

THREESIDES
MARKETING

THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME

*A New and Improved
Recipe for Pie Time
2020 and beyond*



THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME - INDUSTRY CONSULTATION

On 6th November 2019, Destination Southern Highlands together with Threesides Marketing presented the following presentation to a group of around 30 members of the local tourism and hospitality industries. Post-meeting, the following options were discussed. Each needs to be explored further and a decision made on the Future of Pie Time from 2020 and beyond. Discussion points on the day included:

1

Agree on a model that sits somewhere between the options 1 and 2 outlined in this discussion paper - continue as is with increased industry involvement and buy in.

2

Set up a Pie Time working group/ committee to provide more industry ownership and coordinate buy in.

3

Pursue major sponsorship of Pie Time.

It also needs to be noted that post this meeting on 6th November, DSH was advised that the future of Pie Fest & NSW/ACT Best Pie Competition is under review pending Event Organiser's personal circumstances and support from industry for both events.

HERE'S ONE (THREE) WE BAKED EARLIER

PIE TIME SNAPSHOT 2017, 2018, 2019

From Humble(pie) beginnings

To look forward, we must first look back – so how did we get here?

Pie Time began as an original destination marketing campaign baked by the passionate team at Destination Southern Highlands (DSH) – the tourism unit of Wingecarribee Shire Council and peak tourism authority for the Southern Highlands region of NSW.

With perhaps the largest saturation of quality pie producers in Australia, the humble pie was used as a hook and platform for marketing the Southern Highlands in its traditional off-peak month of June. Employing mouth-watering imagery of sweet and savoury pies against a backdrop of Southern Highlands' stunning scenery and iconic tourist drawcards, the favourite Aussie hand-warmer gave people another great reason to visit this region in the coldest month of the year.

Drawing together cafes, restaurants, pubs, wineries, attractions, and hotels from 13 separate towns and villages across the Southern Highlands, Pie Time boosted local tourism to record-breaking levels by offering visitors a unique reason to visit, explore and stay while indulging in delicious pies. The region's existing Pie Trail was enhanced with a month-long celebration of pie promotions, pie competitions and pie activities, culminating in a pie festival in the final weekend of June.

HERE'S ONE (THREE) WE BAKED EARLIER

PIE TIME SNAPSHOT 2017, 2018, 2019

Snapshot of Success

MEDIA/SOCIAL OUTLET	2017	2018	2019	TOTAL
Pies Produced	100,000	200,000	280,500	580,500
Operators Participating	50	55	63	168
Events and experiences created	12	17	40	69
Accommodation bookings*	145	120	99	364
Economic Contribution (estimated)	\$1 million	\$2million	\$3million	\$6 million
Budget	\$120k (plus industry contribution)	\$120k (plus sponsorships)	\$120k (plus +5k sponsorships)	\$365k

