

Submission Cover Sheet

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee - EES

8

Request to be heard?: No - but please email me a copy of the
Timetable and any Directions

Full Name: Brian Hardidge

Organisation:

Affected property:

Attachment 1: Kalbar_Objection_

Attachment 2: Kalbar_SummaryP

Attachment 3: Gippsland-DMP-Fi

Comments: See attached Submission " Kalbar Objection BDH 260920"

The Chairperson,

Fingerboards Mineral Sands Project Inquiry and Advisory Committee

Submission/Objection Re: Finger Boards Mineral Sands Project, Glenaladale, Vic.

I am writing to object to the proposed application by Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd (Kalbar) for a mineral sands mine at Glenaladale.

East Gippsland and in particular the Gippsland Lakes (an area of 354 sqKm) has long been a holiday destination for not only Victorians but internationals due to the uniqueness with it being the largest navigatable inland lake system in Australia.

Being approx 300km from Melbourne a journey to this area can involve value added overnight stays.

Visitation Economy:

It is recognised by both Federal and State governments that the Visitation Economy is a major way to grow the East Gippsland economy in general for the long term making it a better place to not only visit but to live whilst creating business and job opportunities.

- Local Federal MP **The Hon. Darren Chester** estimates that in 2018 the Visitor Economy for Greater Gippsland generated over \$1Billion from 6.4 Million visitors. That supported more than 10,000 jobs.

<https://darrenchester.com.au/east-gippsland-recovery-2030-plan/>

- Victorian State Minister for Fishing and Boating, **The Hon. Melissa Horne**, advises that recreational fishing in Gippsland "...has been measured to contribute \$350 Million to the Victorian economy and supports more than 1,700 full time jobs".

https://vfa.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/595737/Gippsland-Lakes-Recreational-Fishery-Plan-2020.pdf

Unfortunately Gippsland and in particular East Gippsland Visitor Economy has been hit hard firstly by the devastating bushfires late December 2019/early January 2020 and currently the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions..

Post the bushfires/Moving Forward:

The value to East Gippsland of the Visitor Economy is not questioned at both Federal and State levels as indicated by the following presentation-

- To increase recreational fishing visitations the current Victorian Andrews government recently completed a \$9.4 million buy back of all commercial net fishing licences held in the Gippsland Lakes in conjunction with additional spending of \$12.5 million investing in fish habitat and waterway health for the same area

(This is only part of a package of changes by Vic Fisheries Authority under the direction of State Minister for fishing and boating, The Hon Melissa Horne, previously mentioned, which can be read in more detail via

https://vfa.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/595737/Gippsland-Lakes-Recreational-Fishery-Plan-2020.pdf)

- State Government, Visit Victoria, Gippsland Destination Management Plan which aims for an extra 150,000 Visitors to the region and an expected flow on of 3,000 jobs. The following report should be read by all members of your committee
<https://www.visitgippsland.com.au/resources/towards-2030-gippsland-destination-management-plan>
- Federal Minister The Honourable Darren Chesters' recovery plan overlaps with the 2030 Gippsland Destination Management

<https://darrenchester.com.au/east-gippsland-recovery-2030-plan/>

Each of these initiatives are all about improving the Visitation experience whilst also improving infrastructure for locals and most important creating jobs, **thousands of them**.

Proposed Mine by Kalbar Operations Pty Ltd (Kalbar):

Firstly let me say that I am not against mining but what is proposed is not a social nor environmental fit with where East Gippsland need to progress.

Kalbar propose:

- Project abuts the Mitchell River, water supply to a lot of East Gippsland an a major tributary of the Gippsland Lakes
- Very close to market gardens
- Only 22 Km from major regional town of Bairnsdale that the Mitchell River flows through before joining the Gippsland Lakes
- 200 Jobs and perhaps another 200 created in support services. No guarantees locals will be employed.
- Export minerals overseas
- Majority of profits to stay offshore as majority of shareholders are overseas.

- Kalbar does NOT guarantee that they will not damage nor pollute the Mitchell River and therefore the Gippsland Lakes by its operations, nor can they guarantee other issues such as dust suppression and radiation particles will not affect the community of Bairnsdale and its environs.

Things do go wrong despite so called best practice.

- The final item is the most concerning for East Gippsland and its Visitation economy.

Kalbar openly admit that their mine could impact the Visitation economy in the region

<https://ees.fingerboardsproject.com.au/summary-report>

Refer page 20 /left hand column which is continuation of “Socioeconomic” from page 19/last paragraph starting-

“Residents living adjacent etc”

Last 6 lines starting:

“Change *in amenity could also impact on tourism and recreation within the broader region, including diminishing the value of businesses reliant on tourist’s visits*”

If their mine is as safe as they purport why would this be a concern? What aren’t they saying?

Summary:

We have both Federal and State governments earnest in that the way forward for the area involves a healthy Visitation Economy .They have and are proposing to spend millions of dollars in support.

- Are both the Federal and State governments wasting their money with Kalbar openly admitting that their mine could affect the Visitation Economy, diminish local businesses reliant on same which of course would be followed by job losses?

Kalbar, by its own admission, shows that this development whilst valuable in dollars to its shareholders is **not** valuable to the long term benefit of the East Gippsland region, and in particular the Gippsland Lakes Visitation Economy, due to the inherent risks associated with the mine.

What is being compared is a mine that may generate up to 200 jobs, and possibly a further 200 indirect , but with the majority of profits going overseas for say 15 years then closure.

Versus

A Visitation Economy expansion that may generate many 000’s of jobs, many businesses and long term growth for the East Gippsland Region.

Recommendation:

- The increase in the Visitation Economy is heavily reliant on clean rivers and lakes
- Kalbar cannot guarantee that their mining operation will not cause damage to the Mitchell River and therefore the Gippsland Lakes.

Simply the risk of this mine going forward with the inherent risk of polluting the Mitchell River and Gippsland Lakes therefore crashing the local Visitation Economy is just not worth it.

Things do go wrong

I ask that Kalbars application be declined.

BDH



of exposed areas and return of the land to its former agricultural land use may assist some landholders in re-establishing a connection with their land. For others, this connection may be permanently modified.

The loss of land from agricultural and horticultural production represents an average annual gross margin loss of \$57,750 to \$83,000 per annum which equates to a lost value of production of approximately \$87,250 to \$125,250 per annum. This loss will directly impact 19 landholders with agricultural and forestry operations within the project area who will be compensated in accordance with the *Mineral Resources (Sustainable Development) Act 1990 (Vic)* and the *Land Acquisition and Compensation Act 1986 (Vic)*.

Residents living adjacent to the project area are likely to experience the greatest change in amenity from ground disturbance associated with the project. The way in which these residents respond to this change will vary according to the individual. Changes to amenity may impact the way in which some residents identify and interact with their local area. Noise and dust controls and a range of land management measures will be adopted to reduce the potential for these residents to experience a change in amenity. Changes in amenity could also impact on tourism and recreation within the broader region, including diminishing the value of businesses reliant on tourist visits. Kalbar will regularly engage with tourism authorities to identify opportunities for the region and address any issues as they arise.

The project will be managed to avoid or reduce potential impacts to socioeconomic values. Kalbar has developed to a series of commitments to maximise potential socioeconomic opportunities associated with the project.



Human health

The human health risk assessment determined no exceedances in baseline conditions of adopted human health screening criteria for air, radionuclide concentrations in groundwater and surface water, soil or sediments. This means that all regional residents are unlikely to be exposed to noncompliant levels of contaminants or substances within the existing environment. Predictive modelling determined that future exposure of people to chemicals of potential concern in air, groundwater and surface water, soils or sediments as a result of the project were not substantially different to baseline conditions.

Predicted concentrations of dissolved metals in fines tailings, heavy mineral concentrate and overburden soils were below the human health screening criteria for drinking water and recreational water, and are not therefore a risk to potable groundwater supply. Surface water modelling indicated that release of water from the mine site will not increase sediment, nutrient or heavy metal concentrations in the Mitchell or Perry rivers above background levels. Concentrations of deposited dissolved metals in rainwater tanks as a result of the project were predicted to be negligible.

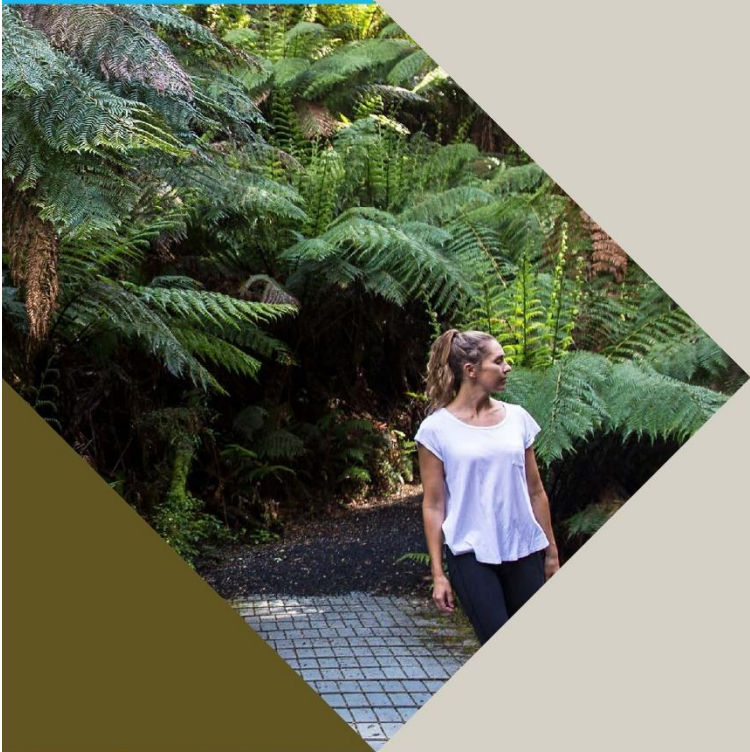


Destination **GIPPSLAND**



Towards 2030 **Gippsland Destination Management Plan**

A Blueprint for Growth



Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land that the geographic scope of this Plan covers, the Gunaikurnai and Bunurong, elders past and present.

Photo Credits

All images used in this document have been sourced from the Inspired Gippsland Facebook page or supplied by Destination Gippsland.

Disclaimer

The Gippsland Destination Management Plan has been prepared by TRC Tourism Pty Ltd for Destination Gippsland and Regional Development Victoria. Any representation, statement, opinion or advice expressed or implied in this document is made in good faith but on the basis that TRC Tourism is not liable to any person for any damage or loss whatsoever which has occurred or may occur in relation to that person taking or not taking action in respect of any representation, statement or advice referred to in this document.

Foreword

The Gippsland Regional Partnership is one of nine Regional Partnerships across the state. Established by the Victorian Government in 2016, Regional Partnerships recognise that local communities are in the best position to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by regions.

Over the past three years, including at three Regional Assemblies, the Partnership has engaged with hundreds of local people across every Gippsland municipality.

