

# monitoring and evaluation

self help module

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# 5



Industry &  
Investment

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## module overview

Individual communities implementing a community economic development (CED) program are usually guided by a strategic plan and local community stakeholders.

The strategic plan identifies a range of community-based economic development initiatives to assist the community in working together towards agreed goals for the future.

This module has been prepared to provide you with knowledge that will assist you to monitor and evaluate your community economic development program and projects. Case studies have been provided from a range of small to large community CED programs and projects to share ideas and techniques. Website references for each community program and project are at the end of the module if you wish to seek further information.

Monitoring and evaluation must be understood as a complete system within a project and should be planned, managed and funded. This includes designing and setting up the system, gathering and managing the information, understanding and using the information to improve actions, then communicating and reporting results.

### **on completion of this module you will be able to:**

- understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation
- be strategic in your approach when planning monitoring and evaluation strategies
- identify, plan and implement monitoring and evaluation approaches and plan an evaluation schedule
- analyse outcomes to establish performance measures, collect information and identify improvements to your program or project
- communicate results to appropriate stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation are important functions in program and project management, yet they are frequently neglected. They are used to 'keep a finger on the pulse' of a program or project, to improve performance, increase efficiency, make assessments and inform stakeholders. They can also satisfy funding requirements and provide information for future lobbying or funding grants by providing relevant information on project outcomes.

# monitoring

## overview:

In this section you will learn:

- What monitoring is and why you need to monitor your program or project
- Formal monitoring techniques including progress meetings and strategic plan review workshops
- Informal monitoring techniques.

## what is monitoring?

Monitoring is an ongoing process of reviewing or observing a program or project to ensure you are 'on track' to achieving your objectives or goals. It should be simple, cost effective and relevant to the objectives of the program or project. The methods used should be flexible and not become rigid, and the information provided should be dependable and accurate. Monitoring should be action-oriented as it is not just concerned with the collection and analysis of data, but with diagnosing problems and suggesting alternative practical solutions.

## why monitor?

Monitoring has many benefits. It is an integral part of project and program management that assists you in reaching successful outcomes, on time, on budget and on track towards your vision and objectives. It assists in guiding your actions and improving the methods you use to implement your program or project. It is strongly linked to communication, ensuring you discuss and assess the program or project and inform and report results to all stakeholders.

Monitoring is also an effective early warning process as an issue can be identified and resolved early before it can become a problem. Finally, monitoring is important for transparency and accountability. For example, a CED program committee must monitor its finances to meet the requirements of funding bodies such as Industry & Investment NSW (I & I NSW). Monitoring can be conducted formally or informally.

## formal monitoring

Formal monitoring involves reviewing achievements against your targets or milestones and presenting regular reports to committee meetings. The treasurer also monitors and reports on finances.

The reports should:

- Make an appraisal of progress
- Clarify issues
- Flag any matters of concern and plan and document actions to rectify any problems.

It is the committee's responsibility to use these reports effectively, to identify trends, to make decisions and to take appropriate action.

Communities need to monitor the progress of their projects at regular intervals to see if they are keeping within the budget, to ensure that the projects have enough human resources and if the tasks are being completed within the timeframe. They can also monitor dependencies, for instance one project may depend on certain tasks or another project being completed before it can begin. Communities also need to monitor any new projects against their community strategic plan, to ensure that the project fits within the plan's parameters and that it addresses objectives identified in the plan.

Monitoring also involves measuring the overall program performance at regular intervals to assess how well your program is doing. Progress meetings are the best way to monitor and report on the progress of projects and your CED program.

## progress meetings

As part of formal monitoring, it is important to hold progress meetings. These can be about the program as a whole or about individual projects. It is often beneficial to stand back and ask some key questions, such as:

- Where are things working well?
- Where are there problems or potential problems?
- Why are the problems occurring?
- What can we do about them?

These meetings are important to keep track of the progress of your program or project, for communication between team members and to make assessments and improvements. Minutes should be kept of these meetings to document the progress.



## tips

**MEETING AGENDA:** There should be an agenda item on the progress of the project for the coordinator or Chair, the treasurer and project representatives at every committee meeting so this is regularly reported.

**TIME AND RESOURCES:** The coordinator and/or committee needs to set aside adequate time and resources to monitor, evaluate and report effectively against the strategic plan's objectives or performance indicators.

**KRAs:** Use your strategic plan's key result areas (KRAs) as a framework for your monitoring and reporting. Every project you do should relate to at least one of the issues in each KRA.

## case study

### case study

**Kendall** is a village of 700 people south west of Port Macquarie on the NSW Mid North Coast. The Kendall Future Directions program committee conducts regular monthly community meetings to monitor progress of village projects. Current projects remain on the monthly agenda until they are finalised even if there have been no actions in that month. CED program members and active community groups attend the meetings and when appropriate, they have a speaker address the meeting if the subject is relevant to a current project. A major monitoring tool is their community strategic plan as any new projects have to be identified on the plan or address an issue from the plan.

The process is transparent and accountable with report updates supplied to a range of stakeholders via email every month. The program also reports progress of projects to the local community via the monthly newsletter. They often receive feedback from these articles, for instance people ring to volunteer services or to give an opinion, whether negative or positive. This type of inclusive process allows anyone in the community to have their say. For example, a landscape architect offered his services after he read an article in the Chronicle and is now working with Council on the new Master Plan for the village, even though he is not a regular participant in the community program.

## case study

**Deniliquin** is a town of 7,500 people located in the south west (Murray Region) of NSW. In 1999 they established a large, annual event called the Deni Play on the Plains Festival that attracts around 18,000 people and features the Deni World Record Ute Muster with a record number of 6,235 utes mustered in 2007. They monitor progress through a defined organisational structure and regular meetings.

The five paid staff includes a Festival Director, Sponsorship Manager, Marketing Manager, Finance Manager and Administration Coordinator. The volunteer Board of Directors that assists in running the event includes a President, Vice President and Treasurer. The volunteer Committee of Management includes a Site Coordinator, Bars Coordinator, Trade Site and Catering Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, Merchandise Coordinator, Waste Management Coordinator, Local Sponsorship and Raffle Coordinator, Signage Coordinator, Concerts Coordinator and Accommodation and Around the Ground Coordinator.

The event has a defined organisational structure with strategies, including progress meetings that monitor progress throughout the planning and implementation period. The festival management committee and board of directors hold regular Director Meetings to oversee strategic direction and associated issues. Staff and coordinators of all the event sections hold Committee of Management Meetings to monitor progress and incorporate information passed on from the Director Meetings. Event sections hold their own Sub Committee Meetings on a 'needs only' basis.

The Deni – Play on the Plains Festival moved from a 'not for profit' incorporated association to a 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee on 1 July 2007. The change was made to ensure a more structured business for the ongoing benefit for the community. It is now called Deni – Play on the Plains Festival Limited.

Some communities develop formal monitoring tools and processes to assist with monitoring the progress of CED projects, such as application processes, training workshops, operation manuals, project planning partnerships with Council staff, and CED newsletters.

## case study

**Clarence Valley** Council has implemented an events and festivals development program. Special events are an important part of the Clarence Valley lifestyle, with more than 100 celebrations held annually. Each event receiving Council funding is required to submit an outcomes summary as part of the annual event funding application process. This data enables the Council to monitor the return on investment and quantify the contribution of events and festivals to the broader economy. The Council also provides a complete tool kit to assist the sustainable growth of events and delivers an annual "Boost Your Event" training program. More information is available from the Council's website – see the Case study websites section of this module.

The Clarence Valley Council Economic Development Officer writes and distributes a monthly e-newsletter to all community program members and other stakeholders, monitoring and updating the progress of current projects, distributing information such as up-coming grants or training programs, and keeping everyone informed of happenings in the Shire.

