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## 1.STRATEGY OVERVIEW

## 1.1. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre (AELEC) is a national leader in the equine industry by providing world-class facilities and hosting a range of events. A ten-year Strategic Plan will guide the future direction and investment for AELEC. Key objectives of the *Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032* include:



Ensure optimal and sustainable asset management of AELEC



Explore opportunities for enhancing operational performance and economic outcomes for the region



Align with the 'Tamworth Regional Blueprint 100'

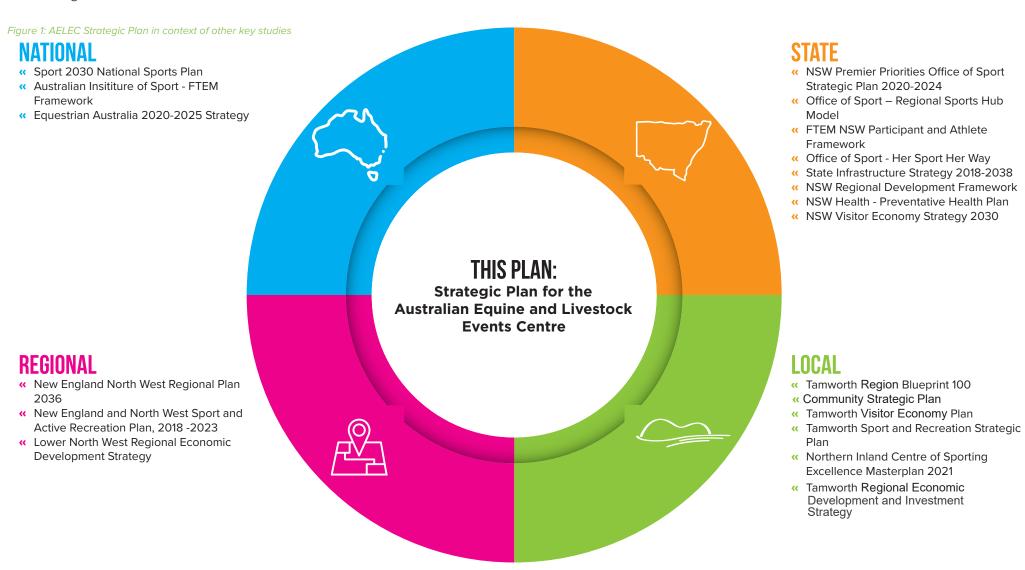


Develop prioritised actions that are achievable and measurable



#### 1.2. WHERE DOES THIS PLAN FIT?

The Australian Equine and Livestock Events Centre Strategic Plan 2022 - 2032 is aligned to Tamworth Region Blueprint 100, a range of national, state, regional and other local strategies.



## 2. ABOUT AELEC

AELEC is the most unique equine and livestock events complex in Australia. Built in 2007/08 at a cost of approximately \$28m, the facility has grown to what it is today with an approximate value of \$62m as of 2020. AELEC is a major equine destination for a wide variety of events and activities. Each year, the venue attracts:



**7,000** annual competitors



**9,000** horses



**16,000** head of cattle



**120,000** visitor nights



\$17m in economic benefits

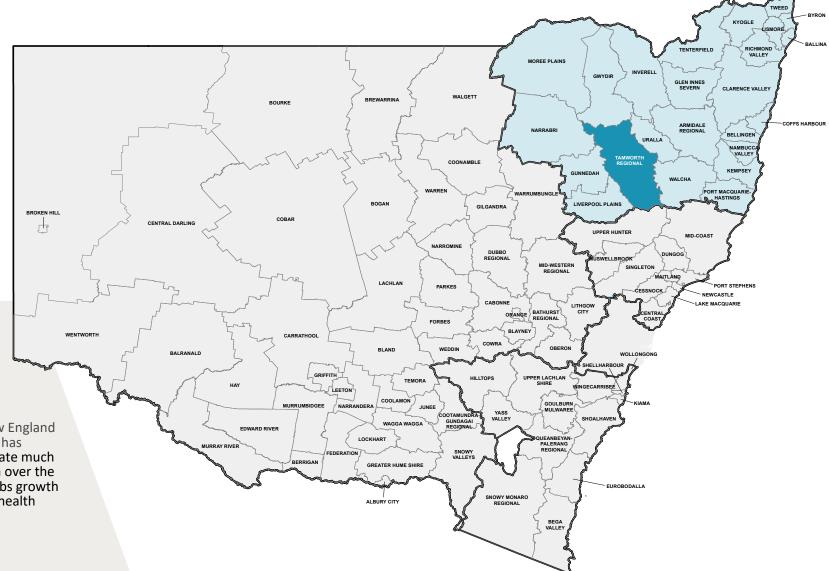
In addition to equine breeding and sporting association shows and clinics, AELEC has hosted a number of other events including the Tamworth Show, cattle sales, major trade shows, indoor motorcycle racing, motorcycle rallies, rodeos, corporate events and even the Moscow Circus. AELEC continues to attract National and International events and each year the facility needs to keep growing and evolving to meet the increasing demand.