The visitor economy, or tourism, has been a common priority identified by the community at these Regional Assemblies, and through our ongoing consultation processes.

Advocating for the development of a Destination Management Plan was one of the Partnership's first priority projects. We were delighted to secure funds from the Victorian Government to see this important tourism document come to fruition.

Tourism is an important industry for Gippsland. It generates an estimated \$1 billion for our local economy. The region attracted a record seven million visitors in the year ending March 2019.

This Plan will be the first step in identifying opportunities to strengthen our tourism offerings, lift visitor numbers and improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of Gippsland.

Accompanying the Plan is the larger Regional Tourism Review. The Victorian Government is currently undertaking the Review to identify opportunities to enhance the value of tourism in regional Victoria. Combined, these projects will ensure sustainable growth of the visitor economy and build on the wonderful region that is Gippsland.

Congratulations to Destination Gippsland and TRC Tourism who have developed an aspirational plan to strengthen the region. We can't wait to see more visitors discover there are all kinds of wonder to be found in Gippsland.

Maree McPherson
Chair, Gippsland Regional Partnership



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Executive Summary

Preamble

Gippsland is a region of abundant world class assets, from our significant natural attractions to gourmet paddock to plate experiences, there is so much to explore and enjoy.

In the year ending March 2019 we welcomed a record 7.06 million visitors to Gippsland, supporting more than ten-thousand local jobs and delivering an economic contribution of \$1 billion to the region. This is an outstanding figure and yet we know Gippsland can achieve more.

At a time when the traditional industries that have supported Gippsland are in decline, the visitor economy offers an exciting new chapter in Gippsland's story with the potential for significant job growth, prosperity and pride for every local community.

'Towards 2030' - the Gippsland Destination Management Plan has been developed to provide a clear vision for achieving long-term, sustainable growth of Gippsland's visitor economy.

It is not a document designed to capture every tourism project or idea currently on the horizon, nor is it a consumer brochure to list every tourism offering.

It is a big-picture strategic framework based on detailed national and international consumer and visitor research and extensive stakeholder consultation, to identify the hero and supporting experiences that can drive the most significant growth in spend, yield and visitation right across Gippsland.

It is designed to inform and inspire all levels of government, stakeholders and the tourism industry about how Gippsland can compete in a dynamic and fast-growing tourism environment – in Victoria, Australia and globally. It is a blue-print for how we ensure Gippsland is on the tourism map, maximizing our region's potential.

Each of us has a vital role to play.

Visitors do not see local, state or federal government boundaries, they see and experience stunning beaches and waterways, pristine parks and wilderness, boutique villages, abundant cycling trails and the very best of food and wine.

Through strengthened partnerships at every level, we offer the best opportunity to maximize visitation and dispersal to every corner of Gippsland, and ensure that tourism is a major economic driver of the region's future.

By working together with a strategic, collaborative, whole of Gippsland approach, we can achieve long-lasting benefits to each and every local Gippsland community.

Sue Smethurst
Chair, Destination Gippsland

Tourism is an economic driver, generating jobs and contributing lifestyle benefits to communities across Gippsland. In the year ending March 2019, the Greater Gippsland region (mainland Gippsland) received approximately 7.06 million¹ visitors who spent an estimated \$1 billion². This level of expenditure supports 13,271 direct and indirect jobs, which represents 11.6% of the regional economy.³

Gippsland's destination appeal is underpinned by its outstanding natural attractions, engaging towns and villages scattered throughout the region, Aboriginal and colonial heritage and its emerging creative industries.

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) identifies the unique offerings that lie within the region that can be leveraged to support tourism and facilitate economic growth and employment to 2030.

Its strategic priorities are:

- Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community
- Strengthen Gippsland's appeal as a destination through brand awareness and co-ordinated marketing
- Develop Gippsland's experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend
- Invest in diverse and exciting regional events
- Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy
- Revitalise visitor servicing across the region
- Create industry partnerships to foster and grow the Gippsland visitor economy.

Visitor projections indicate that Gippsland could receive 8.5 million visitors by 2030 from the current base of 7.06 million visitors. This equates to an additional 150,000 visitors each year until 2030. Visitor nights are projected to grow to 10.5 million by 2030 from the current base of 7.8 million. This means that Gippsland will need to attract an additional 270,000 visitor nights each year to achieve its growth potential by 2030. If this growth potential is realised, total visitor spending will increase from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion.

For a \$1.5 billion in visitor spending target, the total number of tourism related jobs could increase from the current estimated base of 13,271 jobs to 16,257 (13,007 direct jobs and 3,250 indirect/induced jobs) in Greater Gippsland. This would represent over 12% of jobs in the region. In addition, every direct job from visitor spending generates a further 0.26 jobs in other industries in the region.

As expectations and demand for high quality visitor experiences increase, and competition from existing and new destinations continues to grow, Gippsland requires a new strategic and coordinated approach to realise this forecast growth. The challenge is to maximise the region's proximity to Melbourne, create high value experiences that encourage new visitors to travel to the region, extend their length of stay, build shoulder season opportunities and explore what the region has to offer throughout the year. Attracting higher yielding aspirational markets, as well as maintaining existing markets, will be critical if Gippsland is going to increase its market share of tourism in Victoria. To do this, unifying the Gippsland industry and community behind a single vision is critical.

¹ Travel to the Greater Gippsland region and its Sub-Regions - International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, YE Mar 19, TRA

² International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, YE Mar 19, TRA

³ Tourism's Economic Contribution to Great Gippsland in 2016-17

Vision

Gippsland’s natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit

To achieve this vision Gippsland needs to be:



Focused and coordinated implementation of the **new brand and experience themes** for Gippsland is essential to build awareness and preference for Gippsland, that lead to bookings, more visitors and increased spend in the region.

Encouraging **new markets** to visit, stay and explore the region will need to be driven by the creation of new and exceptional experiences within each of the five established experience themes:



Without exceptional or **hero experiences**, Gippsland as a destination will struggle to attract new visitors and will experience low growth. The hero experiences outlined in the DMP are quintessentially Gippsland, they provide a strong competitive advantage over other destinations. The economic benefit of creating these hero experiences is significant with the potential to generate an estimated 235,500 additional visitor nights and increase visitor expenditure by \$49.2 million each year⁴. Together, these hero experiences will facilitate increased visitation to the region and help achieve the accelerated tourism growth target of 10.5 million visitor nights by 2030.

Gippsland is known as a desirable visitor destination which has the potential to drive attendance for major events. Participants choosing event options from a crowded national calendar could be drawn to the region’s attractions and climate – not just for their chosen event activity, but for the short break to explore the region’s attractions during their stay. The development of a **regional events strategy** with a focus on attracting and investing in events that develop, promote and encourage visitation that will generate financial and social benefits to the Gippsland region.

⁴ TRC Tourism estimates based on economic modelling for each hero experience

Destination hubs are a key element to the makeup of Gippsland’s character as a destination. There is an opportunity to develop the visitor experience in these hubs, focussed on their ‘story’ in Gippsland along with experiences and supporting infrastructure to better connect the visitor economy to these communities. The level of investment in facilities and services that support visitors during their stay such as accommodation, roads, signage, walking tracks, lookouts, night-time activities all impact on the visitor’s perception of a destination and their willingness to stay longer and spend. A coordinated planning and **investment framework for infrastructure** that supports the visitor economy across Gippsland will provide a sustainable framework for growth and greater certainty to industry and investors about what is possible and appropriate in terms of future development.

Information is the currency of visitor servicing and must be accessible during all stages of the journey. High quality **visitor engagement** plays a critical role in enhancing the overall visitor experience and inspiring visitors to explore the tourism product that is distinctively Gippsland. The traditional visitor engagement services such as those offered by visitor information centres across Gippsland will need to adapt to the needs and wants of new visitor markets and transform their role. Introducing strategically located Experience Centres that offer high quality information, booking functionality, innovative technology and a retail outlet offering tourism product and local produce provide an opportunity to embrace change and attract new markets through a new model of engagement.

This DMP relies on the **partnerships** and alignment between industry, Government and community for investment, grants, support and sponsorship opportunities to provide enough resources to deliver on the identified priorities. In order to facilitate these opportunities Gippsland must have a fully functional Regional Tourism Board that unifies the region behind the implementation of this DMP. It will be the representative voice for the region on **tourism leadership** and issues and have strong industry partnerships.

This DMP will enable Destination Gippsland and its partners to:

- Determine a balance between ‘quick wins’ and longer-term or major projects
- Demonstrate **success** along the way (with short and longer-term priority progress), resulting in greater support and implementation buy-in from industry and the community
- Develop **signature or hero experiences**, which will become the lead products for Gippsland as well as **supporting experiences** and services required to ensure visitor satisfaction
- Leverage and align with Victorian Government strategic priorities and commitments as well as **Councils’ strategies and plans**
- Develop a framework for **sustainable growth of the visitor economy**, leveraging the attributes, businesses and activities quintessential to Gippsland
- Foster a strong focus on **vibrant communities**, recognising the benefits of tourism as part of regional economic growth
- Identify potential **new opportunities** that can assist in growth and yield, have the potential to attract investment and/or revitalise existing assets
- Build a future for **successful growth**, investment and strong partnerships Gippsland’s visitor economy relies on a range of sectors, stakeholder groups and partners working collaboratively to deliver their part of the tourism picture and to provide the optimal experience for visitors.

This will result in the collective benefits of increased visitor spend, increased profile, increased investment in tourism infrastructure, and direct and indirect economic benefits for Gippsland.

Goal

Grow the value of tourism to Gippsland by increasing the number of visitors, length of stay and spend in region



Strategic Priorities

1. Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community	2. Strengthen Gippsland’s appeal as a destination through brand awareness and co-ordinated marketing	3. Develop Gippsland’s experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend	4. Invest in diverse and exciting regional events	5. Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy	6. Revitalise visitor servicing across the region	7. Create industry partnerships to foster and grow the Gippsland visitor economy.
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ACTIONS

Each strategy has a suite of actions identified that aim to increase leadership, visitation, average length of stay, yield, customer satisfaction, and repeat / referral visitation throughout the year and into the future.

1. Overview of Gippsland

Defining the region

Gippsland covers a major part of the eastern state of Victoria, encompassing a land area of close to 41,600km². The region extends from its western end adjoining metropolitan Melbourne’s south-eastern boundary, to Cape Howe the most easterly point of Victoria. In the north, much of its northern boundary is defined by Victoria’s high country and the adjacent NSW border. The southern boundary encompasses 700 km of spectacular coastline and includes the most southern point of the Australian mainland, Wilsons Promontory.

The Gippsland Tourism Region (GTR) includes the local government areas (LGAs) of Bass Coast Shire (mainland part), Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland Shire, Latrobe City, South Gippsland Shire and Wellington Shire. The GTR is bordered by other tourism regions including Phillip Island, Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges to the west and the High Country, NSW South Coast and Snowy Mountains to the north west. While Phillip Island and San Remo provide a western gateway to the region, Destination Phillip Island is responsible for undertaking strategic planning for this section of the region and its destinations.