## case study

**Crookwell** is an historic town located on the Great Dividing Range south west of Canberra with a population of 2,000 in the town and 4,250 in the Shire. The Crookwell Region Advancement Group (CRAG) secured funding to develop a two-year project that included initiating six small events in the Shire:

- The Garden Lovers Market added value to an existing, successful open gardens event
- The Hidden Treasures Market grew in its second year to include 15 of the main street retailers and has been beneficial to the Crookwell economy
- The Christmas Market joined forces with Santa's Hideaway to strengthen and grow their yearly market
- The Rotary Swap Meet was a huge success in 2006 with over 100 stallholders and is a fundraiser for the Crookwell Rotary Club which benefits the community
- Art on the Range is an annual event that attracts up to \$5000 sponsorship and includes a program of community art workshops for adults and children
- The Living Houses Expo is directed at people who want a tree-change and seeks to attract professionals and light industry to the Shire, and includes information on environmentally-sound housing options.

CRAG established extensive Operations Manuals for each event that outline tasks and timelines to keep the project on track during the planning and implementation phases each year. Information is not lost if volunteers change over successive years and the Operations Manual can be used as a tool to measure against and monitor progress each year.

## strategic plan review workshop

A CED program is established by developing a community strategic plan that includes a vision for the future and a series of CED projects to work towards that vision. Progress towards implementing the strategic plan should be reviewed on a regular basis and, if required, a Strategic Plan Review Workshop should be scheduled to update the plan.

The Strategic Plan Review Workshop helps a community check if it is moving in the right direction and if the objectives identified in the last plan and linkages to the local council are still appropriate. It is an essential tool for local committees to monitor their progress and re-evaluate their community's vision, goals and direction.

At the very least, these workshops should be conducted every two to three years to evaluate achievements, plan future direction and identify new committee or subcommittee members. Workshop facilitation assistance may be available to eligible regional communities. Contact your nearest I & I NSW office for further information and a Community Economic Development Program (CEDP) application form.

## case study

**Merriwa** has a population of around 1,000 and is located north west of Newcastle. The community conducted Strategic Plan Review Workshops in 1999, 2000, 2002, 2006 and 2007. The first three workshops were conducted 12-18 months apart, however during a four year gap, influences such as the amalgamation of Merriwa Shire Council and the loss of the Economic Development Officer caused program achievements to slow considerably. The 2006 workshop kick-started the program again, working on a back-log of projects as well as new priorities for the town. The 2007 workshop was conducted 14 months later and, combined with a recent Township Marketing Plan, The community identified a long list of projects to undertake. The community's next review workshop will be conducted in 18-24 months time.

The Merriwa coordinator, who organises the review workshops, believes they are a necessary tool to motivate the local community and attract new people to be involved in the program. Community members gain skills through the process, so projects that are planned in subsequent workshops are more realistic and achievable. The workshops give the community an opportunity to recognise and celebrate their achievements and re-connect with other community members. The process allows them to re-assess projects that haven't been completed from the previous plan and remove the ones that are no longer necessary. However, they can still retain important or longer term projects and incorporate them into the new plan. The review workshops also inform the Council of the community's needs for their annual planning processes and build relationships and networks between stakeholders.

## case study

**Clarence Valley Council** is located in the Northern Rivers region of NSW, with 50,000 residents living in 40 towns and villages, and one city environ. Clarence Valley has benefited from long associations with CED programs, particularly in the communities of Brooms Head, Eatonsville, Glenreagh, Grafton, South Grafton, Iluka, Maclean, Nymboida, Sealands, Yamba, Waterview Heights and Wooli/Minnie Water. Program reviews and workshops have been a common feature of the Shire-wide program and a proven mechanism for monitoring progress, using formal and informal review techniques with success.

## informal monitoring

Informal monitoring is important and is conducted on a simple, casual basis, often using observation and inclusive communication. For instance, observing a training workshop and noting the efficiency of the registration process at the start of the workshop or the interest of the participants during the training session can provide valuable information about the project. Regular communication is an important monitoring technique, such as keeping in contact with stakeholders in person or by phone and email. You may have formal meeting processes throughout a project to monitor progress. Conversations between meetings can also be an effective and ongoing monitoring tool. This type of monitoring is an invaluable early warning system to identify problems or new opportunities, and share skills and knowledge. It is important for all members of the project to recognise the need to give as well as receive information.

### case study

**Gulargambone** is a village of 500 people and another 1,000 in the surrounding rural area, located between Gilgandra and Coonamble, north of Dubbo. Their 'two eight two eight' project (based on the town's postcode) is the operation of a community-owned building that includes a cafe, art gallery and gift shop selling locally handmade craft and produce, a function centre and catering services. The facility includes the sale of coffee and meals, a secondhand bookshop, a library and events such as regular community movie nights and 'Dinners under the Stars'. It is run entirely by volunteers and all profits are invested back into the community. During the establishment of the project, informal monitoring methods included regular phone calls with committee members between meetings. A video including interviews with community members throughout the process was also created as an observation tool to show the project's progress. The video created great community pride and has been a useful tool to showcase Gulargambone and demonstrate the project's progress to a range of stakeholders.

### case study

**Bangalow** is a village of 1,200 people situated west of Byron Bay in the Northern Rivers region. When the community created their first Business and Community Directory and website, the Project Manager kept in constant touch with the Project Coordinator on a daily or weekly basis via email, phone and casual meetings such as a cup of tea or a quick drink at the pub. Formal reporting and action planning meetings were held with other stakeholders, but the rapport and skill-sharing between the two main drivers of the project monitored progress on a constant, informal basis and highlighted any problems as they arose.

# evaluation

## overview:

In this section you will learn:

- What evaluation is, why you need to evaluate and the benefits you can derive from the process
- Key questions before you start your evaluation
- How you can develop an evaluation schedule
- Techniques and tools used in evaluation methods, including the benefits of qualitative techniques
- How to evaluate your CED project
- Definitions for performance indicators, standards and benchmarks
- How to use I & I NSW's performance measures
- How to use the Business Retention and Expansion Survey as an evaluation tool
- How to evaluate a project using formative, process and outcome evaluation methods.

## what is evaluation?

Evaluation is an assessment tool that can identify and solve problems, find ways to improve management, determine the project or program's worth, measure success or failure, identify costs and benefits, and measure impacts (such as social, economic and environmental). It can also satisfy sponsors or stakeholders and gain acceptance, credibility and support for the project or the organisation.

Evaluation is not just about collecting information for measuring impacts or changes; it involves the ability to interpret that information and make decisions from the process.

## case study

**Tumbarumba** is a town of 1,500 people situated on the south western slopes of the Snowy Mountains, south west of Sydney. The community holds an annual food and wine festival called Tumbafest that regularly attracts around 4,000 people. Evaluation techniques for the festival include a postcode survey that is captured at the entry gates, a survey conducted during the festival and debrief meetings after the festival.

In 2006, the festival organisers conducted a marketing evaluation as part of a funding acquittal process and gained valuable information, such as identifying that only 18 per cent of the attendees were locals. The organisers realised that the majority of their budget was spent on marketing to the local area to people who know what the festival is about and when it's on each year. The evaluation showed that the festival demographic was within a comfortable two hour's drive, so they stopped wasting advertising dollars in the local area and adjusted their marketing reach to include Albury, Wagga Wagga, Gundagai, Cooma and Canberra. They also identified their main target market as 'baby boomer' couples, so they ensure that their entertainment is appropriate to that group. The committee also adjusted their advertising to use more appropriate media outlets that reach their main target market, for example using local community radio stations.

