

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Following on from the Destination NSW plan, you said in your opening remarks that it would be better if there was a more structured plan. I am interested to know how you found the changes in developing your own destination plans and the synergy with Destination NSW.

Bathurst Regional Council was one of the first councils in NSW to commission, produce and adopt a Destination Management Plan in 2014/2015. This document is the blueprint for the development of a sustainable and multi-million dollar industry in the region.

We work with Destination NSW via the Regional Flagship Fund and have received funds for Bathurst 1000 and Bathurst Winter Festival due to the synergies with our DMP and the state's strategic imperatives as articulated in the Visitor Economy Industry Action Plan.

Is it all working?

The Bathurst Region has seen a 15% increase in total visitor nights since 2014 to 2016 - from 723,000 to 832,000, and a 42% increase in total visitor expenditure over the same period; \$118 million to \$257 million (source: Tourism Research Australia NVS).

The creation of the new Destination Network model is yet to be tested as the region which includes Bathurst (Country / Outback) is still in the process of employing staff and setting up the governance structure of the entity.

What support is needed to make it better if it is not working?

In our experience, funding models could be more flexible and move away from a one-size-fits-all approach to better suit mature entities and regions. We would welcome a state based DMP so regional campaigns could be aligned with state campaigns, less stringency around signage and greater support for industry training and product development to meet changing consumer needs & expectation.