Tourism is an economic driver, generating jobs and contributing lifestyle benefits to communities across Gippsland. In the year ending March 2019, the Greater Gippsland region received approximately 7.06 million⁵ visitors who spent an estimated \$1 billion⁶. This level of expenditure supports 13,271 direct and indirect jobs, which represents 11.6% of the regional economy⁷.

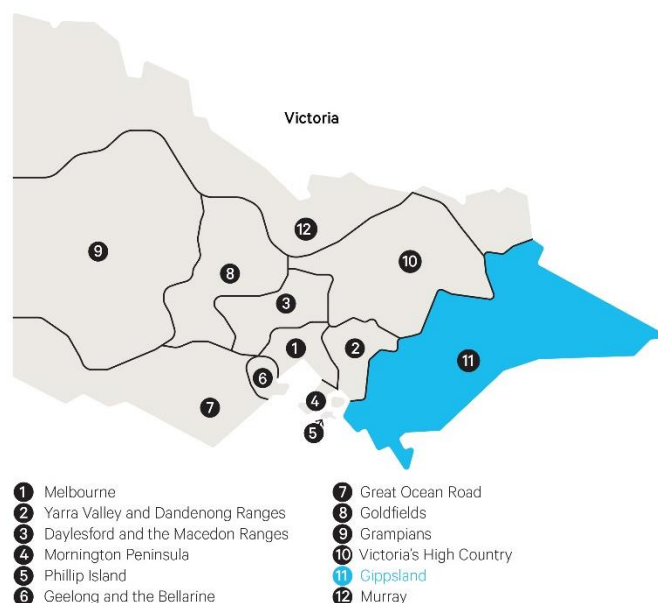
Figure 1 Gippsland tourism region



Regional strengths

Gippsland’s appeal as a destination is underpinned by its outstanding natural attractions, engaging towns and villages scattered throughout the region, Aboriginal and colonial heritage and its emerging creative industries.

It boasts one of Australia’s biggest and most beautiful inland waterways, pristine stretches of coastline and some of Victoria’s most spectacular national parks showcasing alpine peaks and old growth rainforests. The towns, cities, villages and hamlets of the region celebrate their history and heritage and provide experiences of local life. Artists and artisans are inspired by the people, places and stories of the region, and through their creative endeavours, offer visitors an insight into the region. The rolling green pastures of rich agricultural lands boast fresh produce, wineries and hot springs. Gippsland inspires adventure with swimming, fishing, camping, boating, cycling and hiking and a range of other activities for visitors.



⁵ Travel to the Greater Gippsland region and its Sub-Regions - International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, YE Mar 19, TRA

⁶ International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, YE Mar 19, TRA
⁷ Tourism’s Economic Contribution to Great Gippsland in 2016-17

Tourism management and key partners

Gippsland regional tourism

The Regional Tourism Board (RTB) responsible for the Gippsland region is Destination Gippsland Ltd (DGL). The role of DGL is to grow and serve the Gippsland tourism sector and work in partnership with industry and Government to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits to the community. Its focus is delivering marketing, industry development, infrastructure strategy and advocating for the tourism industry.

All the local government authorities in the Gippsland region are significant supporters of tourism growth and have a substantial role in supporting the delivery of infrastructure and services to visitors within their local government areas.

Traditional Custodians

The Gunaikurnai people are recognised as Traditional Owners over approximately 1.33 million hectares in Gippsland – extending from South Gippsland (near Foster west and including part of Warragul), east to the Snowy River, and north to the Great Dividing Range, including 200 metres of offshore sea territory. The Bunurong people are the Traditional Owners of part of South-West Gippsland, including Wonthaggi, Leongatha and part of Warragul. Traditional Owners to the east of the Snowy River include Bidwell, Monero and Yuin groups. The Gunaikurnai Land and Water Corporation (GLaWAC) are joint management partners with the State of Victoria of ten national parks and reserves with Parks Victoria across Gippsland, including Buchan Caves Reserve, Corringale Foreshore Reserve, Lake Tyers State Park, Mitchell River National Park, New Guinea Caves within the Snowy River National Park, Gippsland Lakes Reserve at Raymond Island, Tarra-Bulga National Park, The Knob Reserve and the Lakes National Park and Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park.

The Gunaikurnai and Victorian Government Joint Management Plan guides the management of the parks and reserves, including aspirations for tourism on country.

Phillip Island

Bass Coast Shire straddles two tourism regions - Gippsland and Phillip Island/San Remo. Phillip Island, widely acknowledged as one of Victoria's premier tourist destinations, has significant domestic and international tourism markets and is the focus of national and state tourism strategies. Whilst Phillip Island/San Remo come under the regional development area of Gippsland, for tourism planning and the focus of this DMP it sits separately from the Greater Gippsland region and has its own Regional Tourism Board known as Destination Phillip Island.

Destination Phillip Island and Bass Coast Shire Council has developed its own Destination Management Plan (Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035) to recognise the special nature of tourism to the area. The Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 sets out the strategies for tourism growth. This strategy is considered an important reference document and will be viewed closely when looking at opportunities to grow tourism in Gippsland.

Growing at an estimated 4.2% per annum, visitor numbers to Phillip Island and San Remo could reach nearly 3.5 million visitors and 4 million visitor nights by 2035. The 2035 visitor profile shows a higher growth rate in international visitors and above average growth in day trips. This leads to a likely trend of a reduction in average length of stay which the strategy aims to reverse.

Gippsland is well placed to leverage the popularity of Phillip Island as a destination and entice visitors to extend their stay in the region and in other areas close to Phillip Island. The significant projects identified in the Phillip Island strategy and relevant to this DMP are an iconic South Coast Eco Lodge, new events infrastructure, a world-class hotel and conference centre in Cowes, improved marine access, iconic infrastructure and development of the Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry.

These projects together with the hero and supporting experiences outlined in this Gippsland DMP create outstanding opportunities to extend the length of stay of domestic and international Lifestyle Leaders, and to encourage visitors to travel beyond Phillip Island into the broader Gippsland region.

Strategic Context

Economic growth

Over the last five years, Gippsland's regional economy grew at an annual average rate of 2.3%, outpacing the State average and the rest of regional Victoria.

Gippsland's population and main centre of economic activity is concentrated within the Latrobe Valley corridor. Latrobe City Local Government Area is Gippsland's most densely populated region and Latrobe City is the fourth largest provincial city behind Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo. Other regional centres include Warragul in west Gippsland, Leongatha and Wonthaggi, and the townships of Korumburra and Inverloch which are located along the South Gippsland and Bass highways. Cowes (Phillip Island), Lakes Entrance, Orbost, Maffra and San Remo are also significant towns. Bairnsdale, and Orbost are the main towns of East Gippsland with Sale sitting between the Latrobe Valley and East Gippsland.

Baw Baw and Bass Coast Shires are projected to experience large increases in population over the next ten years due to their relative proximity to Melbourne, including the Cardinia Employment Corridor with new residents settling within commuting distance to metropolitan workplaces. This growth is expected to increase demand for leisure and recreation facilities and services, particularly in areas close to Melbourne, and to stimulate demand for new hotels, conference facilities for business events, as well as visitor services, experiences (including events and festivals) and related amenities.

Tourism in Gippsland is guided and influenced by several different policies, strategies and plans that exist at varying levels (national, state, regional and local) relating to economic growth. The relevant strategic and planning policy frameworks are presented in the Appendix Documentation.

In addition, there are numerous projects and proposals underway in the region that support tourism including improvements to roads, railways and airports, recreational and sporting facilities; trail and path upgrades and improvements to marine facilities. A full description of current investment and proposed developments is presented in the Appendix Documentation.

Sustainability

While this DMP has a structured goal of increasing the economic benefits of the visitor economy, it cannot do this in isolation of the broader question of sustainability. A sustainable visitor economy is a goal to which all partners and contributors to the industry should strive. This could be in the areas of waste generation, re-use of materials, renewable energy, or one of the many other areas of long-term sustainability. Implementation of this DMP should focus on achieving this goal.



2. Gippsland as a Destination

Access

Gippsland is predominately a drive destination with most visitors using the road network to travel throughout the region.



The major road spine, the Princes Freeway (M1) from Melbourne, enters in the west and becomes the Princes Highway (A1) through to the NSW border in the east and then north to Sydney. It is also known as the Sydney Melbourne Touring Route.

The M420 connects Melbourne with Phillip Island with the South Gippsland Highway branching off this road and connecting southern Gippsland to the Princes Highway at Sale.

Other roads head north from the Princes Highway through the High Country to NSW, including the popular Great Alpine Road



Latrobe City is serviced twenty times per day by train to Melbourne (2.5hr) with further rail and coach connections through to Bairnsdale and other East Gippsland towns.



V/Line coach service from Melbourne to South Gippsland, Bass Coast or the north-south service from Wonthaggi-Traralgon. Much of Gippsland off the main train line is also serviced by V/Line coach services.



Despite having eight public and one private airport, Gippsland lacks regular passenger transport. Melbourne's Tullamarine Airport is between 1.5hr and 6.5hr drive depending on how far east the trip commences.

East Gippsland is also accessible via Merimbula Airport in South East NSW.



Bounded by Westernport in the west and Bass Strait to the south, the Gippsland coast is home to five ports and two waterways including the largest series of inland lakes in the southern hemisphere. The region has many wharfs, jetties and boating facilities. There is a regular ferry service from Westernport (passenger only) from Mornington Peninsula to Phillip Island and French Island. There is also a short Ferry (vehicular) from Paynesville to Raymond Island. Phillip Island receives regular cruise ship visits and the Visitor Economy strategy proposes a car Ferry from Cribb Point to Cowes

Attractions and Activities

Gippsland offers long pristine stretches of coastline and some of Victoria's most spectacular national parks showcasing alpine peaks and old growth rainforests. Coastal habitats to high country towns boast fresh produce, cellar doors, hot springs and historical charm. Camping or sailing, cycling or hiking, Gippsland inspires adventure. There are small craft and food festivals, and larger events such as those hosted at Lardner Park and major sporting events in Latrobe City. Gippsland has a large number and range of visitor products and services for domestic, interstate and international visitors.

Nature tourism

Gippsland contains the largest area of public land in Victoria, with 1.6 million hectares encompassing forest, state and national parks, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Marine Coastal Parks and Reserves and Ramsar Wetlands. It contains some of Victoria's most striking landscapes and significant national parks and reserves including Wilsons Promontory National Park, the Gippsland Lakes fed by the Avon, Thomson, Latrobe, Mitchell, Nicholson and Tambo rivers, Croajingolong National Park, Strzelecki Ranges, and Buchan Caves Reserve. The region also contains outstanding alpine areas such as Mt Baw Baw and parts of the Australian Alps national parks. These natural assets support a diversity of activities including walking, hiking, cycling, kayaking, boating, fishing and other aquatic activities and alpine sports. Infrastructure such as walking tracks, cycling trails, camping areas, boat launching areas, and lookouts support the visitor experience across the region. Several tourism operators also provide guided opportunities in these areas.