## why evaluate?

Evaluation of your project helps you identify if the project is achieving the desired results. It also helps you to assess if the activities are appropriate and can suggest ways to improve them.

Evaluation provides evidence that your project is contributing to your community's economic development objectives. Sponsoring and funding bodies, program partners and committees all want to be assured that the project is achieving what it was set up to achieve.

- Evaluation also improves your program's performance and helps to identify:
  - Whether the CED program is being effectively used
  - Whether the CED program and projects within the program can be improved
  - The need for program changes
  - The need for changes to the structure or orientation of the local organisation.
- Evaluation asks some key questions:
  - Are we doing the right things?
    - Are these our priorities?
    - Is this the right project and does it meet our objectives?
    - Would other projects or activities be more appropriate to achieve our objectives?
- Are we achieving the desired results?
  - Is the program achieving its original goals and addressing the issues, problems or needs?
- Are we being efficient?
  - How well did we do it?
  - Is this the most cost or time effective way of doing what we do?
  - Could we be more productive or responsive?
  - Is there a better way of doing this?



## evaluation and objectives

A program or project's outcomes are frequently measured against its objectives. Strategic planning is concerned with setting direction, identifying objectives and determining actions.

Evaluation aims to assess whether the planned results have been achieved, so strategic planning and evaluation are two sides of the same coin.

Therefore, before you can plan your evaluation methods, you need to establish the reasons why you are doing the program or project and what you want out of it. You should establish SMART objectives (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound) at the start of your program or project and use them to guide your evaluation process.

### tip

Evaluations are an important way to demonstrate the value of your project to sponsors.

## case study

**Lismore** is a large regional centre in the Northern Rivers region. The Northern Rivers Greenridge Herb Festival was held in Lismore for several years up until and including 2007. The event committee planned an evaluation schedule to measure whether the event's objectives were being met. The schedule was developed at the start of the event planning process. All the methods listed below were utilised and the information was compiled, analysed and documented at the end of the event. The analysis identified baseline statistics and information for improvements to the festival activities and marketing. Observations, evaluations, debriefs and suggested improvements on each event activity were compiled into an Evaluation Report. This report, along with the Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan and Risk Management Strategies were combined to develop a Succession Plan that was forwarded to the new festival coordinators for the following year to ensure a smooth handover.

The following is a breakdown of evaluation schedule for Northern Rivers Greenridge Herb Festival. Some of the evaluation methods are discussed in the next section of this module.

OBJECTIVE	EVALUATION	METHOD
To develop an internationally renowned signature event to promote Lismore and the Northern Rivers region	Number of attendees Place of origin of attendees	Crowd size estimate Postcode Survey Debrief Meeting
	Marketing awareness	Wandering Survey Marketing Evaluation Report
	Promote Lismore and Northern Rivers	Number of hits on website Number of press releases and TV news stories Photographs and video
	International reputation	Number of international magazine stories
To educate the community on the assets of natural herbs and health	Educational opportunities	Number of speakers Number of attendees
To create industry awareness and networking opportunities	Industry workshop and vendors	Number of attendees Vendor Survey
	Secret Garden (industry area)	Number of service/goods stalls
To promote regional cuisine products	HerBBQ food area	Number of food stalls
	Cooking Competition (community) Cooking Competition (industry)	Number of community entries Number of restaurant entries
	Cooking Demonstrations	Number of attendees
	Food magazine articles	Number of magazine stories
To increase tourism	Accommodation figures	Tourist Information Office weekend figures
To provide quantitative measurements for funding bodies and as a benchmark to measure growth	Benchmark figures	Wandering Survey Evaluation Report Marketing Evaluation Report Sponsor Press Packs
To provide linkages between business and the community and stronger links with Southern Cross University (SCU)	SCU Speaker Tent	Number of speakers Number of attendees
	SCU Information Tent	Number of enquiries
	SCU and business investment in festival	Sponsor Survey Vendor Survey Sponsor Press Packs
To provide the community with an event to interact and celebrate together that is embraced and supported by the community	Community participation and feedback	Debrief meeting Number of community groups and participants on all stages Number of community stalls Number of volunteers
To have a viable festival	Profit or loss of festival	Final accounts / auditor report



### reality check

If circumstances change, remember to review the objectives of your ongoing program, project or event and alter them if necessary.

### case study

**Nymagee** is a small village of approximately 40 people with 160 in the surrounding district. It is located in the north of NSW in the centre of the triangle of three major outback towns, Cobar, Nyngan and Condoblin. Changing circumstances in Nymagee clearly demonstrated the need to review the event objectives of the Nymagee Outback Music Festival. Two of the main objectives of the inaugural festival in 1999 were to showcase Nymagee to potential residents by drawing visitors from further afield and to showcase the village. These objectives worked for the first few years with more than 1,000 visitors annually attracted to the three-day music and culture extravaganza. However, due to the ongoing years of drought, farm workers lost their jobs, families left Nymagee and the village school was closed. The community now finds it difficult to attract young families to the area. Rising fuel prices over recent years have also impacted on the broader tourism draw of the event, so they now market the festival to the surrounding shires of Cobar, Nyngan and Condoblin, with some marketing also directed to Griffith and Dubbo.

### tip

When undertaking an audit and evaluation of your program, use your Strategic Plan's framework of key result areas and objectives so the evaluation and the strategic plan clearly relate to each other



## evaluating a CED program

A review of your community economic development program and an evaluation of its outcomes should be conducted at the end of each year with the committee or community program members. The evaluation is measured against your community strategic plan.

The first step is to review your plan to see if you have completed the number of projects planned for that twelve month period and if you have implemented strategies that address the objectives identified in each key result area. Evaluate your projects individually to see if they were completed on time, on budget and with adequate human resources.

Evaluating a program can be a community-building exercise in itself, helping participants to build community cohesion, re-think local issues and make better decisions for the future. You may find that you were too ambitious and you may have to plan your remaining projects with more realistic timeframes.

Conversely, you may find you were not ambitious enough and that you have completed most of your projects in a shorter time period than expected and need to conduct a review workshop to develop a new plan. You may find that not all your key result area (KRA) groups worked well – you may need to source a new group leader for a group, plan more achievable projects or drop that KRA from your next plan.

You may also be amazed at what you have achieved and feel proud to be a part of such a wonderful community program! Whichever way the evaluation goes, you should use the opportunity to socialise and celebrate your achievements together at the end of each year.

### case study

**Kendall** village, south west of Port Macquarie, conducted a program evaluation for a 12 month period when they entered the Community of the Year Award category (population under 15,000) of the Regional Achievement and Community Awards in 2007. They were surprised when they realised the number of projects they had completed in one year. Many community groups are involved in Kendall and projects from groups identified in the award nomination included the Kendall Future Directions CED program, the Community Centre, Op Shop, Riding for the Disabled, the Heritage Society, Landcare, the Community Pre School, Rural Education Centre, Tennis Club, International Women's Day 2007, Refugee Week 2007, the Music Festival, Kendall-Kadaw Friendship School Project, Watermark Literary Muster and the National Violin Competition. Winning the award and receiving accolades from the community gave them immense pride and encouraged them to continue with their work.

### case study

**Clarence Valley Council** compiles a Year in Review document which evaluates the success of all CED projects across the Valley. They launch the document at a dinner where community members recognise and celebrate their achievements. The dinner, which everyone enjoys, is also a great networking opportunity outside the formal meeting structure of the program.

### tip

Basic evaluation is about outcomes, outputs and inputs that are relatively easy to measure, as well as intangibles that can be difficult to measure in the short to medium term. If the usual set of benchmarks are not working for you, do not worry - just create your own benchmarks that suit your circumstances, get your committee involved and see where it leads.