## 2.1. REGIONAL CONTEXT

AELEC is located within the New England North West Region of NSW as illustrated in the fgure below:

Figure 2: Regional Context of AELEC



Tamworth is a major regional city located within the New England North West Region of NSW. Tamworth not only supports the surrounding region with events but also intra and interstate.

Through their regional plan for New England North West, the NSW Government has identifed Tamworth to 'accommodate much of the projected population growth over the next 20 years, supporting critical jobs growth and providing the region with key health and education services'.

## 2.2. TAMWORTH SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

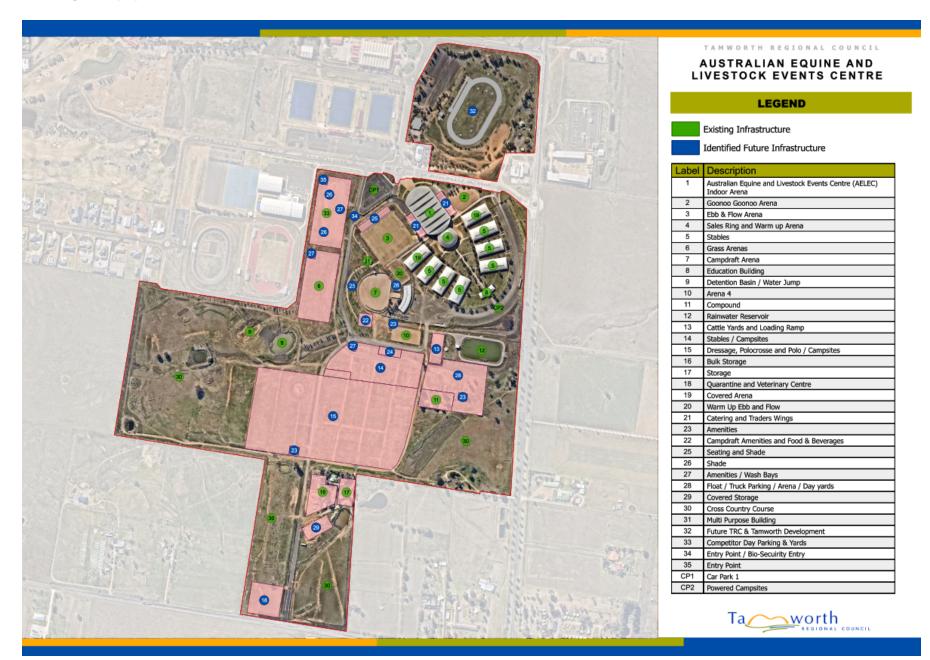
The Tamworth Sports and Entertainment precinct consists of; AELEC, The Northern Inland Centre of Sport Excellence (NICSE); Athletics Centre, Sports Dome, Hockey, Velodrome, Gymnastics, Tamworth Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (TRECC) as well as multiple areas for future growth and development. Refer to figure 3 for an aerial of the Tamworth Sports and Entertainment Precinct as of July 2022.

Each facility manages their own strategic and master plan but work in conjunction with the wider precinct and surrounding properties. The AELEC master Plan drawing has been compiled to illustrate existing facilities, proposed future infrastructure, and the indicative boundary at AELEC as od July 2022 (refer Figure 4).