Touring routes

There are several touring routes in Gippsland including the well-recognised Great Alpine Road that crosses from Gippsland to Northeast Victoria. The Sydney to Melbourne Touring Route drive is similarly promoted by Tourism Australia, Visit Victoria, and Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc. Both routes are very popular for domestic and international visitors. As advertised on www.sydnemelbournetouring.com, the massive, unspoiled wilderness of the Croajingolong National Park and the awesome breadth of Ninety Mile Beach and the Gippsland Lakes, Australia's largest inland waterway – are trip highlights. The journey culminates at Wilsons Promontory, the southernmost point of mainland Australia, where visitors can explore small, hidden bays, see wildlife in its natural habitat, and visit the historic lighthouse. The road continues along the coast towards Phillip Island and Melbourne.

A range of touring routes assist in dispersing visitors across the region both north and south of the Princes Highway. Touring routes are developed and promoted to differing standards, some with a strong depth of product and others requiring ongoing industry engagement to strengthen the offer and proposition. A list of currently promoted touring routes by Visit Melbourne and Parks Victoria can be found in the Appendix Documentation.

Several municipalities have developed recreation vehicle (RV) strategies in response to recent growth in the drive tourism market. These strategies are aimed at managing RV travellers outside of commercial parks including infrastructure provision, visitor information, education on environmental impacts and compliance activities.

Events

Gippsland has a diverse events calendar, including golf and racing days, music festivals and agricultural shows — and a host of food and wine events presenting the region's fresh produce.

Latrobe City hosts a diverse range of sporting events due to its national and international standard sporting facilities. The Latrobe City Events and Tourism Strategy 2018 – 2022 aims to attract more events and continue to increase visitors to the region. Lardner Park is Gippsland's largest event venue and hosts around 150 events annually attracting 230,000 patrons and generating 100,000 bed nights.

Regional produce

Gippsland is one of Australia's longest established food tourism destinations that offers a highly diverse range of cheeses, free-range meats, locally caught seafood, truffles, organic fruits and vegetables and increasingly, speciality foods such as garlic and saffron. Gippsland has some thirty wineries with cellar doors and more than forty farm gate experiences available to the visitor. Restaurants and cafes using fresh local produce are dotted throughout the region providing visitors with a variety of dining options.

Gippsland boasts the largest number of farmers markets in Victoria. Monthly farmers markets are held at Maffra, Warragul, Metung, Inverloch, Koonwarra, Drouin, Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale, as well as at numerous smaller towns across the region.

Heritage and culture

The heritage of Gippsland is as diverse as its landscape. The stories of the region's history can be found in collections held by volunteer historical societies, museums and Keeping Places. The Gunaikurnai, Bunurong, Bidwell, Monero and Yuin people are proud custodians of the stories of the area. Several interpretative walks and lookouts tell the story of the region's first people.

Gold, timber, farming, fishing and energy production shape the rich European heritage of the region. The region's small villages abound with examples of how the area prospered, each with its own character and charm. Yarragon, Fish Creek, Metung, Nowa Nowa, Omeo, Erica, Rawson and Walhalla with the Goldfields Railway and the Long Tunnel Extended Mine, are just a few examples.

Creative industries

Creative industries can enhance regional identity, support the development of the tourism industry and attract greater investment. Performing Art Centres can be found across the region in major town centres including Warragul, Traralgon, Sale, Bairnsdale and Wonthaggi. Theatre Gippsland and Creative Gippsland work collaboratively on creative initiatives. The Latrobe Regional Gallery and the Gippsland Art Gallery are significant attractions for visitors. The newly formed Gippsland Arts Network, comprising representatives from all visual arts organisations and local government authorities, is currently working towards a major festival of the arts. Latrobe City Council is investing in a new events space within the new Latrobe creative precinct in Traralgon. There is significant growth in the creative industry in Gippsland and its emerging arts scene is anticipated to have a significant influence on tourism in the future.

Shopping

There are also many retail opportunities for visitors from village shops selling antiques, crafts and collectibles with Yarragon Village, Stratford on the Avon River and Loch village being the most popular.

Cruise tourism

Neighbouring Phillip Island continues to grow the cruise market with several large cruise ships using Westernport as a port of disembarkation for passengers to Phillip Island. Cruise markets require strong ground content and commissionable product from operators. Gippsland offers good opportunities for small bespoke cruise experiences that include Wilsons Promontory National Park.

Accommodation

An audit of accommodation undertaken by AEC in 2018 indicates that most of the accommodation in the region are caravan /holiday parks and holiday homes/self-catering apartments catering to the large number of families holidaying in the region. Most of the accommodation stock in the region is 3 star rated. Whilst there is a large variety of accommodation for visitors there are gaps in the market relating to the type, quantity, quality, size and location.

Gippsland's hotel, motel and serviced apartment accommodation attract a little over 13% of all visitor nights which has reduced over the last three years from 18.3% in 2015-16⁸. Peer-to-peer accommodation booking sites such as Airbnb are growing channels for distribution and sales of visitor accommodation with over 300 homes across Gippsland listed. An overview of accommodation in the region is included in the Appendix Documentation.

Accommodation performance is measured using occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPAR). In 2015-16 Gippsland's hotel, motel and serviced apartment accommodation (HMSA) achieved the following performance relative to Regional Victoria:

- Occupancy of 46.6% v 50.3% (13/19)
- ADR of \$127.15 v \$142.21 (13/19)
- RevPAR of \$59.31 v \$71.49 (14/19)

Seasonal fluctuations present a challenge for operators with March being the highest performing quarter and September the lowest, suggesting that strategies seeking to flatten out these seasonal variances are required.

The demand for quality accommodation is on the rise. Occupancy rates for luxury and upscale establishments are averaging 80.9% occupancy nationally, increasing the profitability measure of revenue per available room to \$209 in 2017/18. In order to respond to changing consumer expectations, the region needs branded accommodation (known and trusted by national and international consumers) or it will be at risk of losing market share to other destinations.

Accommodation is a key consideration for tourism growth to the region – without enough stock of high-quality (and potentially branded) accommodation, the region will be unable to keep up with the strong growth in demand and it will not be able to compete with other destinations.



⁸ Accommodation Analysis AEC 2019

Infrastructure gaps and investment opportunities

An analysis of products and services across the region suggests that there are several gaps in the range of experiences that will encourage visitors to stay longer⁹. The findings are summarised in the Appendix Documentation.

Experiences that leverage Gippsland's extensive natural assets (national parks, rivers and lakes, coastline), strong Aboriginal and European culture and heritage, regional food and wine will strengthen the appeal of the destination and provide a reason to stay longer.

The key opportunities are outlined below:

- With a range of new and upgraded sporting facilities to be constructed over the next few years in the Latrobe Valley the area is well placed to attract major **sporting events**.
- Gippsland is well placed to capitalise on the global growth of **nature-based and soft adventure tourism** given its outstanding national parks, UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, Marine Coastal Parks and Ramsar Wetlands, along with its many walking, hiking and cycling trails. Cycle tourism is on the increase and Gippsland can leverage this growth by providing cycle friendly infrastructure.
- The region's outstanding water ways and established marine services industry provide significant opportunity to strengthen the destination's appeal as one of Australia's leading **boating and fishing** destinations. Signature accommodation around the Gippsland Lakes or floating accommodation on the lakes also offers potential.
- Expanding the **volume and quality of accommodation** and offering a range of new experiences in areas close to Melbourne will encourage day visitors to overnight in the region and establish it as a short-break leisure destination for new markets.
- The drive **touring routes** across Gippsland have the potential to be enhanced and connected to new experiences, particularly around **destination hubs**. The proximity of Merimbula airport to the Victorian Border presents an opportunity to attract visitors to East Gippsland and explore the Sydney Melbourne touring route. A range of drive tourism routes to the north and south of the Princes Highway are also popular for the drive market and, with strengthening, could be even more attractive.
- The **heritage experiences** of the region, particularly in small villages such as Walhalla with its gold-era heritage offering the Walhalla Goldfields Railway, the Long Tunnel Extended Mine and ghost tours present opportunities for new experiences on existing touring routes for new markets.
- Supporting the **creative industries** is an important element in the tourism mix – with blockbuster exhibitions and performances held at the flagship galleries and theatres in Warragul, Sale and Morwell, the region is home to a concentration of art and culture.
- Gippsland has deep roots and connections with the agricultural sector, particularly dairy, beef and lamb production. A significant opportunity exists to elevate the **regional food and wine** as a truly unique Gippsland experience that cannot be easily replicated in other areas of regional Victoria.

- **Festivals and events** play a major role in attracting visitors to Gippsland, however, for the most part these are day visitors from Melbourne. A strong opportunity therefore exists to grow the overnight visitor market by increasing the number of multi-day food, wine, cultural and sporting events.
- **Business events** also offer strong growth opportunity for Gippsland given its proximity to Melbourne and the variety of experiences on offer. Suitable accommodation and conference facilities will be required to support this market.
- Broadening and deepening the **Aboriginal cultural experiences** available to visitors will attract new markets (including international) and increase the number of repeat visitors to Gippsland.
- Elevating standards of customer service, extending business operating hours to create a vibrant night-time economy in destination hubs are all essential to establish Gippsland as the destination of choice.
- Maintaining and investing in high quality **public infrastructure** will play a significant role in increasing the appeal and extending the length of stay in the region – this includes signage, parking, roads, pedestrian walkways, cycle paths, lookouts and public amenities.
- Gippsland has a small and niche opportunity to leverage Phillip Island's focus on **cruise tourism**. Developing small bespoke cruising experiences and supporting land content in South Gippsland together with the development of Barry's Beach/Port Welshpool as a visitor cruise port for smaller cruise vessels presents real opportunities.
- **Sustainable tourism** is an important aspect to ensure the protection of the outstanding natural and cultural values of the region. As a first step government and industry should be aiming to provide best practice sustainable tourism. Initiatives that encourage the tourism industry to become more sustainable are important considerations.
- **Accessible tourism** is the ongoing endeavour to ensure tourist destinations, products and services across the region are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. This DMP supports the actions in the Gippsland Tourism Accessible Partnership Plan.