## performance indicators

Performance indicators help answer the question *How do you know what you are achieving?*

To help identify indicators you can ask:

“If the community outcomes were achieved, what would we see in the community?”

A performance indicator can be expressed as a numerical measure of the degree to which an objective is being achieved. For example, if one of your objectives is to train young people so they are able to gain employment in your town, then one performance indicator can be the proportion of trainees that gain employment after the training project is completed.

Some indicators are difficult to measure, such as changes in attitude, so ensure your indicators are practical and measurable. They should be identified when you develop your project plans or strategic plan.

Performance indicators are important and useful pieces of information that are generally expressed as a percentage, index, rate or ratio (but not always) or as tasks and activities. They are monitored at regular intervals and often compared with one or more criteria (for example a target, standard or benchmark).

Performance indicators on their own are not very helpful unless they have a context. For example, a 100 per cent increase in visitors to an attraction in a week sounds impressive until we find out that visitation has increased from two people to only four. Therefore, in developing performance indicators, you must be able to make comparisons to something meaningful.

### These can be to:

- **targets**
- **standards**
- **benchmarks (other programs, projects, events).**

**Targets:** A level of performance that you want to achieve. Targets are set locally and can be altered. The first measurement of performance against a performance indicator is baseline data, often just called the baseline. Baselines can help set targets. Targets can be moved up (raising the bar to encourage better performance) or overly optimistic, adjusted downwards. Performance against targets is monitored over time and trends are identified. Research before the program begins can set a baseline which allows ‘before and after’ comparisons. Milestones are one kind of target.

**Standards:** A level of performance to which targets can be compared. Standards cannot be altered. They are often set by independent organisations, such as government or an industry group. You may, for example, compare the local level of unemployment with the regional, state or national figures. The Community Profile contained in the Community Economic Development Program application form has several performance indicators that can be compared to these types of standards.

**Benchmarks:** The ‘best practice’ standard reached within an industry. Benchmarks are set when a number of community economic development programs compare performances and set a ‘best practice’ standard for an activity. This becomes the benchmark for all other programs. Benchmarking also enables comparison between similar projects or programs. Both parties learn about their strengths and weaknesses and as a result can make improvements. In comparing performance it is important to compare like with like.

### tip

#### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

As a starting point in determining how to measure the objectives in your strategic plan, consider the performance indicators in the Community Economic Profile contained in I & I NSW’s CED Program Application form. Data gathering for these performance indicators can be an integral part of your evaluation process. It will help you meet accountability requirements to I & I NSW, as well as providing information relevant and useful to your projects and local program

## using I & I NSW's performance indicators

Before you can effectively evaluate your program you must determine what it would be like if the objectives outlined in your strategic plan were achieved. What would it be like if you were successful? These attributes of success help to identify performance indicators. When defining success, it is important to consider it from the stakeholders' perspective.

- For example, this may mean considering the opinions and experience of:

- Young People
- Business Owners
- Property Owners
- Residents
- Visitors
- The Committee
- Community Groups.

I & I NSW identifies some performance indicators in its Community Economic Profile contained in the CED Program Application form and in its CED Outcome Report forms. Information about these performance indicators helps the Department determine how the CED Program is performing on a state-wide basis. If you use I & I NSW's indicators wisely at the local level, they can also tell you a lot about your own program and projects. I & I NSW's performance indicators investigate the achievement of overall community economic development objectives. They are indicators of the effectiveness of the program in addressing the original problem or need in communities.

- For example, they include:

- Number of additional visitors to the area as a result of marketing activities
- The number of jobs created by a program activity such as an event
- An increase in community cohesion as evidenced by local partnerships
- Funds leveraged.

- Other indicators for community economic development objectives often identified in strategic plans may include:

- Aspects of improved quality of life identified by residents in interviews and follow up surveys
- Improved profit/yield from tourism to individual businesses
- Increased pride in your community.

I & I NSW also asks for information about key indicators for projects such as:

- Retail turnover resulting from a particular promotional campaign
- Dollar revenue generated by a major event
- Attendance numbers for a major event, particularly visitors from outside the local area
- Media coverage as a result of your promotional efforts (dollar value)
- The level of funding and 'in-kind' contribution for projects.

Collection of this data is useful to justify the impact of your project to funding organisations and sponsors. When acquitting your funding, you can use the I & I NSW Final Outcomes Report as a valuable evaluation tool.

## case study

When reporting their Final Outcomes Report for the **Brunswick Heads** Simple Pleasures Marketing Campaign project, the team measured achievements against each goal of the project. For example, under “merchandise sales” the outcome identified that t-shirt and calendar sales exceeded expectations, while postcards and bag sales were slower than expected. Total sales income exceeded the target by ten per cent. Merchandise production and outlets were adjusted after the evaluation of these sales.

## tips

### INITIAL INFORMATION COLLECTION:

It is important to collect baseline data at the beginning of a project or program.

### PROGRAM COMPARISONS:

You may be able to compare your program performance with similar towns or suburbs. Talk to your nearest I & I NSW office about whether they can help you with the relevant information.



**PROJECT COMPARISONS:** Consider benchmarking with another community that has a project like yours, for example, an event. Ring your colleagues direct, or speak to I & I NSW staff who may be able to help you locate a similar project.



## reality check

### being aware of factors outside your control

In evaluating the program as a whole, it is important to assess realistically the extent to which the outcomes are the result of the local program. You must make the link between your activities and projects and the outcomes that are achieved. For example, it will most likely be unrealistic to say that the entire increase in employment in a town is directly attributable to a local CED program. However, a CED project can realistically claim to have contributed to an increase in employment. Changes in employment are often a legitimate performance indicator.

Conversely, it is important to remember that broad objectives such as an increase in employment or in community quality of life are more subject to influences outside your control. Failure to improve them does not necessarily mean a failure of the program. Even specific project aims can be affected by external factors. For example, an event can be affected by poor weather, or rural town retail results can be affected by a drop in commodity prices in a major local agricultural industry.

Some factors beyond the control of a project or the program, which nevertheless affect the achievement of its broad objectives, could include:

- Political decisions and policies
- A tight economic climate
- Program critics
- Natural disasters and climatic conditions
- Competitors for dollars or visitors
- Loss of a major employer or industry
- Regional demographic trends.

## Business Retention and Expansion Survey

A useful data collection method is the I & I NSW Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey. This survey provides a snapshot of the local business environment, establishes strategies for improvements and baseline data for important business indicators which can be monitored over time. Your nearest I & I NSW office can provide further information and an application form.

### case study

**Young** is located north west of Canberra with a population of 9,665. The town of Young conducted a BRE in 2001 that identified local business issues and developed a range of projects to address them, such as the need for a cinema, gaps in the retail sector, parking issues in the CBD and the need for youth workers in the community. In 2007 the community evaluated the results of their BRE and realised they had completed most of the major projects in the plan, so applied for funding to conduct a second BRE in 2008. The aim of the new BRE is to 'keep a finger on the pulse' of the Young business community and keep all stakeholders fully informed of current issues so they can plan opportunities for the business sector in Young and the surrounding district. This information will be of vital importance to future planning and will feed into a shire-wide economic development plan to be developed by the Council later in 2008.

In September 2000 the **Brunswick Heads** Chamber of Commerce designed and implemented its first business survey to provide a snapshot of Brunswick businesses and the health of the local economy. The results from this survey confirmed that the initial strategies in the 1999 CED Plan had begun to have a positive effect on the town's economy, its morale and sense of place, and provided motivation to continue with economic revitalisation strategies.