* bookings were via DSH Booking System

HERE'S ONE (THREE) WE BAKED EARLIER

PIE TIME SNAPSHOT 2017, 2018, 2019

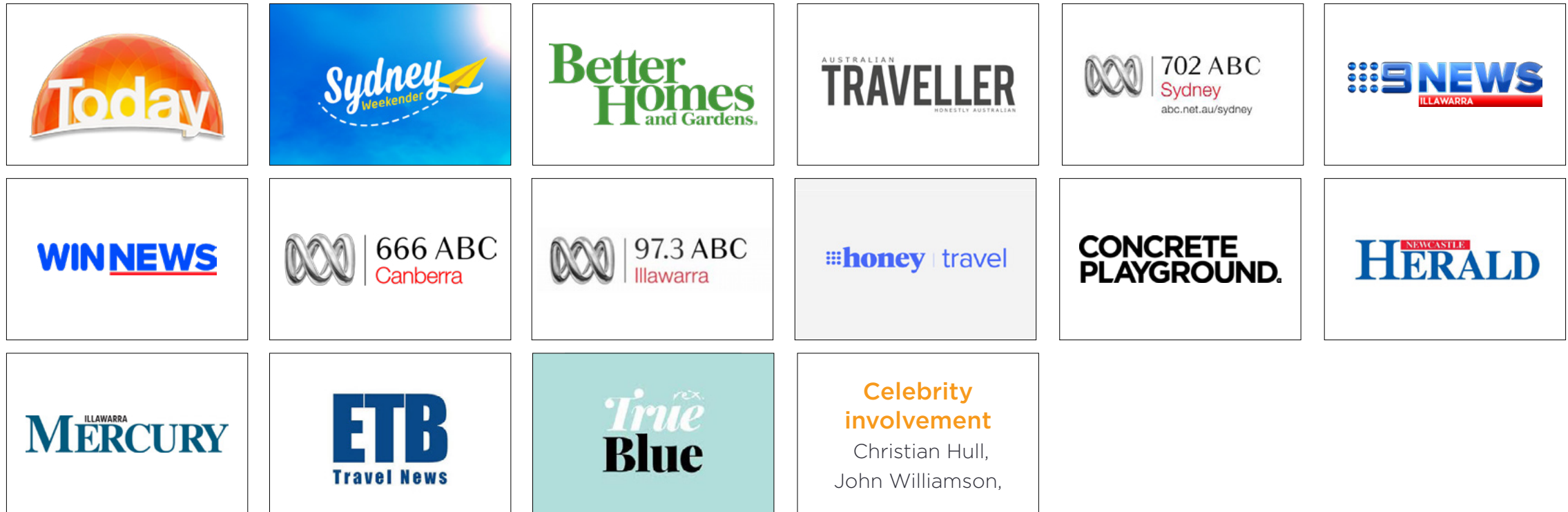
Media and PR

MEDIA/SOCIAL OUTLET	2017	2018	2019	TOTAL
Media and Social Media coverage (items)	56 (media only)	62 (media only)	245* (incl. Social media)	363
Media and PR value	\$1.2million	\$1.3million	\$1.5million +	\$4 million

HERE'S ONE (THREE) WE BAKED EARLIER

PIE TIME SNAPSHOT 2017, 2018, 2019

Media and PR Highlights over the last 3 years



HERE'S ONE (THREE) WE BAKED EARLIER

PIE TIME SNAPSHOT 2017, 2018, 2019

Major Achievements

- Winner, Canberra and Region Tourism Awards 2017, Destination Marketing.
- SILVER, Destination Marketing at Australian Tourism Awards 2017 in Perth.
- Winner, Canberra and Region Tourism Awards 2018, Destination Marketing.
- GOLD, Destination Marketing at Australian Tourism Awards 2018 in Tasmania.
- Canberra and Region Tourism Awards 2019, Destination Marketing Category – Stay tuned for results on 29 November 2019.

Other notable successes

- Parliamentary support – Launch of 2018 at Parliament House in Canberra, and 2019 at Sydney's Parliament House.
- Letter of support from NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian.
- Increased support from Destination New South Wales.
- Add-on initiatives in 2019 – creation of our own Big Pie at the Welcome Centre.
- The BIG Event Group (TBEG) was successful in receiving \$20k in 2018 from Destination NSW (DNSW) via their Incubator Event Funding Program for marketing of PieFest. Further, TBEG received \$20k in 2019 from DNSW via their Flagship Event Funding program for marketing PieFest.

THE CHALLENGES OF KEEPING PIES FRESH

Pie Time has seen some major successes in its time – and now coming into year 4 we have to deal with the challenges of our previous success and keep things fresh.

IN 2019 WE EXPERIENCED:

- It was definitely a lot harder to secure unpaid media coverage without \$\$\$ – newsrooms are shrinking, and paid content is becoming the norm. Plus, many major media outlets, namely TV, had already covered Pie Time in 2017 and 2018 so there is reluctance to cover again.
- Difficulties in getting social media reach as the ‘novelty’ of the event has started wearing thin.
- PieFest event saw a decline in visitation numbers, with 2019 event having approx. 4,000 visitors, whilst in 2018 visitation stood at a stunning 10,000.