Addressing these gaps in products and services available to visitors will:

- Appeal to existing and new markets
- Encourage visitors to explore Gippsland in new ways
- Motivate visitors to stay longer and spend more
- Give Gippsland a competitive edge
- Provide visitors with more authentic and enriched visitor experiences
- Extend the length of the tourism season
- Enable Gippsland to align itself to its new brand and to target markets and segments
- Encourage businesses and sub-regions to work together

⁹ Draft Destination Management Plan AEC 2019



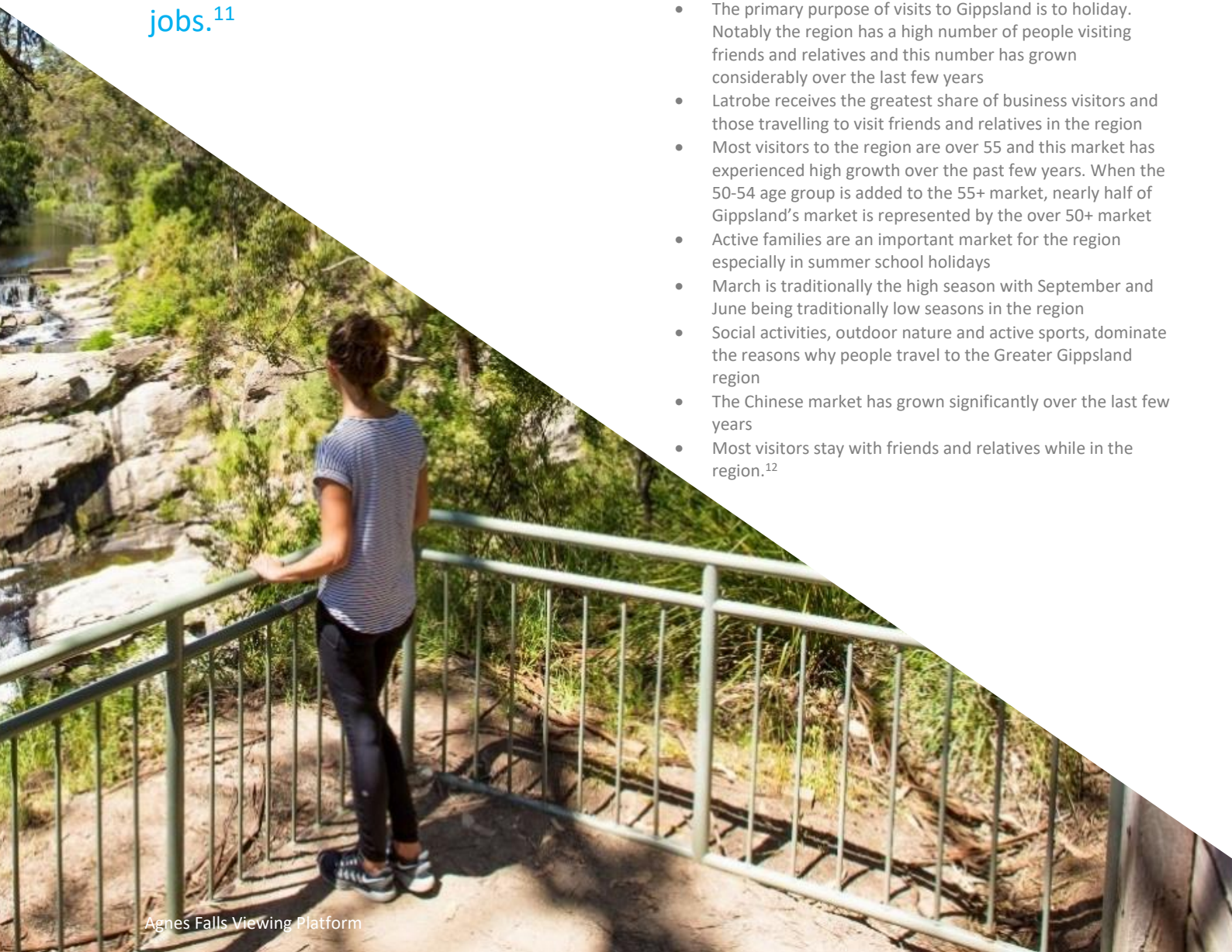
Port Albert

3. Gippsland's Visitor Economy

Tourism is an important industry for Gippsland. The Greater Gippsland region receives approximately 7.06 million¹⁰ domestic (overnight and daytrip) and international overnight visitors combined, who spend an estimated \$1.0 billion each year in the region. This level of expenditure supports 13,271 direct and indirect jobs.¹¹

Tourism Snapshot

- Greater Gippsland receives a 12.4% share of the regional Victorian market for visitors (International overnight, Domestic overnight and Domestic daytrip)
- Most visitors to the region are day trippers (60%), followed by domestic overnight visitors (39%). International visitors represent 1% of visitors to the region
- Most visitors to the region are from Victoria
- International visitors stay longer in the region three times longer in the region compared to domestic visitors
- Domestic overnight expenditure in Gippsland is estimated \$106 per night and \$296 per visitor
- Daytrip visitors spend an around \$89 on their trip
- International overnight expenditure is estimated at \$68 per night and \$562 per visit
- The primary purpose of visits to Gippsland is to holiday. Notably the region has a high number of people visiting friends and relatives and this number has grown considerably over the last few years
- Latrobe receives the greatest share of business visitors and those travelling to visit friends and relatives in the region
- Most visitors to the region are over 55 and this market has experienced high growth over the past few years. When the 50-54 age group is added to the 55+ market, nearly half of Gippsland's market is represented by the over 50+ market
- Active families are an important market for the region especially in summer school holidays
- March is traditionally the high season with September and June being traditionally low seasons in the region
- Social activities, outdoor nature and active sports, dominate the reasons why people travel to the Greater Gippsland region
- The Chinese market has grown significantly over the last few years
- Most visitors stay with friends and relatives while in the region.¹²



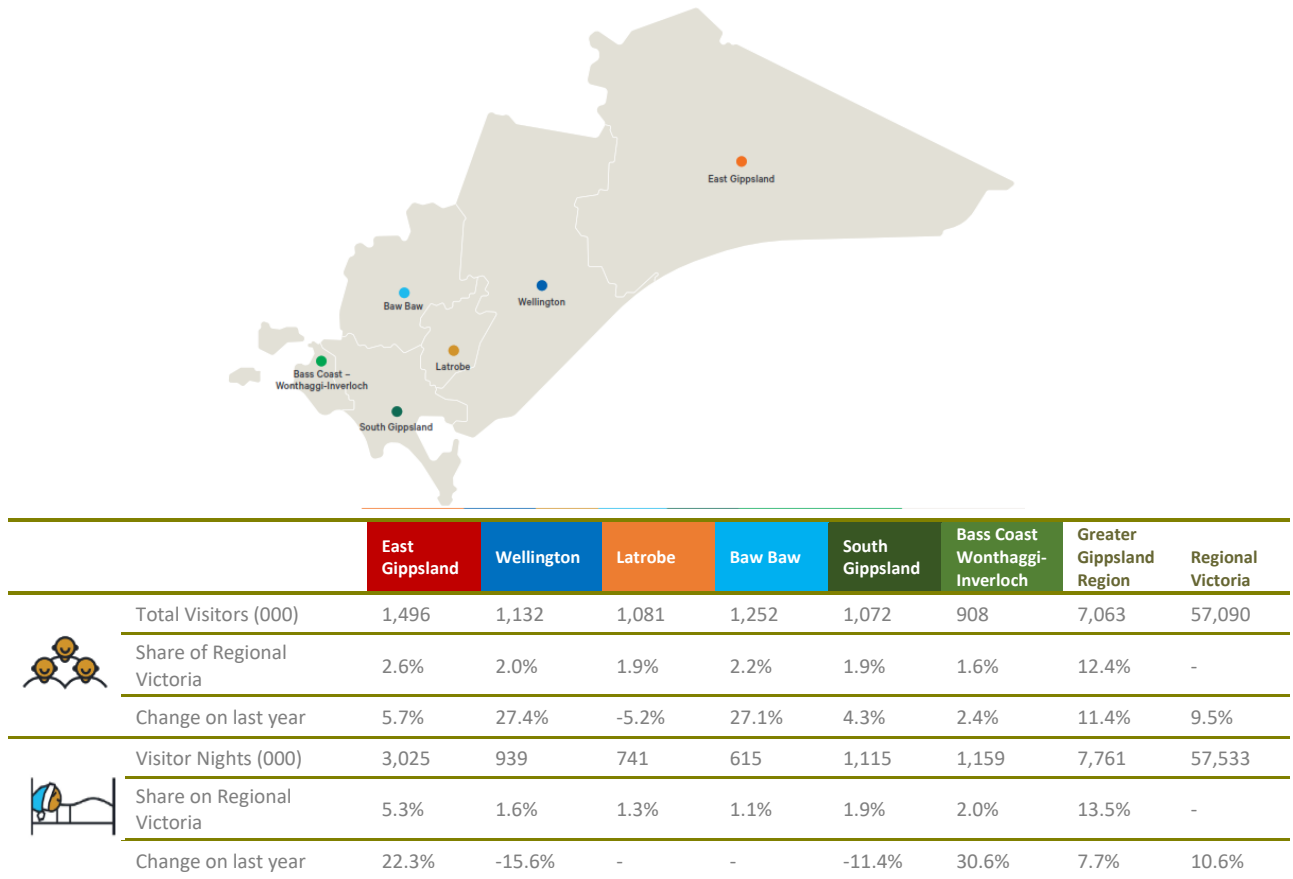
Agnes Falls Viewing Platform

¹⁰ Travel to the Greater Gippsland region and its Sub-Regions - International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, YE Mar 19, TRA

¹¹ Tourism's Economic Contribution to Great Gippsland in 2016-17

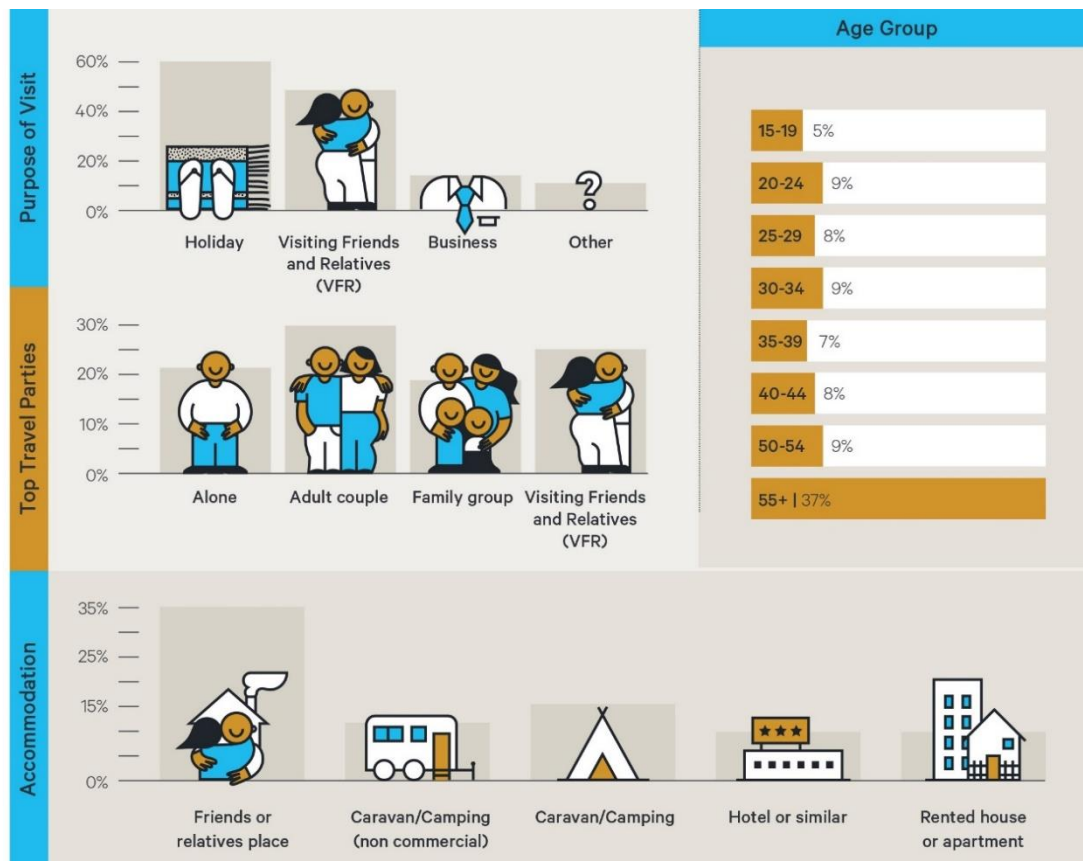
¹² Sourced from: Travel to the Greater Gippsland region and its Sub-Regions - International Visitors Survey and National Visitors Survey, 2018 and Year Ending March 2019 TRA; Tourism's Economic Contribution to Great Gippsland in 2016-17