Figure 3 – The Tamworth Sports and Entertainment Precinct

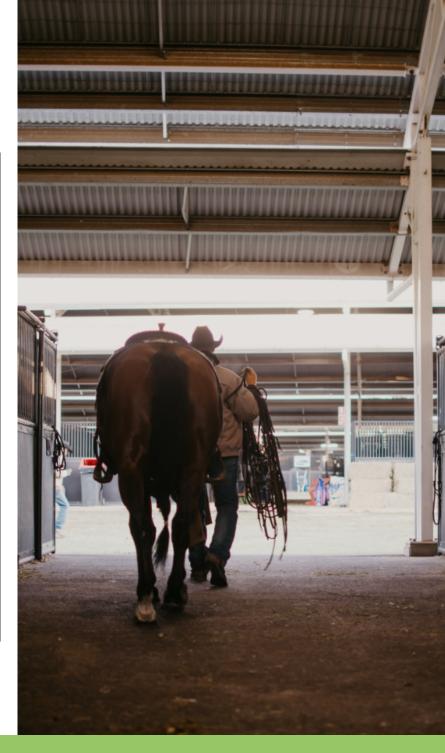
Figure 4: AELEC – Existing and Proposped Future Infrastructure Plan



## 2.3. KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

The objectives of optimal and sustainable asset management, operational performance and economic outcomes for the region, provide several challenges and opportunities for AELEC in this 10-year strategic plan. Some of these include:

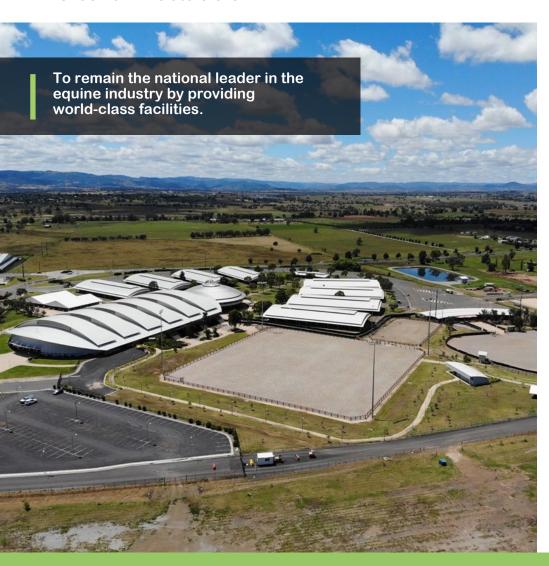
CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES
Ensuring effective integration with the proposed regional aquatic leisure facility	Maximising integration with the precinct overall
The need to balance cost of venue hire with broader economic return	Taking advantage of synergies with the tourism and equine precinct and the Visitor Economy and Economic Development and Investment Strategy
Major events splitting up due to increased size and capacity that AELEC cannot accommodate and therefore potential loss of events to competing venues and states	Use the growth of events to capitalise the use of AELEC and increase facilities to support the demand
Cost of long-term asset management and replacement requirements	Flexible venue hire arrangements that maximise utilisation
Traffic management and parking requirements internally and the wider precinct to mirror the growth of the venue, the precinct and surrounding developments	Enable simultaneous events or larger events that require quarantining of spaces, venue and precinct access and internal/external movements
Food and beverage spaces are not appropriate for the output required and are not flexible to cater for the variety of events and show and their requirements	Re-investigate original AELEC plans with catering and trader 'wings' off the side of the Main Arena to mitigate current venue shortfalls
Accessibly across the venue	With new design, infrastructure and layout accessibility requirements and existing needs can be included into the scope of works and incorporated into venue upgrades and developments
Maximise the cost recovery of venue operations whilst not adversely impacting on broader economic return opportunities and increasing venue hire fee that damages users' ability to use the facility	Other revenue generating spaces such as food and beverage, produce, stall trades exhibitions, functions, vet clinics, sponsorship and other community and commercial activations etc.
Emergence of privately owned venues – in particular Campdraft and covered arenas	Trend and growth analysis and developments to see that AELEC responds to the modern trends and changes to maintain world class facilities and is a step above the rest.
In planning for facility upgrades that don't adversely impact on the diversity of AELEC users and key events	Upgrades to increase AELEC's venue diversity whilst increasing equine discipline and non-equine venue use.
Staffing being able to service event content and hirers through agile management and operational resourcing	Future proof structure through event and venue utilisation and projected use throughout and after developments
	Effective partnerships with other agencies to maximise funding opportunities, utilisation and revenue potential.