When approximately 80 per cent of the 1999 CED Plan had been implemented, the Chamber conducted an official BRE Survey in 2003 in preparation for their CED plan for 2004-2009. Approximately two thirds of the new CED plan was completed by 2006. The remaining third was not undertaken due to lack of funding or human resources, or the long-term nature of the projects. Another BRE was conducted in 2006, allowing comparisons to be made between the two BRE processes. The following is a summary excerpt from the Chamber's 2006 BRE Report:

"The BRE Survey Report provides the community with invaluable data for application in three main areas;

- The BRE Survey provides a useful tool to evaluate the success of the economic renewal strategies and projects that have been implemented in the town by the Chamber of Commerce and the Business & Tourism Group (CED program) over the past three years
- The survey provides a 2006 "snapshot" of the Brunswick business sector, with very useful research material for prospective new businesses, for Council and for use in grant funding applications
- The identification of major issues and suggestions for opportunities or improvements from survey respondents will provide great input into the most urgent priorities of those yet-to-be-undertaken projects listed in the "Taking Care of Brunswick" Strategy 2004-2009. In addition, the survey provides an excellent opportunity for the business community to suggest additions or changes of direction to economic renewal strategies and actions planned by the Chamber and the various project teams in the near future."

The following excerpts from the 2006 BRE survey report compares outcomes with the 2003 survey:

- Retail is the most common type of business, followed by hospitality and accommodation (up from 2003), then health and well-being. There are 22 eateries. The professional sector has grown and a leisure and eco-tourism sector is emerging
- January and December are the best trading months and extending out further to February. July and August replace June and July as the worst trading months. 6 per cent of respondents report no pattern at all
- 74 per cent of businesses sell more than 50 per cent of their products locally, down ten per cent from 2003
- 53.6 per cent source more than half of their raw materials locally, double that in 2003
- 14 businesses are interested in youth mentoring (there were nine in 2003)
- 29 per cent of businesses are considering expansion in the next two years and another 29 per cent are unsure. Lack of suitable premises in town is the main barrier. No-one is considering relocating out of town compared with five businesses in 2003.

Good examples of useful BRE information are the following statistics that tracked the size of businesses and employment figures in the village. They show variations in the number of employees per business from 2001-2006 and employment increases in that period of 390 jobs in 2001, 560 in 2003 and 720 in 2006. The Chamber is able to use these statistics to gain funding for further projects as they justify the effectiveness of the revitalisation strategies in their CED plan.

- Brunswick is still characterised by a large number of small businesses, but only nine per cent employ less than two people compared with 15 per cent in 2003. 45 per cent employ between two and 4.5 staff, similar to 2003. The number of larger businesses (ie employ more than 10 people) has increased from 12 per cent to 23 per cent
- Employment has increased by 19.8 per cent in the last two years, double what was anticipated and is expected to increase again by 18.6 per cent over the next two years.



## case study

**The Clarence Valley** Business Retention and Expansion Survey completed in 2005 was the largest survey of its type ever conducted in NSW. More than 1,000 Clarence Valley businesses took part. The return rate for the survey was well above expectations, thus providing an extensive pool of information. The data collected during the BRE has proved to be an invaluable data source for the development of the LGA economic development plan and local skills development programs.

## evaluation approaches

There are a number of different approaches and tools used in evaluation, such as:

- Quantitative evaluation uses tools to measure data such as statistics and financial records, surveys and questionnaires
- Qualitative evaluation uses tools to understand the impacts such as interviews, focus groups, debrief meetings and observation methods
- Financial evaluation includes tools such as a cost-benefit or cost effectiveness analysis, and initial budgets versus actual budgets
- Needs-based analysis, action research, performance audit, and desktop and document analysis.

Quantitative and financial evaluation have traditionally been used to justify the progress of a CED project, such as unemployment figures, occupied retail space, and annual amounts of funding gained through the program. However, qualitative evaluation is just as important, measuring changes such as leadership, changes in attitudes, development of networks and increased quality of life.

Qualitative research studies human activities. It broadens our field of knowledge or refutes our accepted beliefs through comparisons with other cases. Qualitative evaluation uses observation and comparison, resulting in new insights and understanding, rather than strict, measurable numerical evaluations.

## tip

**In late 2004, I & I NSW conducted a statewide analysis of 6,200 responses from 63 BRE surveys to identify geographic patterns and consistent issues within NSW. The report identified specific trends that can be used to compare data collected in a local BRE.**

## case study

Projects completed by the **Gulargambone** Flying Ahead Program have had a big impact on the pride, cohesion and quality of life of the community. The program's achievements have won many awards for the town and attracted a range of press, radio and television stories, which have enhanced Gulargambone's reputation as a strong community and a great place to live. The benefits of these awards and stories are hard to measure for a CED program, however they provide tangible outcomes as a strong and cohesive community is attractive to new residents who are seeking a "tree change" lifestyle experience to bring up a young family or for retirement.

**Brunswick Heads** is a seaside village of 1,800 residents, located north of Byron Bay in the Northern Rivers region. The community CED program conducted a survey in 2006 to evaluate perceptions of Brunswick Heads as part of their Simple Pleasures Marketing Campaign project. Surveys were completed by 66 residents, 44 locals from the surrounding areas and 52 tourists, resulting in a total 162 surveys - refer to the following short survey example for more information.

Outcomes of the analysis showed, for instance, that 75.7 per cent of participants regarded Brunswick Heads as a good place to enjoy in winter and 92.4 per cent of participants believed the town was a good place to enjoy all year round. The frequency rate of ticks for each of the questions highlighted people’s perceptions of the town, giving valuable information for future marketing activities and validated the idea that “the branding of Brunswick Heads as a place to enjoy the simple pleasures is well matched with the expectations and perceptions of residents, local visitors and tourists”.

This questionnaire is quick and easy to complete, so no-one refused to do it. It can be done in batches of 100 whenever the community needs to check the perception barometer or when a convenient opportunity presents itself. Comparisons can be made with previous surveys to track any changes in perceptions.

**PERCEPTIONS OF BRUNSWICK 2006**

Please tick as many boxes as you like

**Brunswick Heads is.....**

**Postcode/Town:** \_\_\_\_\_

- A good place for adventure activities
- A good place for arts, crafts and culture
- A good place for history and heritage
- A good place for festivals and events
- A good place for night life and partying
- A good place for natural attractions or experiencing nature
- A good place for scenic landscapes
- A good place for family fun
- A good place for enjoying the simple pleasures
- A good place to enjoy in winter
- A good place to enjoy all year round

Qualitative evaluation of Brunswick Head’s Old and Gold Festival used observation, community feedback and debrief discussion to identify the following community perceived outcomes from the festival:

- Community involvement
- Community ownership and pride
- Sense of place
- Business community partnerships fostered
- Low cost, affordability of activities - free train rides, free face painting, free Pioneer’s Morning Tea, all entertainment free, all displays, concerts, etc free, cheap food available at BBQ, picnics facilitated
- Family orientation
- Eco-friendly activities selected
- Minimal environmental impact - recycled paper cups used for Pioneer’s Morning Tea
- Awareness and education of old things
- Composting education - one on one demonstrations and information given
- Fun and friendly, relaxed and safe atmosphere was evident
- Reconciliation was promoted and acknowledged by the local member of Parliament in opening welcome.

## tip

**When undertaking an audit and evaluation of your program, use your strategic plan's framework of key result areas and objectives so the evaluation and the strategic plan clearly relate to each other.**

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## evaluation methods

Evaluation methods need to be kept in-line with the size and needs of your project, so you can start with simple evaluations and build your skills and knowledge as you progress.

When you first conduct evaluations you will be amazed at the value of the information and how it helps you improve your project.

The 'Project Management', 'Event Management', 'Tourism' and 'Marketing and Promotions' modules all examine evaluation in detail more relevant to their subjects.