Figure 2: Overview of tourism across each of greater Gippsland's tourism regions¹³



Source: Travel to the Greater Gippsland & sub-regions YE May2019, TRA

Figure 3: Statistics for Gippsland (excludes Phillip Island)¹⁴



¹³ International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey, Ye Dec 18, Tourism Research Australia

¹⁴ Visitation, Impact & Trends International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey, Ye Mar 19, Tourism Research Australia

Gippsland compared to Regional Victoria

When compared with the rest of regional Victoria, Gippsland has experienced strong growth in the number of domestic visitors traveling to the region in recent years. However, the average overnight spend for domestic visitors to Gippsland is lower (\$106) than the average for regional Victoria (\$139) and the average overnight spend of international visitors to Gippsland is only marginally lower (\$68) when compared to an average of \$71 for regional Victoria. The regions receiving the highest total visitor spend from domestic and international visitors are Great Ocean Road, Murray and Geelong and the Bellarine all with \$1.3 billion, followed by Mornington Peninsula and Goldfields \$1.1 billion. Gippsland receives 4 million more visitors than Victoria's High Country but receives the same amount in visitor spend (\$1 billion)¹⁵.

Figure 4 Tourism to Gippsland compared to other Victorian regions¹⁶



	Region	Total visitors	Total Spend
1	Melbourne	34.7 M	\$19 B
2	Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges	6.0 M	\$756 M
3	Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges	3.0 M	\$500 M
4	Mornington Peninsula	8.1 M	\$1.2 B
5	Phillip Island	2.2 M	\$481 M
6	Geelong and the Bellarine	6.0 M	\$1.1 B
7	Great Ocean Road	6.1 M	\$1.4 B
8	Goldfields	7.5 M	\$1.2 B
9	Grampians	2.4 M	\$460 M
10	Victoria's High Country	4.0 M	\$1.3 B
11	Greater Gippsland (includes Bass Coast)	7.1 M	\$1.0 B
12	Murray	6.3 M	\$1.5 B

¹⁵ www.business.vic.gov.au/tourism National Visitor Survey Results YE March 2019 - note that Bass Coast is normally excluded from the Gippsland Region. For the purposes of comparison, Bass Coast has been included and is known as Greater Gippsland

¹⁶ Ibid

4. Growth Opportunity

Visitor Projections

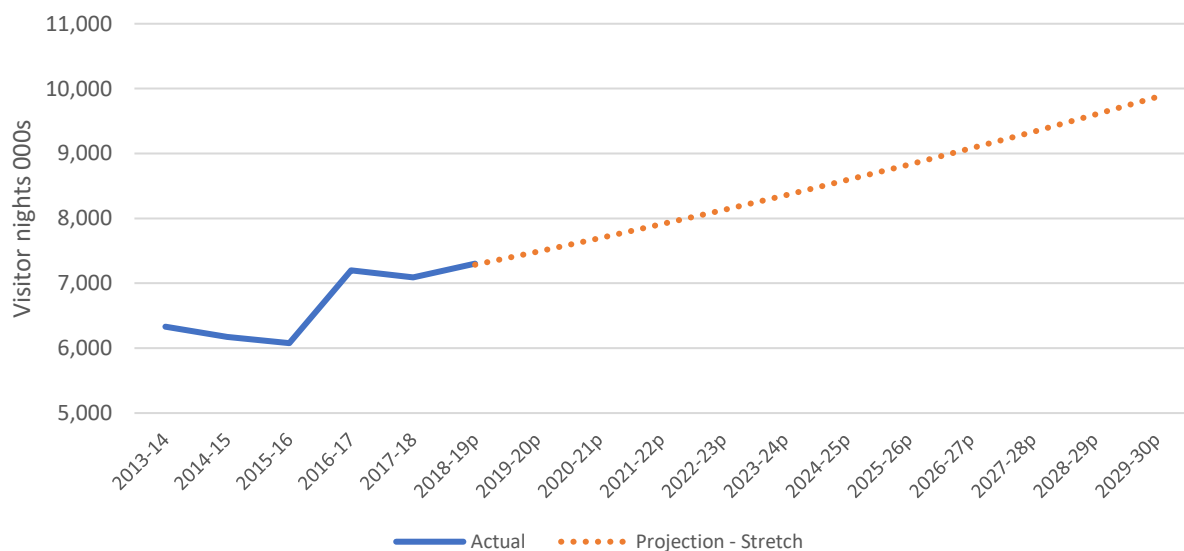
Tourism growth target of 10.5 M visitor nights by 2030

With the right mix of leadership, marketing, experiences and infrastructure, Gippsland could receive 8.5 million visitors by 2030 from the current base of 7.06 million visitors. This equates to an additional 150,000 visitors to the region each year until 2030. Visitor nights are projected to grow to 10.5 million by 2030 from the current base of 7.8 million. This means that Gippsland will need to attract an additional 270,000 visitor nights each year to achieve its growth potential by 2030. If this growth potential is realised total visitor spending will increase from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion.

For a \$1.5 billion in visitor spending target, the total number of tourism related jobs could increase from the current estimated base of 13,271 jobs to 16,257 (13,007 direct jobs and 3,250 indirect/induced jobs) in Greater Gippsland. This would represent over 12% of jobs in the region. In addition, every direct job from visitor spending generates a further 0.26 jobs in other industries in the region.

The challenge for the region will be to convert the high number of day visitors that are likely to travel to the region from Melbourne to overnight visitors who stay longer. To achieve this goal a combination of new experiences and additional and more diverse accommodation will be required throughout the region.

Figure 5 Visitor night projections 2019-2030¹⁷



¹⁷ Gippsland Region Visitor Projections AEC 2018


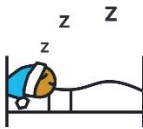



Markets for Growth

To achieve the projected growth targets specific attention will need to be given to:



Maintaining existing markets

To ensure long term base growth it is important that products and services appeal to existing markets and continue to evolve to meet their needs to encourage repeat visitation and dispersal around the region. As outlined in Section 3 the potential growth in the existing markets for Gippsland can be summarised as follows:

<p>Domestic day</p> 	<p>There is an opportunity to engage with this market while in region to encourage a return visit, disperse throughout the region and to stay longer.</p>
<p>Domestic overnight</p> 	<p>This is the most significant market for the Gippsland visitor economy and further market segmentation has identified that refreshed and new products are necessary for the market to grow. Interstate visitation is comparably lower however this segment has the capacity for higher growth and higher spending (due to travelling further and undertaking longer length of stay than the local Victorian market). Appropriate product development and marketing to certain segments will increase it. Note that the active family market is an important market for the region and will continue to grow.</p>
<p>55+ market</p> 	<p>It will be important to maintain this market by continuing to offer experiences, services and facilities that meet the needs of this market. The 55 plus market is the largest travel group in Australia. They are no longer just the grey nomads – they are active and also the most lucrative as they hold the majority of Australia's wealth. This market is most likely to travel outside of peak periods and will assist in growing the visitor economy for the region.</p>
<p>International market</p> 	<p>This is a small but high growth market for the Gippsland visitor economy that could be developed further with specific products that appeal to them. The main markets are currently the UK, Germany, NZ and the USA. According to Tourism Australia the Asian market, particularly China and India, is a market evolving rapidly, and segments of this market are becoming more sophisticated in the experiences they are seeking. This specifically relates to Chinese and Indian visitors who are on their second or third trip to Australia or visiting family and travel in groups.</p>
<p>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)</p> 	<p>There is an opportunity to develop and implement a VFR campaign to increase yield from the VFR market, allowing local people to show-off their own 'backyards'.</p>

Attracting new higher yielding aspirational markets

Developing experiences, infrastructure and creating opportunities that raise the profile and the aspiration of travellers to visit Gippsland is also critical to achieving growth. This can be achieved by focusing on an aspirational psychographic. It does not mean excluding existing visitors; however, it is about developing experiences, infrastructure and creating opportunities that raise the profile and the aspiration of the destination to new markets.

The aspirational market for the Gippsland region has been identified as the *Real Seeker*¹⁸. The Real Seeker is a mind-set and is not demographic specific. The Real Seeker market is aligned to Visit Victoria's 'Lifestyle Leaders' market. This DMP will refer to this market as the Lifestyle Leaders for consistency.

Overall there are about 1.36 million Lifestyle Leaders living in Melbourne alone. This market will set the travel trends and introduce the destination to a new audience and represents the most significant opportunity for Gippsland. However, in the marketing of the destination, the family market, VFR, 55 plus and the young adults market segments will be the focus.

¹⁸ Gippsland Brand Strategy | Spy, 2018

Matching Markets, Products and Experiences

To achieve the growth targets, the following table summarises the potential product opportunities that align with the experience themes.

Figure 6 Target Market potential product matching

	Domestic day	Domestic overnight – active family market	International market	55+ market	Asian Visitors (China / India)	VFR	Meeting / Business Market
Agritourism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aboriginal	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nature (soft & aquatic adventure)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Heritage and Culture	✓	✓		✓		✓	
Creative Industries	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Food and Wine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special interest (sports, leisure, golf, cycling)	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Events/Festivals	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Touring routes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Growth targets

The following performance measures and targets are well within reach of Gippsland tourism industry and should be used to measure tourism growth in the region to 2030.