## 3. VISION & KEY FOCUS AREAS

#### 3.1. VISION

The vision for AELEC is as follows:



### 3.2. KEY FOCUS AREAS AND TIMING

In order to contribute toward the AELEC vision, the Strategic Plan outlines four (4) Key Focus Areas as follows:





**INFRASTRUCTURE** 

MANAGEMENT AND **OPERATIONS** 



PROMOTION, EVENTS AND **ACTIVATION** 



**EDUCATION** 

Goals, actions and accompanying rationale are assigned to each Key Focus Area. These are summarised in the sections below. The timing of actions within the 10-Year Strategic Plan have been assigned as:

- « Immediate (commence within 6 months)
- « Short Term (commence within 2 years)
- « Medium Term (commence within 3-5 years)
- « Long Term (commence within 6–10 years).

Full implementation of the Plan will be dependent on available resources and operational schedules.

#### 3.2.1. Infrastructure

#### Goals:

- « Ensure infrastructure maintains AELEC's competitive advantage and realises the continued vision of being the world class leader in the equine industry
- Ensure existing and new infrastructure is sustainable
   Maximise use of infrastructure by ensuring it is as fexible as possible
   Avoid duplication with other infrastructure in the precinct
- « Leverage synergies within broader sporting, entertainment and commercial precinct

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
1.1	Investigate the feasibility of a commercial kitchen and on-site restaurant/ function facility within the indoor arena. This could potentially be incorporated by an enclosed extension to the indoor arena. The facility should be designed in such a way as to service the broader precinct and include the potential for trade space to service events, function and conference space, back of house storage, AV and sound, storage and amenities.	To provide a broader diversity in catering, encourage patrons to stay and socialise at the venue and enhance secondary spending. The intention is to increase venue utilisation for existing and new hirers and provide an additional revenue stream. Will create social and function spaces that AELEC currently lacks and therefore is forcing patrons to go off venue to fulfill these requirements.	Short Term (Investigation) Medium Term (Implementation)
1.2	As an alternative to an on-site restaurant/ function facility within AELEC, consider the provision of these facilities within the proposed tourism/ equine precinct north of Jack Smyth Drive. The facility should be designed in such a way as to service the broader Tamworth Sports and Entertainment precinct.	To provide a broader diversity in catering, encourage patrons to stay and socialise within walking distance of AELEC, provide a commercial return and create deeper links to equine and region visitors.	Short Term
1.3	Reposition the campdraft arena and extend current cattle yards immediately to the south and alter its orientation. Incorporate an event office, announcer's box, food and beverage outlets, shade and tiered seating around the arena, and improve drainage of the arena surface.	Address impact of afternoon sun on campdraft events. Provide a more functional and welcoming space for patrons.  Improve multi-use capacity of the campdraft arena for other equestrian disciplines. Endeavour to phase in these improvements in order to continue to maximise its current use.	Short Term and Ongoing
1.4	Install shaded tiered seating on the northern side of the Ebb and Flow arena and incorporate provision of two raised judges boxes.Potential solar options	Provide a more functional, all weather and welcoming space for patrons.  Allow for enhanced officiating of events.	Medium Term
1.5	Investigate the cost and benefit of installing a drop down four-sided electronic screen in the indoor arena.	Improve sponsorship and revenue generation opportunities. Enhance customer/ spectator experience.	Immediate (Investigation) Short Term (Implementation)
1.6	Improve access to the indoor arena for all abilities and people with prams. This should be included as part of any proposed expansion of the indoor arena (refer Action 1.1 above) and assess option for additional lift.	Other than a single lift at the southern end (which is also used for services) all abilities access to the indoor arena is currently restricted to the northern end. Improved access from the southern end of the arena will better service accessibility where the majority of patrons enter from.	Short Term
1.7	Conduct an audit of power to ensure it is capable of serving all areas for both existing and proposed facilities. Include the need for emergency power supply.	Tripping of power supply impacting on event management and user satisfaction in multiple locations around the venue.	Immediate (Audit) Short/ Medium Term (Implementation)