OTHER CHALLENGES

- PieFest
- NSW/ACT Best Pie Competition



BUT YOU DO HAVE AN AWARD-WINNING RECIPE

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES - 2019 STILL HAD ITS WINS:

- Brilliant new photography creating a new premium quality image for the campaign.
- Introduction of new events and experiences from operators.
- Introduction of the Sweetie Pie and Bubbles Trail.
- The installation of a BIG Pie at the Southern Highlands Welcome Centre which attracted media attention and selfie moments by visitors.
- Having new and interesting stories to tell from operators.
- University of Wollongong Sponsored Research Study of Pie Time and how consumers engaged with the Pie Trail.



WE HAVE DELIVERED THE PIE TIME 3 YEAR PLAN

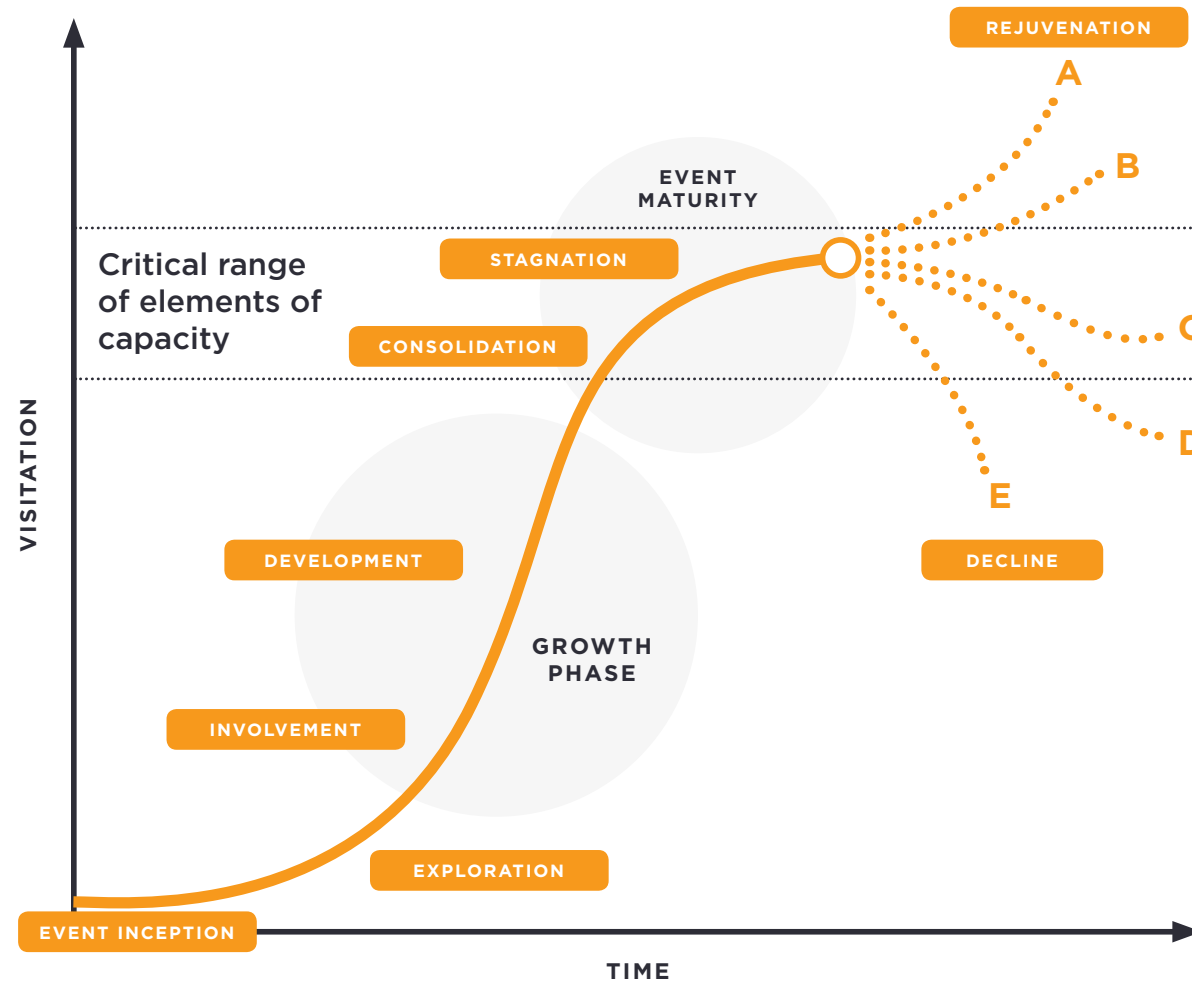
Destination Southern Highlands curated the recipe for Pie Time, pulling together a flavoursome mix of ingredients, baking it and sharing this highly engaging month-long festival for the region with visitors who all came for a taste.