Ongoing evaluation for a long-term project develops a body of knowledge and information that shows the effectiveness of the project in meeting its objectives. Methods used for evaluation vary depending on the information required and type of evaluation being conducted. There are three basic types of evaluation:

- Formative evaluation used for pre-project research and conceptual planning
- Process evaluation used during the implementation, management and operation of the project
- Outcome evaluation used for post-evaluation at the end of the project.

## formative evaluation

Research and planning methods vary according to the project's needs but can include:

- Researching and evaluating other similar projects
- Conducting a feasibility study
- An internal audit of the organisation's resources
- An external audit of the environment
- Evaluating data such as date or venue selection for the project
- An 'aspirations analysis' to identify the aspirations and interests of the major stakeholders for formulating strategic objectives
- An economic impact study to demonstrate economic returns to a community to legitimise local support and to gain further funding or sponsorship
- Strategic, project and marketing planning as formative evaluation, including the identification of costs and resources
- Previous post-evaluation used to update or start planning the next project.

### case study

**Kurri Kurri** is located west of Newcastle with a population around 12,600. The town has a mural project through the Towns With Heart community program that includes the surrounding villages of Abermain, Stanford Merthyr, Weston, Heddon Greta, Pelaw Main and Neath. The Mural Project commenced in 2003 with five murals showcasing the area's history with the aim of encouraging some of the thousands of visitors in cars that pass through Kurri Kurri to stop in the town. The project was initially evaluated by developing a project plan that included the project's aims and objectives, key tasks, constraints, and financial resources. It also identified ways to finance the project, the project management team, an action plan including responsibilities and a budget with income and expenditures. The plan was used to gain funding and sponsorship, and to guide the project.

### case study

The need for the two eight two eight project in **Gulargambone** was identified in the community strategic plan by the town's Tourism, Marketing and Events group. The community-owned building is a tourist information centre, café and events centre addressing all the group's issues in a single, major project. Formative evaluations to establish the centre included a feasibility study funded by a grant and a strategic and action planning workshop with the project committee based on the findings of the feasibility study.

### case study

**Crookwell** used formative evaluations for the Crookwell Market Days Project to develop six small events. The evaluations identified the need to build onto what was already successful and create partnerships to make the project sustainable, with community groups taking ownership of the individual events. A major factor for the success of the project was the amount of initial community consultation and understanding of stakeholder expectations. They developed a calendar of events and a risk management process that included analysis of finances, OH&S, insurance, infrastructure and volunteer availability.

## process evaluation

Process evaluation can be used during the implementation, management and operations of a project as an audit to check if the plan is being implemented as intended. 'Milestones' can be placed along the planning path as a checklist to ensure the project is 'on track and on target', for example using budget requirements tied to a timeframe such as gaining \$5,000 sponsorship by a certain date.

Surveys are often used in process evaluation and are conducted during the implementation of a project. They can include mail, email, text, web or telephone surveys, surveys of competition tickets, 'place of origin' surveys, business surveys, resident surveys, visitor surveys, shopper surveys, sponsor surveys, volunteer surveys etc.

## case study

**Coonamble** has a population of 3,000 people and acts as a sub-regional service centre for the surrounding areas of Warren, Baradine, Walgett and Lightning Ridge. A range of surveys were used in Coonamble as part of a Sense of Place planning project, including a Photographic Survey, a Community Survey, a Business Survey and an Employer Survey.

Each survey gave specific and valuable information and in some instances the same information crossed over, with perspectives from one survey adding value to information collected in another. The surveys identified information such as the need for goods and services in the Shire in prioritised order, the lack of specific trades, employment issues, shopping preferences and shops missing in the retail mix, business confidence in Coonamble's future, community values and attitudes to safety etc. Issues identified in some of the surveys were incorporated into the community planning process and specific actions to address the issues were planned by the community and by the Council.

Event attendee surveys conducted during an event give valuable information and are used extensively in event evaluations. These surveys identify information such as the origin of visitors, visitor profiles, satisfaction levels, motivations to attend, and advertising effectiveness. The information was used to determine target markets and program modifications. Refer to the Event Management module for an example of an event attendee survey.

## case study

**Brunswick Heads** conducted an event attendee survey during the Old and Gold Festival which gave them information on the following: the age group of the respondents, their gender, place of origin (postcode), how many nights they stayed in Brunswick, what type of accommodation they used, how they found out about the festival, the amount of money spent in the CBD businesses during the festival, what they enjoyed most and suggestions for improvements. 102 people responded to the survey.

Results showed festival visitors spent a total of \$6,860 in local businesses during the festival and stayed a total of 100 nights in the town. This information provided valuable insights into the economic value and benefits of the festival to the town and baseline figures to measure future festival growth. The figures also provided justification to funding bodies for future grant applications.

Other process evaluations can include reports, budgets updated throughout the planning stages of the project, personal logs written by staff, audio or video recordings, photographs, suggestion boxes etc.



## tip

One event developed an 'Observation Sheet' for key managers and volunteers to evaluate impacts such as the program, crowd satisfaction and service quality at each section of the event. These sheets asked questions such as: crowd response, did the crowd like the performer, weather during the day and impacts of any change of weather, estimate the crowd size, were the toilets sufficient and kept clean, were there enough rubbish bins and allocated staff to keep the site relatively clean?

## outcome evaluation

Post-evaluation is conducted to evaluate project outcomes including the impacts, its success or failure and to gain insight for future improvements such as more targeted promotional activities or program modifications. Evaluation feedback should come from a range of stakeholders including the project team, participants, sponsors and other observers.

Each evaluation method gives you specific information. For example, a 'Place of Origin' survey can be compiled after the event from information gathered verbally at the entry, from the event attendee survey or competition tickets. This information establishes benchmark statistics showing where your attendees come from, if the event draws tourism numbers or if it showcases your town to surrounding regions. It assists you in planning your marketing message and where you place it the following year. Over successive years it allows you to see if your event is growing and meeting your planned tourism objectives.

### case study

**Nymagee** conducts a Town of Origin postcode survey at the entry to their bi-annual Nymagee Outback Music Festival. They have conducted the survey at the last three festivals, tracking the origin of attendees over a six year period. The survey data is used to evaluate the tourism attraction of the festival against the objectives in their event plan. It monitors the effectiveness of their marketing program and determines where to place their advertising for the next festival. They also use the data for grant applications.

The first two surveys showed growth in tourism attraction, however the third survey identified that attendees had not travelled as far as they had for previous festivals. These results were combined with other information and evaluations including the drought, rise of petrol prices, event attendee survey outcomes and the wet weather conditions at the time of the festival to identify the reasons for the change in the origin of attendees.

### tip

Place of origin surveys can be used for a variety of projects using different methods, for example:

- When selling raffle tickets, jot down the postcode along with the person's name and phone number - whilst you sell your 50-100 raffle tickets, you've also conducted a postcode survey
- Village or town retailers can work together and identify the origins of their shoppers in peak tourism periods by asking each customer for their postcode during a set two hours each day over a one week period. When all postcodes are collected and tallied, it will identify tourist draw patterns that will enable the village or town to market directly to those areas in prioritised order
- Many tourist destinations, events or retail outlets collect postcodes at the entry or point of sale to assist their marketing planning. Some retail outlets collect database information that includes addresses and shopping preferences for evaluation purposes and direct marketing campaigns
- Large shopping destinations may be able to identify the place of origin of shoppers by evaluating the postcodes of EFTPOS usage on specific days or during peak tourism periods.

Post-project surveys or market area surveys can be conducted by phone, mail or email. You achieve a better response with a one-to-one telephone survey, but greater numbers by mail or email, although to obtain survey results you may need to offer a prize. For youth projects you may even try text or website surveys with an appropriate prize or incentive. Entries from a competition can provide phone numbers or a mailing list or conversely, questionnaires can be collected at the end of a project or given out at the exit of an event with the promise of a prize for surveys returned.