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
1.8	Upgrade Wifi and make available to venue hirers.	Current Wifi is limited. Enhancing will improve customer satisfaction and improve patron experience.	Immediate
1.9	Upgrade public address system including capacity for splitting to enable messaging to individual areas.	Improve managing and officiating of events and enhance patron experience. Enable multiple events to be run in conjunction with each other and have the support of sound/announcers.	Short Term
1.10	Investigate the capture, storage and re-use of water onsite for irrigation purposes.	Reduce operational costs of water supply and continue use of recycled water	Short Term (Investigation) Long Term (Implementation)
1.11	Continue with works to locate and build covered storage and maintenance facilities at the southern end of AELEC. Liaise with key users to incorporate storage/ on-site maintenance facilities for their activities.	Reduce ad-hoc storage across the site, improve overall site amenity, safety and cater for user needs by reducing their need to store equipment off-site.	Ongoing
1.12	Improve the condition of the grassed surface currently used for dressage and show jumping purposes situated west of the Ebb and Flow arena. Incorporate wash bay, toilet and shade facilities.	Provide a higher standard for events utilising this area and improve patron experience. Maintain the status of being able to host all FEI disciplines.	Short Term and Ongoing
1.13	Involve key stakeholders and private sector in investigating the re-use of the sale yard arena.	Currently under-utilised and has the potential for enhanced activation and greater financial contribution to the venue. Involving stakeholders and the provide sector enhances the partnership potential and may generate a more feasible solution.	Short Term (Investigation) Long Term (Implementation)
1.14	Investigate the most appropriate location for a temporary campsite including the provision of support amenities. Ensure no adverse impact on event uses.	Enhance support with event demand and enhance customer experience. Enhance utilisation of AELEC space to cater for many user groups and reduce remediation costs.	Medium Term (Investigation) Long Term (Implementation)
1.15	Improve provision of shade throughout the venue whilst ensuring no adverse impacts on AELEC events (e.g cross country). Implement as part of overall Master Plan for the venue.	Enhance patron experience. Via trees and shaded infrastructure either permanent or temporary.	Ongoing
1.16	Investigate possible locations for day parking and day yards, due to possible NICSE expansion that will impact on AELEC's current footprint. Consider incorporation of amenities, wash bays and arenas.	The land that will form part of the proposed Aquatic Centre will result in the loss of functional day-parking space for a number of events. It will be essential to provide this elsewhere at a suitable location within the venue.	Immediate (Investigation) Short/ Medium Term (Implementation)
1.17	Expand and install new cattle yards, loading ramp, holding yards, truck parking and turning bays south of the existing cattle yards with a cattle lane joining the two operations.	Current cattle yards are not large enough to support the cattle operations that are conducted at AELEC. An alternative location for the loading ramp, holding yards and truck turning bay would eliminate the safety risk of all users being positioned in a tight location within the centre of the venue. Additional space and yards would assist in maintaining animal welfare whilst animals are on site. Additional space would improve user satisfaction and allow for event diversification.	Medium Term

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
1.18	Subject to there being no impact on the conduct of existing events at AELEC, investigate the demand for, and potential location of, polo and polocrosse fields and support amenities. Polocrosse Australia* required dimensions are as follows:  « Standard size of a Polocrosse field is 146.5m x 55m  « Distance from sideline to spectator line is a minimum of 3m  « There must be a minimum of 12m clearance at the ends of fields  « Distance between fields is a minimum of 10m  « If fields run end-to-end the minimum clearance is 24m  « If fields run end-to-side the minimum clearance is 22m.  [* "Polocrosse Australia. Polocrosse Rules Information on the Game, 2019"]  Polo field dimensions^ are as follows:  « Full size = 275m x 183m (if unboarded) or 274m x 146m (if boarded)  « Minimum size = 230m x 160m (if unboarded) or 230m x 130m (if boarded)  « Recommended safety zone = 9m beyond the boards or sidelines and 27.5m beyond the back line (prepared to same standard as the field of play).  [^ "Australian Polo Federation. Australian Rules of Polo. 26th Feb 2018"]	Further improve the utilisation of the venue and attract new revenue generating events. Polo and Polocrosse are consistent with the overall purpose of the venue. If demand warrants provision, careful consideration of positioning of the fields would be required due to the size of the land area needed in order to ensure no impact on existing events.	Medium Term (Investigation) Long Term (Implementation)
1.19	Investigate the feasibility of incorporating on-site commercial activities with synergies to AELEC (e.g. vet clinic, farrier, produce store etc).  Include analysis of the most appropriate delivery model to facilitate commercial activities (e.g. provision of land for private development).	The incorporation of commercial activities on-site has been included in existing planning documents. This could potentially contribute to the operating viability of the facility and/ or raise the profile of the site as a national leader in the equine industry.	Medium Term (Investigation) Long Term (Implementation)
1.20	Explore the feasibility of truck access via Burgmans Lane during major events. Explore the location of the supporting internal road network to work with both venue entrances.	An alternative access to the main entry off Jack Smyth Drive would reduce congestion and lead to enhanced customer experience. Entry off Burgmans Lane has been raised in previous planning.	Medium Term (Investigation) [If feasible, implementation will hinge on final design/ timing of proposed bypass road]
1.21	Budget to progressively repair or replace infrastructure identified in the Asset Management Plan as being in poor condition.	Ensures standard of venue is maintained consistent with leading national equine centre.	Immediate and Ongoing