And now we are at the end of the planned 3 year funding period for **event growth** of Pietime.

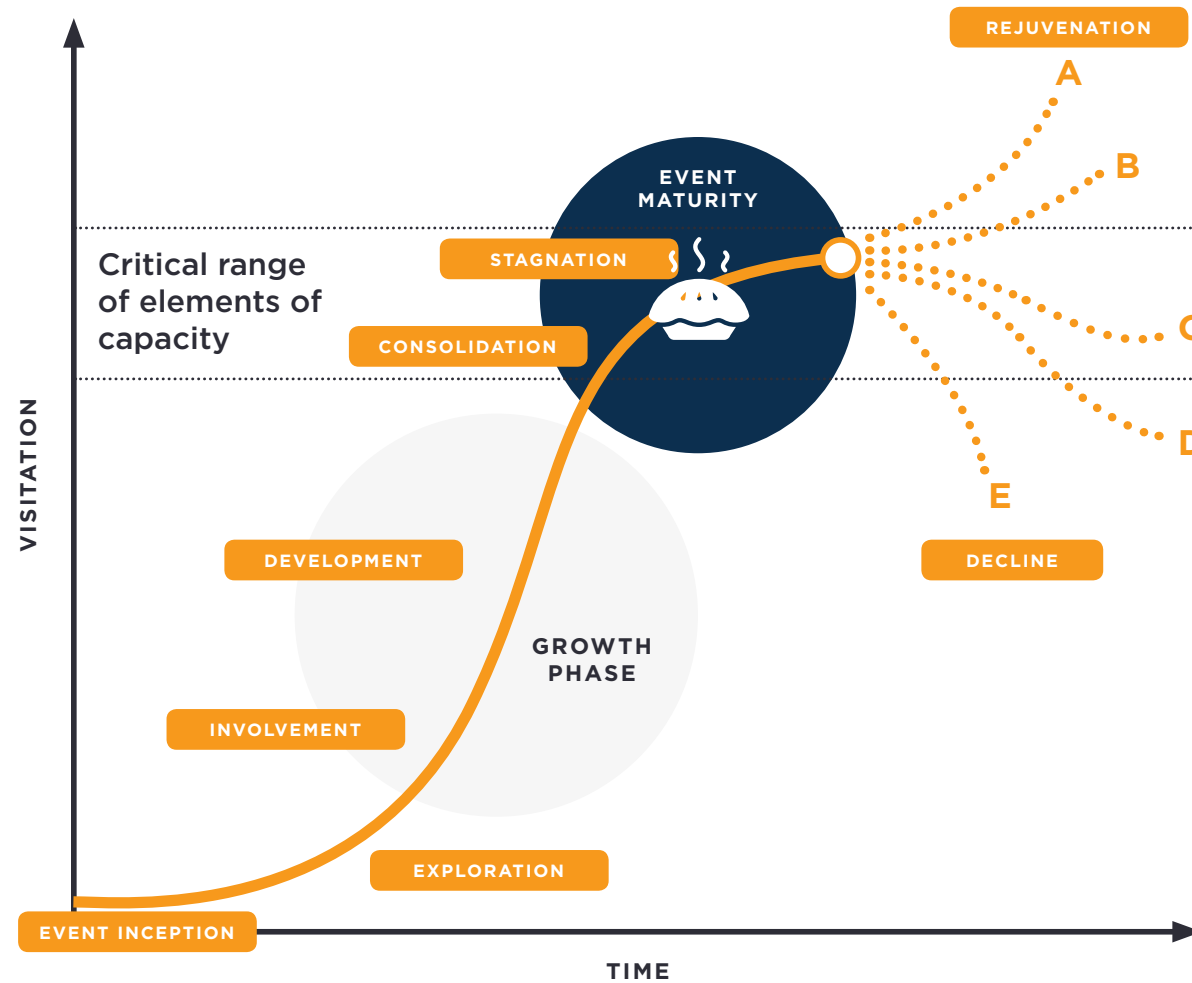
For this campaign event to continue on the same trajectory we need to consider its future, its funding and its ownership.