### case study

**Young** has conducted a series of retail training workshops over the past five years on a range of subjects identified by the local business community. They use a simple survey supplied by I & I NSW as part of the funding toolkit for the project. The survey evaluates the outcomes of each training session by identifying feedback on the effectiveness of the trainer, the training subject and what subject businesses want in the next training session.

### case study

Evaluation of **Gulargambone's** ongoing two eight two eight project was conducted by documenting verbal feedback from patrons that is noted by volunteers for committee meetings, a Visitor's Book, a Customer Survey and a Volunteer Survey. They discovered that the responses from the Customer Survey and the Visitor's Book weren't very useful in terms of helping with future planning as every reply was positive and the main request was to open more than four days a week. The feedback from the Volunteer Survey and verbally patron was more in-depth and gave more valuable information. Information from all the surveys was compiled and discussed at a committee meeting and the committee is currently developing new strategies to address the weaknesses that have been identified to strengthen the project. The surveys will be repeated annually, with adjustments to the Customer Survey to gain more useful information.

### case study

**Kurri Kurri** evaluates their Mural Project on an annual basis. The volunteer guides give out evaluation forms to visitors. The data is collected and the statistics are analysed once a year to ascertain information such as where the visitors come from, how they heard about the murals, how much they spend in the town etc. This information is used to determine how to promote visitation to the murals, brochure content and where to place advertising. It also justifies the existence and growth of the project to stakeholders.

In approximately four years the number of murals has grown from five in 2003 to 49 in early 2008, with some placed in surrounding villages to showcase other Towns With Heart communities. Free tour guide incentives are provided to bus tours to encourage visitors to stop for lunch or a snack. Evaluation data shows that the average person spends \$21 with 75 per cent spent on food and 25 per cent on other items such as newspapers. Tour bookings and sales of the mural book track the growth of visitation. The evaluation information is reported to local businesses, funding bodies, sponsors and other relevant stakeholders.

## case study

Some surveys can be short, completed quickly and give valuable information. When collecting competition tickets from retailers at the end of a June Sale weekend in **Lismore**, the following short survey was conducted. Even though the survey was quick and easy, the information was valuable. For example when answers were compiled from the question 'What time did you get busy?' the outcomes showed that there was a flow of people starting their shopping at one end of the CBD near the main car park and working their way through to the other end of the CBD, highlighting the sale's linkage to parking facilities. The following year entertainment was strategically placed in the slower areas to pull shoppers into those areas earlier.

## survey

## post event retail june sale survey

BUSINESS NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

Were your figures up or down on last year's sale (%)? \_\_\_\_\_

What hours did you open/close? \_\_\_\_\_

What time/s did you get busy? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you employ any extra staff? YES  NO  If YES, how many? \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-5 how successful was this sale? \_\_\_\_\_

(1=terrible, 2=not good, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=fantastic)

Other outcome evaluations can include the analysis of ticket sales, marketing and sponsor evaluation, final budgets and the tourism value. Tourism value can include post-evaluation on traffic counts, petrol sales, occupancy levels, restaurant attendance and merchant sales, however these figures are difficult and time-consuming to collect.

You can also measure the economic impact of a project or event if it attracts out-of-region visitors to determine the creation of local employment and generation of income. Sometimes long-term, indirect impacts occur such as improved ability to attract investment or improvement of the destination's image and attractiveness through studies of perception and trip motivation. Measuring economic impact is difficult and there are various types of "multipliers" used to calculate this figure. It may be easier to use an evaluation tool such as ENCORE, developed by Southern Cross University in Lismore, especially for large events.

### case study

**Deniliquin** - Deni Play on the Plains Festival Limited is a large event in Deniliquin in the south west of NSW, incorporating the world record for the biggest Ute Muster. They developed a strategic plan for 2005-2010 and one of the objectives identified in this plan was the need for an economic impact assessment. These reports can be expensive to produce, especially if you use a university or evaluation company. The committee decided that they needed a tool to measure economic impacts that could be updated by the organisers without the continual use of a consultant, so the evaluation tool ENCORE was purchased from Southern Cross University. The package develops numbers, percentages, graphs and multipliers and provides benchmark information that can be updated each year.

In 2007, fifteen volunteers collected 300 surveys and the data was entered into the ENCORE package. The information from the Economic Impact Report will assist with further funding grants, justification to sponsors and understanding by the community of the benefits of the festival and why it requires continued support, particularly during the recent years of drought.

**Murwillumbah** is a town of approximately 6,500 residents in the Tweed Valley on the far north coast of NSW, south west of Tweed Heads. The Festival of Speed on Tweed is a popular historic car racing event that brings famous cars and people to town with some of the big names in motor sport taking part.

In its fifth year of operation in 2006, the festival committee commissioned a consulting company to conduct an economic impact study and research report that provided economic impact information on the event, a description of market segments attracted to the festival and the experiences of the audience. Surveys collected data from over 300 spectators at the event, 88 drivers and crews who returned surveys after the event, and observational analysis by the project manager.

Results were analysed using the ENCORE evaluation kit. This method used direct in-scope expenditure, which assesses the “new money” coming into the region and does not include money from existing visitors or locals attending the event as it is assumed this money was already in the region. Spectator and driver surveys were analysed separately and together to highlight the differences between the two key segments.

Some of the lessons learned from the evaluation highlighted the place of origin of attendees, some interesting similarities and differences in the average spend per person per day and the value of attracting drivers to the event, for example:

- Over 800 drivers and their crews came from other regions including Brisbane and other parts of Australia. The event is highly successful in attracting around 20,000 spectators from interstate and intrastate with 68 per cent of all spectators coming from outside Tweed Shire. While many come from Brisbane and the Gold Coast for a day trip, 27 per cent of spectators stay in local accommodation. There were 200 driver teams with approximately four team members, totalling 800 drivers and crews
- Drivers spend more than double that of spectators (\$168 per day for drivers, \$73 per day for spectators)
- Drivers spend double that of spectators on accommodation
- Drivers spend between two and three times that of spectators on meals, drinks and other expenditure
- Local spectators spend about the same as spectators from other regions (excluding accommodation).

The event contributes \$2.7 million to the local economy through direct expenditure. Driver, crew and spectator spending is primarily on accommodation, as well as dining and food. The research also identified the important role of the community in providing accommodation and hospitality to interstate friends and relatives attending the event and in providing volunteer support during the event.

### tip

**If you're a small community and you can't conduct an economic impact study, but you'd like some measurement to gauge the number of attendees and the impact of an event on local businesses, ask each local café the number of litres of milk they used on the festival day. It's a good indicator of how much coffee and tea was drunk. This can be compared with a normal day in the same seasonal period to see how much increase in business there was from the event and how many extra patrons were served. This evaluation is simple and easy to conduct and can be repeated many times to compare different projects or events in the town. Café owners are more likely to reveal this figure than tell you their turnover for the day.**

Always hold a debrief meeting with your project staff and if possible include a range of stakeholders such as volunteers, sponsors and Council staff. Allow each person to give feedback on what went right or wrong in their area of the project and what suggestions they have to improve it for the following year. Compile the findings into a report. Analyse all other evaluations collected during the project and collate all the findings into an Evaluation Report.

### case study

**Tumbarumba**, on the south west slopes of the Snowy Mountains, hold two debrief meetings at the end of the Tumbafest wine and food festival each year. The first debrief is held with the event committee and the second debrief is held with stakeholders such as Councillors, Chamber, businesses, sponsors, volunteers, stallholders and the general public.

