

## **SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET – COUNCIL MEETING 27/02/2018**

### **Regional Destination Marketing Organisation – Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Statement**

Plantagenet Shire President, Deputy Shire President, Councillors, Chief Executive Officer, Administrative Staff and others, thank you for the opportunity to make this Regional Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) presentation.

In making this presentation I do so as elected Chairperson/President of the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board, Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Amazing South Coast Representative and sole Amazing South Coast Tourism Advisory Group member representing the Plantagenet sub region.

The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board has and continues to support and endorse the Amazing South Coast DMO initiative, including the formation and adoption of a regional DMO Board and business administrative structure.

That stated, the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board takes this opportunity to make the following observations and draw to Council's attention contributing factors based on consideration and information received:

#### **1. Mount Barker Tourist Bureau, Board and Local Industry Engagement:**

- 1.1. As proposed, the DMO Board would assume the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board and the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board would cease to exist.
- 1.2. The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board currently only has six elected members with no Vice President, despite our best efforts to secure one and other board members from financial members or those that would seek to be so. Given the pre DMO intention of the current President, Treasurer and Events Coordinator to step down at the October AGM, the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau and Board would not be in a position to continue under current local stakeholder level engagement.
- 1.3. With great respect and appreciation to our supporting members, I have been informed that not one local tourism business applied to be a DMO Tourism Advisory Group advocate.

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2. The Mount Barker Visitor Centre:
  - 2.1. Business ownership and operation would transfer to the DMO, administered through a regional Visitor Centre Manager reportable to a CEO.
  - 2.2. The existing Mount Barker Visitor Centre staffing model and currently deployed resource of a paid Visitor Centre Coordinator, together with unpaid volunteers would continue.
  - 2.3. The Mount Barker Visitor Centre, as currently administered by the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board as a self-funded autonomous incorporated and accredited entity, relies on membership subscriptions and fund raising for a considerable part of the Visitor Centre essential operational revenue.
3. Shire of Plantagenet representation on the DMO Board:
  - 3.1. As Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Chairperson, I have sole representation on the DMO transitional board prior to the election of DMO inaugural Board members proposed in November 2018.
  - 3.2. Election of the DMO inaugural Board members is to be skills based and by conventional voting by DMO members.
4. Transition to the new DMO Board / Wind Up of the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau and Board:
  - 4.1. It is important to recognise that an appointed DMO CEO, and administrative staff, including, but not necessarily limited to a regional Visitor Centre Manager would **administer** the DMO and Visitor Centres and the DMO Board's role would be to set governance and policy etc.
  - 4.2. Under our binding constitution, a wind up/transfer of the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau would require promulgation of a Special Resolution and adoption by members at a Special General Meeting.
  - 4.3. It would be prudent to conduct a Mount Barker Tourist Bureau members "shakeout" meeting **prior** to the Special General Meeting to address any concerns and/or answer any questions.

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4.4. The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board recognises and endorses a public meeting for the purposes of engagement and promotion of the Amazing South Coast but this should occur **after** both the Member's "shakeout" meeting and the Special General Meeting as a precursor to an Amazing South Coast DMO 2018/9 Membership Drive and to ensure timely focus on and achievement of transition to the DMO.

## 5. Concerns

The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board reiterates their support for the Amazing South Coast DMO but reasonably recognises and appreciates the following:

### 5.1. Representation on the Amazing South Coast DMO Board and Formation of a Local Tourism Advisory Group:

5.1.1. Given that election of the Amazing South Coast DMO Board inaugural Board members will be skills based and subject to conventional member voting and taking into account points 1.2 and 1.3 it is possible that the Plantagenet sub region may not have any members on the board.

5.1.2. Peter Snow supported by Michael Edwards, Chairs of Discover Albany Foundation and Denmark Tourism (Inc.) have proposed two options:

Option 1 – Plantagenet representative on the DMO Board – that representative chairs the local tourism advisory group.

Option 2 – No Plantagenet representative on the Board – the elected chair of any local tourism advisory group attends DMO Board meetings in a non-voting right capacity. Such group being an unincorporated body.

5.1.3. Notwithstanding the two options proposed, it is understood that the Shire of Plantagenet could exercise appointment of a local group under the Local Government act.

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#### 5.2. Mount Barker Visitor Centre Operation / Ongoing Financial Viability:

5.2.1. Given the planned 1 July 2018 cut over to the DMO, there would be no normal injection of 2018/9 Mount Barker Tourist Bureau membership funds usually commencing in June.

5.2.2. The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau currently has sufficient funds to finance operations to June 30, but any slippage or curtailment of the DMO sustaining funding after June 30 will impact on the Visitor Centre's operational viability.

#### 5.3. Event planning/engagement/attendance/representation and Fund Raising:

5.3.1. The Mount Barker Tourist Bureau currently undertakes attendance at various local events and fund raisers with its "Mobile Shop Front" attended from a pool drawn from the Board and Visitor Centre.

5.3.2. The mainstay of attendants has/is currently the President, Treasurer and Events Coordinator who will be stepping down.

5.3.3. Understandably, there is little capacity for Visitor Centre staff/volunteers to volunteer additional time over and above that provided to keep the Visitor Centre open.

5.3.4. With a single DMO Board/Administration, combined with a much larger pool of regional events there would be a need for a local group to sustain these functions.

Again, subject to the expected ratification by members, the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau wholeheartedly endorses and supports the move to an Amazing South Coast DMO with amazing and previously impossible promotion, marketing, LGA resources and potential dividends and respects any conditions the Shire of Plantagenet as an ongoing Alliance partner, may wish to make to protect its interests and that of the local tourism and general community.

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Finally, a move to a regional DMO by July 01 will require a lot of work in what is now a very short time frame. Therefore the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board asks of Council and the Shire of Plantagenet administration that the outcome of today's in camera agenda item in respect to the DMO be communicated to the Mount Barker Tourist Bureau Board and other DMO stakeholders at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you for your opportunity to make this presentation

**Colin Molloy**

**President – Mount Barker Tourist Bureau**

**27<sup>th</sup> February, 2018**