TOURISM EVENTS LIFECYCLE



WHERE IS PIE TIME RIGHT NOW?



THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME: THE REALITY

For Pie Time to remain successful and continue on the upward slope of the event cycle in the maturity phase and into rejuvenation, maintaining existing funding (or growing it will be required).

THE REALITY IS:

- DSH funding at current levels cannot be maintained indefinitely.
- Staff resources are a high cost and need to be scaled back to meet all of the destination priorities.
- DSH needs to develop other key HERO experiences and campaigns.
- Future industry involvement is critical.

Total cost to run Pie Time for 1 year inclusive of wages = \$250k



THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME: THE OPTIONS

There are a number of options available to DSH and industry:

1. Keep it running on less money – DSH keeps the event running with no-industry buy-in, meaning the event gets smaller with less marketing budget available.

2. A Joint Buy-In – Pie Time becomes supported by a % buy-in split between DSH and industry and grow the available budget.

3. Industry Take it over – Pie Time becomes fully owned by the local industry, with council sponsorship only –

4. Take the year-round approach focusing on ‘Australia’s home of Pies’ – marketing of pies all year round to retain this position, validated by the Pie Trail.

5. Finish the campaign and move on to a new idea – wouldn’t that be a real ‘pie to the face’ for the region’s hard-working industry, sponsors and supporters.
This was discussed and all agreed this is not an option.

There is a definite need to review other iconic events’ industry funding models.

THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME: CREATING AN ICONIC EVENT

Pie Time has the opportunity to become known as one of Australia's Iconic events.

Some notable events that transform whole regions at a specific time of year and successfully attract large visitor numbers who come for the theming, fun, main events and smaller sub-events include:

- Parkes Elvis Festival, Parkes NSW.
- Tamworth Country Music Festival, Tamworth NSW.
- Deni Ute Muster, Deniliquin NSW.
- Floriade – Australia's Celebration of Spring in Canberra.
- Sculpture by the Sea – Bondi Beach to Tamarama Beach Coastal Walk.

See Elvis festival 2017 Handout as example.



THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME: ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

1

Commitment of campaign marketing Budget of \$120-150k from all sources.

2

Set key dates for the Pie Time calendar – launches, competition, industry events, PieFest.

3

Identify resources (People + Time) to coordinate the program.

4

Coordination of the events calendar and experiences at least 6 months prior to June 1.

5

Confirmation of campaign marketing program and budget at least 6 months prior.

6

Commencement of marketing campaign starting Feb 2020.

7

Coordination of DSH/Industry project team to deliver all supporting events – launches, pie comp support, PieFest support.

8

Evaluation of event and outcomes within 3 months of end of the event.

THE FUTURE OF PIE TIME: THE KEY TO SUCCESS

RECOMMENDATION:

Pie Time started as a council initiative. It is still a DSH owned and run destination marketing campaign with individual business involvement.

It's time to hand it over.