At the first meeting, each event area fills out a simple debrief form outlining what worked well in their area, what could be improved and scoring their area with a 1-5 rating. The event areas identified in the debrief forms include: Committee Operation; Tickets and Pricing; Advertising, Publicity and Promotion; Sponsorship; Gate Operation and Staffing; Rostering; Community Groups and Volunteers; Main Stage; Just Kids Area; Rides and Amusements; Information Tent; Food Court; Market Stalls; Dine in the Vines; Bar; Wine Courtyard; Wine Tastings; Merchandise; Hire and Security; OH&S; Venue and Grounds; Set Up; Pull Down; Cleaning.

The second meeting compiles feedback from stakeholder perspectives and submissions from the general public. It is a structured roundtable discussion to identify issues and make recommendations for improvements. Notes are taken and outcomes are included in the final evaluation.

The event coordinator has learned that the second debrief meeting needs to be held at least ten days after the festival to allow people time to process the details and give them some breathing space. By that time the committee has also had time to gauge the 'buzz' around town and any community feedback such as 'the toilets were clean but the beer was too warm'. They measure all debrief and feedback outcomes against the festival objectives and compile an evaluation report.

The second meeting is also used as a thank you and event celebration with wine and conversation. They have discovered that the festival builds community pride and the town's social fabric as it gives locals a chance to get together with family and friends. Even the quantitative data reflects this trend as many attendees are family and friends of local residents who visit Tumbarumba specifically for the festival.

## case study

**Deniliquin** in the south west of NSW compiles a Post-Evaluation Report for Deni-Play on the Plains Festival Limited at the end of each event. All committee members and key volunteers evaluate their own areas and make recommendations for improvements. The document is distributed to all stakeholders after the festival and is used as the basis for the following year's festival, with recommendations acted upon according to the priority status.

Don't be overwhelmed by the number of evaluation methods suggested in this module. There is no set formula for evaluation as projects vary so widely and have individual objectives. Evaluation processes need to be tailor-made to fit the requirements of the project and the organising body. You can start with a few easy evaluation methods and work up to more complex methods.

In summary, use the following basic steps when planning your evaluation:

- Plan your evaluation schedule and methods at the start of your project planning processes
- Develop SMART objectives for your project or program – why you are doing it and what you want out of it
- Decide on the purpose and scope of the evaluation
- Plan your evaluations against the project's objectives and/or any other issues you need to evaluate, and identify the methods you will use
- Prepare your evaluation materials such as questionnaires and human resources
- Conduct the evaluations and compile the data
- Analyse the data and identify outcomes with actions and improvements
- Document the results into an Evaluation Report
- Report the outcomes to relevant stakeholders
- Use the evaluation outcomes to inform and improve your project or program on an annual or ongoing basis.

## strategic approach to evaluation

Evaluation does not have to be a chore. Here are some ways to get the best results for your efforts:

- Consider evaluation when you do strategic and project planning
- Link your evaluation and data gathering with I & I NSW's performance indicators, where appropriate
- Restrict the number of performance indicators to those that are most significant
- Set up ways of collecting data as part of your routine monitoring and reporting process
- Evaluate from a number of viewpoints – the committee, the funding body, visitors, residents
- Allocate money and resources for evaluation purposes
- Allow your coordinator adequate time to do evaluations. It is an integral part of the management (and improvement) of a program or project.

## resources

### other resources and websites

COMMUNITY	WEBSITE
Bangalow	<a href="http://www.bangalow.biz">www.bangalow.biz</a>
Brunswick Heads	<a href="http://www.brunswickheads.org.au">www.brunswickheads.org.au</a>
Clarence Valley Council	<a href="http://www.clarence.nsw.gov.au">www.clarence.nsw.gov.au</a>
Coonamble	<a href="http://www.coonamble.org">www.coonamble.org</a>
Crookwell	<a href="http://www.upperlachlantourism.com">www.upperlachlantourism.com</a>
Deniliquin	<a href="http://www.deniutemuster.com.au">www.deniutemuster.com.au</a>
Gulargambone	<a href="http://web.mac.com/gulargambone2828/iWeb/two.eight.two.eight/Welcome.html">http://web.mac.com/gulargambone2828/iWeb/two.eight.two.eight/Welcome.html</a>
Kendall	<a href="http://www.kendall.org.au">www.kendall.org.au</a>
Kurri Kurri	<a href="http://www.kurrikurri.com">www.kurrikurri.com</a>
Lismore	<a href="http://www.lismore.nsw.gov.au">www.lismore.nsw.gov.au</a>
Merriwa	<a href="http://www.upperhunter.nsw.gov.au">www.upperhunter.nsw.gov.au</a>
Murwillumbah	<a href="http://www.speedontweed.com">www.speedontweed.com</a>
Nymagee	<a href="http://www.geocities.com/nymageefestival">www.geocities.com/nymageefestival</a>
Tumbarumba	<a href="http://www.tumbafest.com.au">www.tumbafest.com.au</a>
Young	<a href="http://www.young.nsw.gov.au">www.young.nsw.gov.au</a>

## resources

### case study websites

CONTACT	RESOURCES	WEBSITE
I & I NSW	Range of resources; Community Economic Profile, CED Application Form, Self Help modules, CED success stories, BRE survey	<a href="http://www.regionalcommunities.nsw.gov.au">www.regionalcommunities.nsw.gov.au</a> <a href="http://www.industry.nsw.gov.au">www.industry.nsw.gov.au</a>
SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY (SCU)	ENCORE and other reference materials (not free)	<a href="http://www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop/2/default.aspx">www.crctourism.com.au/bookshop/2/default.aspx</a>
SCU	Action Research resources	<a href="http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html">www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/arhome.html</a>
AUSTRALASIAN EVALUATION SOCIETY (AES)	Variety of information	<a href="http://www.aes.asn.au/">www.aes.asn.au/</a>
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY USA	The Evaluation Center	<a href="http://www.wmich.edu/avalctr/">www.wmich.edu/avalctr/</a>
NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION	User-friendly handbook for project evaluation – overview of different approaches	<a href="http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm">www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm</a>
USA INDEX OF EVALUATION RESOURCES	Digital resources for evaluators – from communities to training courses	<a href="http://www.resources4evaluators.info/">www.resources4evaluators.info/</a>
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE OTTAWA CANADA	Selecting and managing an evaluation consultant or team	<a href="http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/115645009918.pdf">www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/115645009918.pdf</a>
AG ARIZONA EDUCATION	Community-Based Project Evaluation Guide	<a href="http://ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/evalgde.htm">ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/evalgde.htm</a> - 11k -
QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT	Community Engagement Evaluation	<a href="http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/evaluation/index.html">www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/share_your_knowledge/evaluation/index.html</a> - 16k -
IMPACT YOUTH ORGANISATIONS	The Vibe Outside Evaluation Report – reducing crime	<a href="http://www.impactyouthprojects.net.au/files/pdf/ProjectEvaluationTheVibeOutside.pdf">www.impactyouthprojects.net.au/files/pdf/ProjectEvaluationTheVibeOutside.pdf</a> -
SOUTH AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY HEALTH	Planning and Evaluation Wizard guide to project planning and report writing	<a href="http://som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/SACHRU/PEW/index.htm">som.flinders.edu.au/FUSA/SACHRU/PEW/index.htm</a> - 11k -
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT NRM TEAM	Community guide for monitoring and evaluating natural resource management projects	<a href="http://www.nrm.gov.au/publications/factsheets/me-fact-sheet.html">www.nrm.gov.au/publications/factsheets/me-fact-sheet.html</a> - 26k -
EVA COX	The Social Audit Cookbook – recipes for auditing the way we connect	<a href="http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/download/social_audit_cookbook.pdf">http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au/download/social_audit_cookbook.pdf</a>