Figure 7 Performance measures and targets

Goal	Measure	2030 Target
Increased destination awareness	Growth in target market and intention to visit	Growth in target markets achieved
Increased visitor numbers	Growth in visitation	7 m to 8.5 million visitors
Increased overnight visitation	Number of visitor nights	7.8 m to 10.5 million nights
Increased visitor expenditure	Value of regional expenditure	\$1 b to \$1.5 billion
Increased length of stay for domestic visitors	Average number of nights	2.6 to 4 nights
Increased dispersal (throughout Gippsland & nights across all months)	Visitor nights throughout the region	10.5 million nights
Increased number of tourism jobs	Number of jobs created by tourism spend	13,271 to 16,257 tourism jobs

5. Strategic Priorities for Growing Gippsland’s Visitor Economy

There is a need to consider how to better market the region’s greatest assets; how best to deliver on a brand that reflects the diversity of the region and provide a competitive advantage; and how to attract the level of investment required to enhance the tourism industry. This will require strong leadership, focused marketing, new experiences and quality infrastructure.

The first step is to unify industry and community toward a common vision. Gippsland offers authentic experiences to its visitors as do other destinations. What it lacks is transformational experiences that inspire the world to visit. When people experience transformational moments, they almost always point to a specific moment or memory. Therefore, transformational experiences, or life changing moments, must include a ritual, shared experience or other kind of “crossing the threshold” moment people can later use as their anchor memory - the defining moment they continue to recall and share with others. This is what the region should offer.

Therefore, the vision for the region is:

Vision

Gippsland’s natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit

To achieve this vision Gippsland needs to be:



|

Goal

Grow the value of tourism to Gippsland by increasing the number of visitors, length of stay and spend in region



Strategic Priorities

1. Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community	2. Strengthen Gippsland’s appeal as a destination through brand awareness and co-ordinated marketing	3. Develop Gippsland’s experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend	4. Invest in diverse and exciting regional events	5. Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy	6. Revitalise visitor servicing across the region	7. Create industry partnerships to foster and grow the Gippsland visitor economy.
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ACTIONS

Each strategy has a suite of actions identified that aim to increase leadership, visitation, average length of stay, yield, customer satisfaction, and repeat / referral visitation throughout the year and into the future.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community

Gippsland must have a Regional Tourism Board that is a collaborative and effective leader that is aligned to the State Government’s structure for Victorian Regional Tourism Boards and meets the needs of its regional stakeholders.

Understanding the objective

Gippsland must have a fully functional Regional Tourism Board in place that is aligned to the State Government’s structure for Victorian Regional Tourism Boards and meets the needs of its regional stakeholders. DGL must:

- Have a structure that unifies the region behind the implementation of this DMP
- Utilise the total existing regional funding to the most effective and efficient way possible
- Look to the region first, taking a whole of destination approach to funding and implementing the unifying band framework
- Provide tourism leadership and be a representative voice for the region on tourism issues
- Be transparent, accountable and have an appropriate constitution and legal framework
- Be structured and resourced appropriately for the functions that the organisation is accountable for delivering
- Have a strong industry partnership to leverage private sector funding and development of tourism in the region.

The current situation

Destination Gippsland Ltd is the peak body for tourism in Gippsland. It was formed in 2008 through the creation of a company limited by guarantee. Such company structures are used in Australia for not for profit companies and are governed by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). The Destination Gippsland Ltd ‘members’ (the guarantors) are the six local government authorities of Gippsland which represents the area in which DGL serves. They are East Gippsland, South Gippsland, Wellington, Bass Coast, Baw Baw and Latrobe.

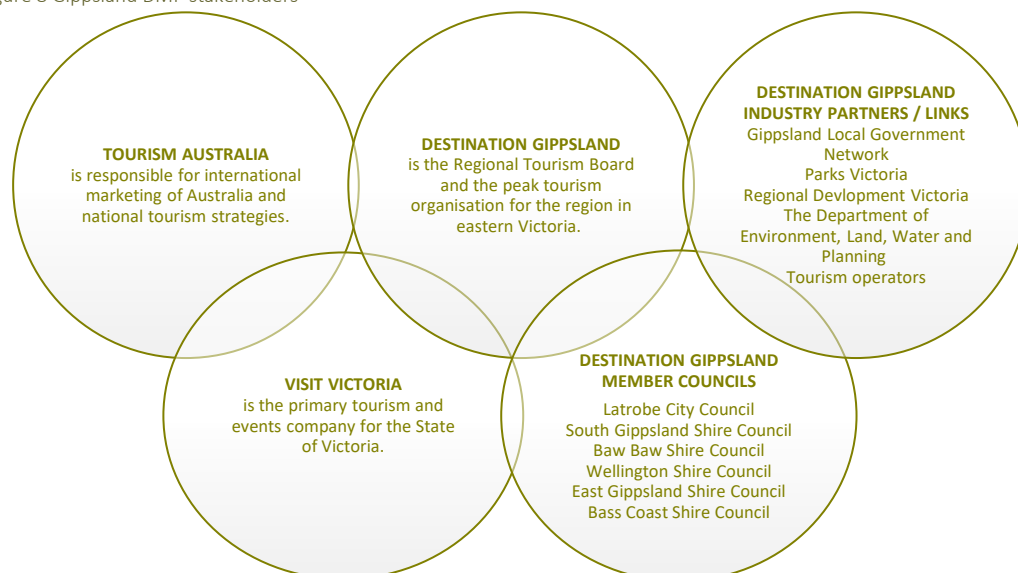
The organisation is governed by an independent skills-based board and additionally includes the following observers:

- A CEO as representative of the Gippsland Local Government Network
- Parks Victoria
- Regional Development Victoria and
- Visit Victoria.

Visit Victoria is the state government agency that drives demand for tourism in Victoria with marketing activities. The Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions oversees tourism in Victoria. Visit Victoria partially funds the operation and delivery of visitor economy marketing and services within regional Victoria.

The role of Destination Gippsland is to grow and serve the Gippsland tourism sector and work in partnership with industry and government to deliver rewarding economic, social and environmental benefit to the community.

Figure 8 Gippsland DMP stakeholders



The focus of Destination Gippsland is on delivering marketing, industry development, infrastructure strategy and advocating for the tourism industry.

The organisation has 5 destination objectives that guide the strategic priorities and goals:

1. Encouraging overnight visitation
2. Increasing visitor expenditure
3. Increasing the length of stay
4. Increasing the dispersal of visitors
5. Increasing visitor satisfaction

To achieve the vision, the organisation is pursuing six priority areas which are:

1. Advocacy
2. Destination Management
3. Industry Success
4. Product Development
5. Marketing, public relations and media
6. Governance

Local governments across Gippsland generally have resources attached to tourism management, leadership, partnership and growth within their respective organisational structures. This can be in the form of full-time or part-time tourism officers and visitor centre management. The tourism resources generally sit within the economic development function of a council. The role and function of these officers varies but generally includes industry liaison, product development facilitation, support to DGL, visitor servicing management (through visitor information centres), event development and coordination and other functions at a local government area level.

State Government agencies including Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort, Parks Victoria and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning also put significant resources into tourism development, management and marketing across the region.

A review of spending on tourism related services by local government in the Gippsland region in 2015¹⁹ showed that direct expenditure was close to \$8.4 million (2015 \$). In order to effectively analyse the spending on tourism operations without the costs of caravan park operations (i.e. those funds spent on leadership, industry development, product development and marketing), – it is appropriate to remove the operation of caravan parks and attractions. The adjusted figure was conservatively estimated at close to \$6 million. That figure could be higher in 2019 allowing for increases in funding in some areas, and indexation to 2019. Local governments directly employed 11 FTE’s in tourism management roles and a further 27 FTEs in visitor information centres. While the figures are relatively old, they paint a picture of the way in which local and State Government, and the RTB spend tourism funds in the region.

Aligning the resources and functions, as well as accountabilities would appear to be a significant area for future focus for governance of tourism in Gippsland.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

The current model and governance arrangements for tourism management across Gippsland has both strengths and weaknesses.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The RTB (Regional Tourism Board) is clearly established and has a widely supported governance model • Provides a forum for regional tourism leadership • A skills-based board brings the necessary skills to both govern the organisation and drive the strategic agenda of DGL • Professional tourism staff and CEO employed • Is not bound by local level thinking, aiming to raise the outcomes across the region • Can be flexible and agile in delivery including in response to emergencies and natural disasters 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is insufficient to fully deliver expectations of a modern RTB • Industry does not contribute a lot to the campaigns, and there is no levy or alternative source of income • Has no direct control over much of the resource that goes into tourism management and growth in Gippsland • Lack of consistency in LTO models
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase funding that enables a full implementation of the DMP and strategic directions • To continue to unify the industry in Gippsland • To have access to and to more effectively use the total resource pool that is currently being spent on tourism • The state government has commenced a review of Regional Tourism in Victoria that will deliver recommendations by December 2019 with a broad remit across regional tourism. The review will include investment, policy, funding and how government undertakes tourism 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics within the region may not see the benefits of a regional approach and work towards the RTB not being effective • With each Council election, new Councillors bring differing agendas when it comes to tourism funding • DGL cannot deliver the DMP and accordingly loses investor and member confidence, as well as industry support and confidence • Potential impact of current regional tourism review

¹⁹ Review of Delivery of Gippsland Tourism Services – November 2015. Bill Fox and Associates

Preferred Approach

The strengths of the current Regional Tourism Board structure are evident. DGL (and Destination Phillip Island Inc.) has served the region well in the past and with continual improvements can continue to provide the leadership and governance that is required to implement this DMP.

The recommendations for the governance of tourism in Gippsland are twofold – firstly a principled approach with accountability for the core elements of tourism delivery, and secondly a process driven approach to pick up the State-wide Regional Tourism Review outcomes. The priority areas to resolve are overlap of brand and marketing, and content and servicing.

Principles and accountabilities

One of the core functional roles for Destination Gippsland are to set the strategic direction for marketing the region including the development and implementation of all marketing activities for the destination. Destination Gippsland will manage the brand and all content relating to the destination brand. Destination Gippsland will own and manage the regional website and destination marketing activities, including working with local government authorities (LGAs), regional tourism organisations (RTOs) and business and tourism associations to develop a 12-month marketing plan that each area within the region buys into.

Destination Gippsland would implement marketing campaigns for the region. They should also continue to work very closely with the LGAs, RTOs and other local entities to develop industry capacity building programs as well as developing programs to create packages, bundling and content related to each campaign that Destination Gippsland implements.

Separating and clarifying the role of the RTB/RTOs is fundamental. The development of content needs to be a core focus of the LGAs/RTOs. The focus of the content is critical and building the industry's capacity to deliver experiences that meet the market needs is at the core of any successful region. RTOs need to work with Destination Gippsland to develop individual content strategies. This would also include looking at bundling and packaging experiences for the different target markets for distribution through all of Destination Gippsland's channels to market.

The following role statements based on those undertaken in the 2015 review of tourism services²⁰ in Gippsland are applicable and recommended as part of this DMP. Appendix Documentation provides suggested accountability frameworks that build on this model.

Destination Gippsland Ltd (DGL)

DGL is primarily responsible for the marketing and tourism development for the broader Gippsland region through working with state government and collaborating with local government, the business sector and the broader community. DGL also lead strategic tourism planning for Gippsland and provides a framework enabling both local and regional tourism associations to develop, promote and service their local destinations.