## 3.2.2. Management and Operations

#### Goals:

- « Ensure that the management model for AELEC continues to support commercial and responsive decision-making to realise the vision of being a world leader in the equine industry
- « Continue alignment of AELEC with other sporting, entertainment and commercial facilities in the broader precinct to avoid duplication and maximise economic benefit to Tamworth and the region
- « Collaborate with key stakeholders to ensure AELEC continues to generate high levels of key user satisfaction as the equine event capital. « Ensure adequate resourcing is available and implemented for the service levels and requirements of AELEC.
- « Maintain an evidence-based approach to future improvements to maximise value for money, viability and user satisfaction.
- « Ensure that existing infrastructure is maintained in a manner commensurate with a leading national equine centre, future improvements and; Adopt policies to retain and improve the competitive advantages of AELEC

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
2.1	Extension of partnerships with universities, private organisations and associations to maximise beneficial outcomes to AELEC	Implementation of partnerships that supports Blueprint 100 initiatives across multiple platforms. Developments of grass-root to Olympic training teams and home facilities provides opportunities across multiple disciplines and diversifies the use of the venue whilst creating access to other revenue streams.	Short Term and Ongoing
2.2	As part of the review of management arrangements, ensure the structure is agile enough to continue to enable AELEC to draw on temporary resources required to match peak demands in a timely manner.	AELEC has a small multi-skilled team which is highly regarded by key stakeholders for their support and expertise in equine events. However, the demands during peak times require additional resources to ensure the venue is presented in a manner consistent with a national leading equine facility, e.g. event preparation may require additional mowing, landscaping and equipment set-up.	Short Term and Ongoing
2.3	Establish a mechanism for liaising with key users in budget preparation and informing them of any major capital works prior to their implementation.	Minimises risk of unintended adverse impacts on existing user groups and their events when implementing major capital improvements and provides good communications.  Provides an opportunity for key users to provide input on facility improvements.	Short Term and Ongoing
2.4	Establish a formal de-brief process after events.	Informal liaison occurs with major users at the present time. Establishing a formal process will facilitate continual improvement consistent with a national leading equine facility.	Short Term

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
2.5	Undertake a review of fees and pricing structure. Consider:  « Flexible charges which minimise risk of losing existing or future events (or parts thereof) to competing facilities.  « Enabling smaller groups to hire parts of the facility at more affordable prices.  « The community and economic benefit of events in granting any concessions.  [Infrastructure enhancements outlined within this Strategic Plan, offer other opportunities for revenue generation which could offset potential loss of revenue].	Prior to Covid, AELEC had a cost recovery of 76% with a net deficit of approximately \$500,000. The venue generated an estimated economic benefit of \$17m per annum (i.e. a benefit 34 times the size of the operating deficit). In this context, fee structures and contract arrangements should also consider the net economic and socio economic benefits of events as opposed to a focus on operating cost recovery only.  There is some risk that parts of events could be reallocated to competing venues in order to reduce costs.	Short Term
2.6	Prepare a traffic management plan that addresses surrounding precinct, external access and parking for events, internal traffic movement and the quarantining of individual areas to enable simultaneous use.	Facilitates safe and efficient movement of competitors and visitors and maximises the capacity for simultaneous use.	Short Term (Planning) Short Term and Ongoing (Implementation)
2.7	Look into inclusion an iconic entry statement, possibly incorporating public art. As part of the masterplan, develop an indicative cost estimate for improvements.	This master plan will guide the implementation of future improvements, budgeting, assist in the marketing of the centre, and support business case(s) for government funding.	Short Term
2.8	Develop a business case and advocacy document to help secure State and Federal funding for future improvements.	Ensure optimal return on investment and minimise reliance on Council funding to implement AELEC masterplan.  Provide an evidenced based approach to required facility improvements consistent with government requirements including economic impact assessments.	Short to Medium Term

