasibility investigations into the proposed bike park with skills development and a pump park
- Undertake investigations into route finding, trail design and GIS mapping of a potential trail link from Mogo sportsground to Mogo State Forest (Maulbrooks Road / Sandy Pinch Road area)
- Undertake a detailed assessment of the existing trails at Deep Creek Dam and Mogo State Forest to determine priorities for trail upgrading to support the overall Mogo Adventure Hub
- Consult with the local community and other stakeholders
- Determine cost estimates for implementation of the Mogo Adventure Hub
- Seek funding support for the project

Responsibility:

Lead Role

ESC

Support Role

FCNSW, community trail users, tourism operators and event managers

Timing:

Short term – next 1-2 years to undertake feasibility investigations and cost estimates

Implementation within 3-5 years

Category 3

Projects that can be leveraged in the mid-term to lift the profile of nature-based tourism across Eurobodalla

3.1 Project: Reimagine and Activate Town Waterfronts

Initiating Actions:

Prepare concept master plans to reimagine and activate the town waterfronts. At Batemans Bay – Clyde River Interface this should be timed to support the commencement on the major infrastructure projects. Consideration should be to given to:

- › Create a better gateway for visitor information within an activated precinct
- › Link the arrival experience at Mackay Park with the waterfront by a wide and extensive pedestrian and bike friendly boulevard along the natural river edge also designed to support events and community activities
- › Provide harbour and support facilities to enable nature-based tourism operators including boat hire, house-boats, kayaks, cruises, sea plane tours, oyster tours, Marine Park tours etc
- › Encourage private sector investment in the redevelopment of accommodation and visitor facilities around the waterfront
- › Utilise a range of public space improvements such as tree planting and commissioned artworks that would enhance the arrival experience
- › Upgrade Holmes Lookout as a scenic lookout point before arrival into Batemans Bay on Kings Highway

Responsibility:

Lead Role

ESC

Support Role

RMS, DNSW, DSNSW, BMPA, NPWS, DPC, DPI, Crown Lands

Timing:

The initial stage is to prepare a concept master plan for reimagining and activating the Batemans Bay – Clyde River waterfront. Foreshore and sports precinct master plans are currently being prepared for Narooma.

3.2 Drive Visitation Growth for the Batemans Bay Coastal Headlands Walking Trail

Initiating Actions:

- › Undertake community consultation and assessments (e.g. impacts, risk, operational) to meet planning and development approval requirements
- › Review and identify the site and experience opportunities for enhancing the nature-based tourism appeal of the walk including the capacity and interest for tour operators to access and utilize the sites
- › Commence upgrading of Observation Point layout and facilities
- › Review the budget and prioritise to ensure selected sites and visitor facilities will deliver expectations for quality nature-based tourism experiences
- › Produce a style manual for the walk that will ensure consistency across some features of the walk e.g. signage (with use of international known symbols), design of walk furniture and embracing story-telling and thematic interpretation
- › Link to an over-arching nature-based tourism visitor information (collective marketing) collateral to ensure visitors are enticed to visit and spend longer in Eurobodalla

Responsibility:

Lead Role

ESC

Support Role

Crown Lands, OEH, NPWS, DNSW

Timing:

Dependent on grant funding to allow the project to proceed.

Category 4

Projects that strengthen Eurobodalla's key points of difference in the longer term

4.1 Harness the Potential of the Hinterland

Initiating Actions:

- › Establish a working cross -agency to review existing policy framework
- › Select initial sites that have the capacity to provide a mix of quality nature-based tourism experiences ready for niche visitor markets and are appropriate locations for increased visitation
- › Upgrade of visitor facilities at selected sites to enhance the nature-based tourism experiences
- › Review the overall track network to promote a wide choice of outdoor recreational experiences whilst achieving safety and minimizing risks between different users
- › Work with operators to build product for market to further capitalise on experiencing the Hinterland
- › Collaborate with land managers to seek potential interest in eco-tourism accommodation such as small 'eco-lodges', standing camps and huts associated with nature-based experiences
- › Link to an over-arching nature-based tourism visitor information (collective marketing) collateral to ensure visitors are enticed to visit and spend longer in Eurobodalla

Responsibility:

Lead Role

NPWS

Support Role

FCNSW, ESC, NSWDI, DPC

Timing:

Long term project with aim to identify new product and experiences for implementation in 5-10 years

4.2 Grow Demand for Aboriginal Cultural Tourism Products

Initiating Actions:

- › Formulate agreement on vision and ideas for Aboriginal cultural tourism products – product definition, concept design, scoping and identifying funding pathways
- › Seek collaboration with selected partners including identified projects such as the Mogo Art and Cultural Centre, Bingi Dreaming Track and the Gulaga Spiritual Experience Cluster including Wallaga Lake and the Umbarra Cultural Centre
- › Develop career training programs for Aboriginal communities in nature-based tourism
- › Assess partnership options including joint ventures, MOU, management agreements and leases
- › Seek grant funding with commercial tourism assistance and preparation of business plans

Responsibility:

Lead Role

LALCs, ESC

Support Role

NSWDI, DPC, DNSW, OEH

Timing:

Long term project with aim to have selected project(s) progressed to being 'market-ready' within 5 years

Supporting Existing Tourism Industry Development

Initiating Actions:

- › Start a mentoring program for both existing and new operators
- › Hold an annual nature-based tourism forum for industry and agencies to enable discussion and sharing of views on the growth areas, hot spots, management / regulator and industry issues
- › Develop a seasonality issues program – facts sheet tied to implementation of seasonal experiences by operators
- › Improve visitor information around adventure activities aligned with target markets, and showcasing the visitor experiences
- › Identify how best to leverage consumer and trade marketing in relation to the core markets for nature-based visitors
- › Develop a library of images and film footage for Eurobodalla that presents its nature-based tourism experiences

Responsibility:

Lead Role

ESC

Support Role

NPWS, LALCs, DSNSW, BMP

Timing:

Short term – next 1-2 years to commence program initiatives

Building Cooperative Arrangements with Partner Agencies

Initiating Actions:

- › Develop a Cross-agency Nature Based Tourism Working Group that can act as a ‘clearing house’ for multiple tenure/ cross-agency developments, applications and issues to create more effective solutions
- › Undertake discussions at a senior level with NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (and possibly Treasury) about models, procedures and legislation to encourage inter-agency cooperation with Council around significant projects
- › Review opportunities for collective management approaches
- › Consider longer term goals such as raising the quality of the visitor experience, focussing on agreed target markets such as higher yield overnight visitors and using different agency tools to consistently build a long term desired sustainable tourism industry focussing on quality

Responsibility:

Lead Role

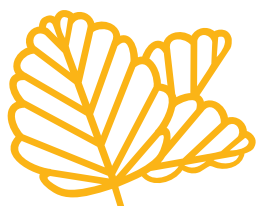
ESC

Support Role

BMP, NPWS, FCNSW, LALCs, DNSW, DSNSW, DPC, DPI

Timing:

Immediate and ongoing process of review and implementation



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