Pie Time needs to become an industry-led campaign, owned, grown and supported by the businesses who are benefiting from this new focus on our region.



THE OVEN TIMER IS SET

The oven timer is set for Pie Time 2020.

There is now under 7 months on that timer.

What should we be cooking up as a team in 2020 and beyond?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

WHAT WORKED REALLY WELL IN 2019?

1. New suite of photography including the region's hero pie makers and pie experiences.
2. Having new stories to tell such as – Fairground Follies was new and interesting and told a very different story as demonstrated by a double-page spread in The Canberra Times and several other pieces of media coverage. Sweetie Pie and Bubbles trail was also a favourite. Industry collaboration to produce new events like Pie in the Sky star gazing at Cuttaway Hill Wines along with new tours, activities, dinners built on the story from 2018.
3. Engaging comedian and social media influencer, Christian Hull, worked very well to create new content with a humorous spin that reached new audiences for Pie Time via Christian's almost 600,000 Facebook followers and 153,000 Instagram followers. Christian created 4 Facebook posts with video, 7 static Instagram posts, and 54 Instagram stories. His video from the Illawarra Fly Treetop Adventures has been viewed over 96,000 times to date, and each of his 54 stories was viewed an average of 30,000 times.
4. The Sydney pie-partisan launch at Parliament House engaged the local industry and politicians, as well as gaining media coverage of Pie Time Campaign Launch.
5. Facebook ads worked very well – we received a 39.3% increase on link clicks over 2018. 25,000 clicks to the website were received via Google Ads and 98% of that traffic had never visited the website before – this helped to increase the reach and brand awareness of Pie Time to people who may not have heard about it otherwise or helping them to access more information about Pie Time.
6. Tailored and comprehensive media itineraries for visiting journalists that encompassed a strong mix of Southern Highlands' products.
7. The Sydney Influencer bus engaged social media influencers with larger followings and different audiences to those that have been previously engaged. The relationships formed will no doubt lead to greater promotion for 2020.
8. Engaging DNSW early and in person assisted with getting them on board with more support of Pie Time via the Influencer Famil and promotions in their social media and E-newsletters.
9. Ambassador Vanessa O'Hanlon's videos promoted by 9Honey gained some good exposure with 58,000 views to date.
10. Employing a new campaign strapline '30 days & 100s of ways to enjoy pies in the Southern Highlands' to showcase that Pie Time was more than a 2 day Pie Festival

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

POST 2019 EVENT, THREESIDES MADE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS TO DESTINATION SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS FOR PIE TIME 2020 AND BEYOND:

1. Consider condensing Pie Time activities into a few main events/activities rather than so many smaller ones. As DNSW suggested – ‘be known for doing a few things really well’. Too many events and activities may also appear confusing to the consumer.
2. Aim to begin all media activity even further in advance – especially for bigger proposals such as getting a high-profile Ambassador on board (and ensure ample and realistic budget for this). Suggested timing for June would be initial approaches at the end of 2019, or very beginning of January 2020.
3. Consider a budget to be set aside for paid radio partnership with a ‘wish list’ radio station such as WSFM 101.7, or Nova 96.9 in Sydney, and/or Wave FM in Wollongong.
4. Convert TVs earlier for 2020 – given the lack of TV coverage outside of the locals regionals for 2019 (due to heavy coverage in 2018), suggest pitching new angles to Sydney Weekender, TODAY, Better Homes & Gardens, Getaway, Sunrise etc. to lock them in early 2020.
5. Recommend going ahead with another Influencer Famil out of Sydney in 2020, however you should host it on a Saturday or Sunday and set aside some budget for paid influencer opportunities. If budget allows, you might like to consider a famil from Canberra in addition to Sydney as they haven’t visited since 2018.
6. Pursue other branded partnerships with major national Pie related companies such as Four’NTwenty, Mrs Mac’s, Garlos, Sargents, Vilis, Heinz, MasterFoods in consumer promotions. Additionally, Food related charities or organisations such as Oz Harvest that can amplify the marketing of our month long festival to new audiences.