## 3.2.3. Promotion, Events and Activation

#### Goals:

- « Raise greater awareness of AELEC as a premier equine event destination
- « Build on the strengths of AELEC as an equine facility to seek other equestrian events with potential economic beneft
- « While not jeopardising the focus of AELEC as a leading equine centre, pursue other (non-equine) event opportunities which can improve operating viability and/or generate additional economic and socio economic benefit
- « Partner with users to create opportunities for improving revenue generation and patronage, and enhancing customer experience
- « Align with Tamworth's Visitor Economy strategy and leverage tourism through the link to the Economic Development and Investment Strategy and the Opportunities that arise within

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
3.1	Pursue new equine event opportunities that have economic benefit	Maximise facility utilisation, generate economic benefit and reduce net operational deficit.	Ongoing
3.2	Seek new event opportunities outside of the equine sector (e.g. trade shows, caravan/ camping shows, home shows, concerts, other sports) particularly at off-peak times (i.e. July and August).	Maximise year-round facility utilisation, generate economic benefit and reduce net operational deficit.	Ongoing
3.3	Liaise with major event promoters to address essential improvements required to enhance the functionality of the venue for major non-equine events.	Discussion with a major event promoter revealed the need for improvements to internal and external traffic movement including quarantining of areas to enable concurrent activities to take place and generally improve venue flexibility.	Short Term
3.4	Seek sponsorship opportunities that align with Council values.	Maximise revenue generation and reduce the net operational deficit.	Short Term and Ongoing
3.5	Establish and publish an annual calendar of events.	Ensures key stakeholders and other potential users can be informed of venue availability.	Short Term and Ongoing
		Maximises public promotion and awareness of the facility.	
3.6	Work closely with users to maximise the promotion of events and patronage.	Ensure optimal facility awareness and utilisation leading to enhanced community outcomes.	Short Term and Ongoing
3.7	Work with stakeholders and the equine industry to assist in bidding for, and securing, new events and help to acknowledge milestone events at the centre.	New or milestone events help to reinforce the status of the venue as a world leading equine centre e.g. International Dressage Championship 2024. The Tamworth Show will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2023.	Short Term and Ongoing
3.8	Ensure promotion activities of AELEC and the broader precinct align with the Visitor Economy Plan.	Maximise economic benefit to the Tamworth Region through increased awareness and visitation.	Short Term and Ongoing
3.9	Develop a promotion strategy which raises the awareness of AELEC as an event destination (include digital marketing such as fly-throughs, sizzle reels)	Contribute to awareness of the venue for potential new users and contribute to Visitor Economy Plan.	Short Term

## 3.2.4. Education

#### Goals:

- Pursue partnerships with the education sector which would help to raise the profle of the venue as a world leading equine centre
   Encourage use of AELEC for educational activities which contribute to operational sustainability and/ or economic beneft to the region

ITEM	ACTION	RATIONALE	TIME FRAME
4.1	Assist University of New England (UNE) in investigating the establishment of a National Equine & Canine Institute in Tamworth.	Establishing a National Equine & Canine Institute (NECI) in Tamworth is consistent with the vision of Tamworth being the world leader in the equine industry.	Short Term
4.2	Undertake a preliminary Business Case analysis of the cost/ benefit of establishing AELEC as a headquarters for the proposed National Equine & Canine Institute.	If established at AELEC the NECI would need to be a net contributor to the economic benefit of the region and/ or the operational performance of the venue.	Medium Term
4.2.1	Identify research, education and training opportunities in association with a proposed National Equine & Canine Institute that would support AELEC to be the world leader in the equine industry.		Medium Term
4.2.2	Identify new/ upgraded facilities required (including indicative capital cost) to enable AELEC to accommodate research, education or training components of the National Equine & Canine Institute which would support AELEC to be the world leader in the equine industry.		Medium to Long Term
4.2.3	Identify any additional operational costs and revenue that would be incurred if AELEC becomes a headquarters for the proposed National Equine & Livestock Institute and the Equine Multipurpose Centre.	Additional operational costs and revenue from the establishment of the NELI at AELEC would need to be budgeted for and taken into account in the Business Case.	Medium to Long Term
4.3	Ensure that use of AELEC for educational activities does not impact on the staging of events at the venue.	The core business of the centre would need to be unaffected by the NECI to ensure no user impacts or financial impacts. The activities are to compliment	Ongoing
4.4	Encourage and continue use of AELEC by equine groups for local educational activities (e.g. judging courses, rider education)	Reinforces goal of being a world leading equine facility. As well as providing a pathway for youth.	Ongoing