The role of DGL Ltd will be to own the regional tourism strategy and report on its implementation to members and stakeholders at least bi-annually. Importantly DGL lead the Gippsland brand and be responsible for its implementation. DGL can take a lead role in visitor servicing levels, recommendations and

implementing programs including visitor centre reviews and service levels. It may choose to operate visitor servicing in several forms.

DGL must also take a lead role in product and industry development. Without the 'tourism leader' for Gippsland, Gippsland tourism cannot prosper as a region. DGL as the RTB is also the lead agent for dealing with State and Federal Government on visitor economy research, leadership, advocacy and growth.

Councils

Local Government is responsible for strategic oversight of tourism and economic development including infrastructure, visitor services including visitor safety, development and investment attraction. LGAs work closely with their regional and local associations and maintain a strong partnership with Destination Gippsland. Where tourism is in a development phase, they also provide the necessary leadership to help 'grow' the sector.

The six Councils of the Gippsland Local Government Network are financial members of DGL and provide strategic direction to the organisation. A representative of GLGN is recognised as an Observer to all DG Board meetings.

The role of LGAs in relation to visitor servicing may be to operate some centres and work with DGL on the development of excellence in servicing and the appropriate model for the region. LGAs will operate some tourism attractions such as caravan parks.

Industry liaison and product / industry development are important roles of LGAs.

Regional tourism organisations

Regional tourism organisations RTOs provide a strategic alignment between Council, local organisations and in Gippsland's case, DGL. They provide an industry perspective and in partnership with Council staff are responsible for the coordination of tourism activities within a municipal area and provide the necessary strategic oversight. They are most effective when they have strong leadership and a clear understanding of their role. The organisations that manage tourism at a local level in Gippsland include Bass Coast Tourism Partnership, Prom Country Regional Tourism, Central Gippsland Tourism, Latrobe City Business and Tourism Association and Business Tourism East Gippsland. Walhalla & Mountain Rivers Tourist Association is representative of three destination: Walhalla, Rawson and Mt Baw Baw.

These Regional tourism organisations will not undertake regional marketing, instead focussing on product packaging, content development, experience development and implementation of several recommendations within this DMP. They will have a strong role in developing and implementing Local Destination Action Plans for local areas and destination hubs as prioritised in this plan. They have an important role in working directly with operators and linking businesses with Council and the Destination Gippsland.

²⁰ Review of Delivery of Gippsland Tourism Services – 2015. Bill Fox and Associates

Business and tourism associations

There are currently some twenty Business and Tourism Associations/Chambers of Commerce throughout Gippsland and two Local Advisory Committees to Council. The primary responsibility of local associations is visitor servicing, networking and local advocacy, not marketing. It is their role to ensure that all visitors have an enjoyable and positive experience when visiting a destination. This is achieved through excellence in customer service, provision of up to date information, on-selling of other experiences/services and collaborating at the local level to provide a seamless visitor experience.

Business chambers and associations should not be involved in marketing the region to markets outside Gippsland. While promotion of the benefits of local areas, and promoting identity and developing business is important, to be effective the Gippsland brand must be owned by the Destination Gippsland.

Process approach

With a State Government led review into Regional Tourism pending at the time of developing this DMP, it is appropriate to be cautious about recommending specific structural changes other than the clarification of accountabilities recommended above. It is recommended that principles aligned to the discussion above are adopted and a process to follow post the outcomes of the review is undertaken.

The process is designed to collaboratively deliver the strategic objectives outlined in this section and enable the organisation to better lead the regional delivery of this DMP. Collaboration between the Councils, industry, RTOs, BTAs and DGL is critical for this reorganisation to work effectively, and for tourism to flourish.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the following steps be taken as they will lead to improved governance and leadership:

- Upon the release of the state government review into regional tourism, consider the recommendations and the implications for Gippsland
- Implement an accountability framework and functional alignment consistent with the recommended roles for each level of tourism service provision in this DMP
- Work with GLGN to review the allocation of resources across the sector, to ensure alignment with the revised accountabilities recommended
- Convene an industry summit to consult on the changes, outline the reasons and develop an implementation strategy with GLGN.

- For the industry to grow and develop and for this DMP to be effective, all levels of the industry must be strong and aligned and clear on their roles. Working together is a fundamental element for success.

It is also true that for the region to grow its visitor economy, it needs strong leadership from DGL in the form of a fit for purpose well-resourced organisation supported by the LGAs.

Funding models

For Destination Gippsland to be an effective Regional Tourism Board, it needs to ensure that:

1. It spends the money it has wisely and aligns it to delivery of the strategy
2. It has enough resources to deliver the functions that it is accountable to deliver under its constitution and member directions, and
3. It leverages funding from a variety of sources including industry for targeted campaigns and programs.

In relation to the first point, it is the role of the Board and its members and stakeholders to hold DGL to account for the expenditure of its current budget, and to ensure it is aligned to its strategy, not the role of this DMP.

Point 2 will be a matter considered as part of the review proposed in this section. Alignment of resources across Gippsland to the accountabilities and priorities required is an essential step in supporting the RTB deliver the functions it needs to.

By way of example, with a regional spend of over \$2million on visitor information centres, and a recommendation in this DMP to reduce the number while increasing their effectiveness, it would be appropriate to recommend that savings from the operation of the visitors centres be applied to other core actions in this DMP, rather than the savings being applied to other Council business items.

An analysis of several other regions provides evidence that for Gippsland to succeed, further funds are required by DGL to implement this plan and to better market the region. By way of example, the following regional tourism organisations that market and operate in regions of Australia similar in size geographically, product wise or population are shown with their estimated budgets. Of note is the divergence in business models – all operating with different structures, and forms of income that include levies, operating attractions and industry contributions to marketing and development initiatives.

Region	Total Budget RTO or RTB	Comment
Destination Gippsland	An annual budget of approx. \$1.5 M	The majority is grant funding with \$200k raised through member and stakeholder contributions.
Tourism Tropical North Queensland	\$8.77 M	Industry contributions total over \$2.3 million grant funding forming most of the funding.
Destination Gold Coast	\$17 M	A tourism levy is applied by the City of Gold Coast that raises \$13.95 million annually – and with grants and other forms of sales revenue contributing significant income leaves only \$439,000 to be raised through member subscriptions.
Margaret River Busselton Tourism Association	\$10 M	Managed attractions including cave tours and lighthouses form most of the income – a diversion from the other models presented in this table. The RTB also directly manages and runs the visitor information centres in the region (3).

For the number of recommendations included in this DMP to be implemented over several years, DGL will require further resources. This also acknowledges that the current funding regime is inadequate for its current accountabilities and that the spend of existing funds across all partners is inefficiently applied.

The level of funds required will be significantly higher than currently available. Funding sources that do not put significant strain on the partners will continue to include grants for various programs and initiatives. It is noted however that typically organisations that can raise their own funding to the necessary levels are also more capable of applying for grants with some level of co-funding applied.

A range of options for increased funding for tourism exist. Visit Victoria is currently a significant contributor to Gippsland’s RTB marketing and program of activities. This is likely to continue but it will not be the funding game changer for DGL to substantially increase its funds into the future. Accordingly, a range of other models will be required to be looked at, A selection of options is provided below.

1. Increased member and stakeholder contributions

This could include each of the Councils contributing more cash to DGL to bolster its budget. Visit Victoria also contributes significantly to the RTB and this may also be increased.

2. Redirect some existing council resources

Aligned to the review of functions and accountabilities discussed above, it would be appropriate for councils and potentially other organisations to divest some of their resources that they currently spend on duplicated services to DGL. This brings additional resources that can be spent at a regional level aligned to the brand and single marketing strategy. It also ensures the most effective use of funds across the sector.

3. Develop an industry membership model

It is commonplace that industry contributes funds for a seat at a table, or for buy in to campaigns. DGL is currently working with industry on marketing campaigns. A buy in membership model if developed may add significantly to the income for DGL and the industry collaboration. This option may require changes to the DGL constitution and board membership. Accordingly, careful consideration would need to be given to it.

4. Implement an industry levy

A differential business rate or tourism levy could also provide an alternative means of generating new revenue to invest in tourism. Charging businesses an additional rate is not a decision to be taken lightly and additional benefits will need to be clearly demonstrated. A differential business rate levy can take two principal forms – a specific tourism levy (on tourism businesses or the sectors benefitting from tourism expenditure) or as part of a broader economic development levy.

A well-funded RTB would be able to significantly increase marketing, develop, purchase and own a number of regional events aligned to a regional event strategy, and increase experience development across the region, work with the education sector and industry on visitor economy skills, and help develop industry skills and capacity as well as implement a number of the recommendations contained within this strategy.

Strategic Priority 1.

Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
1.1	Review and then implement a revised structure and governance of tourism in Gippsland through GLGN, drawing on the State Government’s regional tourism review (late 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an analysis of the Victorian government’s regional tourism review when released in late 2019 Undertake a review of the structure of tourism in Gippsland led by GLGN that includes LGAs and industry Implement the review and ensure that the partners and industry acknowledge their accountabilities and roles within the new framework Once the governance review is completed, develop funding models to implement the review. 	Short term	DGL, Visit Victoria, GLGN

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS



Inverloch, Surfers on Cliff Overlooking Beach

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Strengthen Gippsland’s appeal as a destination through brand awareness and co-ordinated marketing across the region

Driving growth in Gippsland requires a clear and consistent brand and marketing strategy that infuses the character of Gippsland, its people, products, experiences and visitor services.

New brand and experience themes

Whilst Gippsland has significant tourism products and assets, in recent times the brand identity for Gippsland as a destination had dated. There was a long list of ‘things to do’, but no cohesive sense of promise or strategic positioning. This has the effect of a seemingly disjointed destination experience in the marketplace. In turn, this limits the ability of Gippsland to compete with other destinations and to encourage visitors to move around and disperse further within the region.

Destination Gippsland undertook a major review of the destination brand and rolled out a new, refreshed brand in 2019²¹. This new brand platform will allow the positioning of the region to be closer to what consumers want and move it from ‘nature only’ to nature plus food, wine, culture and events. The positioning has been developed taking into consideration all the insights from consumer research that show that Gippsland does not necessarily have high recognition as a place to visit outside of those who are already visiting the region. The new brand provides a road map for Gippsland to ensure it lives, breathes and innovates to achieve the growth opportunities set out in Section 4 within this DMP. The new brand provides an opportunity for the tourism industry to develop a distinctive and competitive suite of experiences that will create a strategic advantage over other destinations.



²¹ iSpy Destination Positioning Framework Gippsland 2018

According to the new brand guidelines for the region, the Gippsland sense of wonder should always be conveyed through images. The campaign photography is always the hero element in every communication touchpoint. It should feature inspiring and local natural scenes of wonderment - with a human presence always included. A brand toolkit is available through DGL.

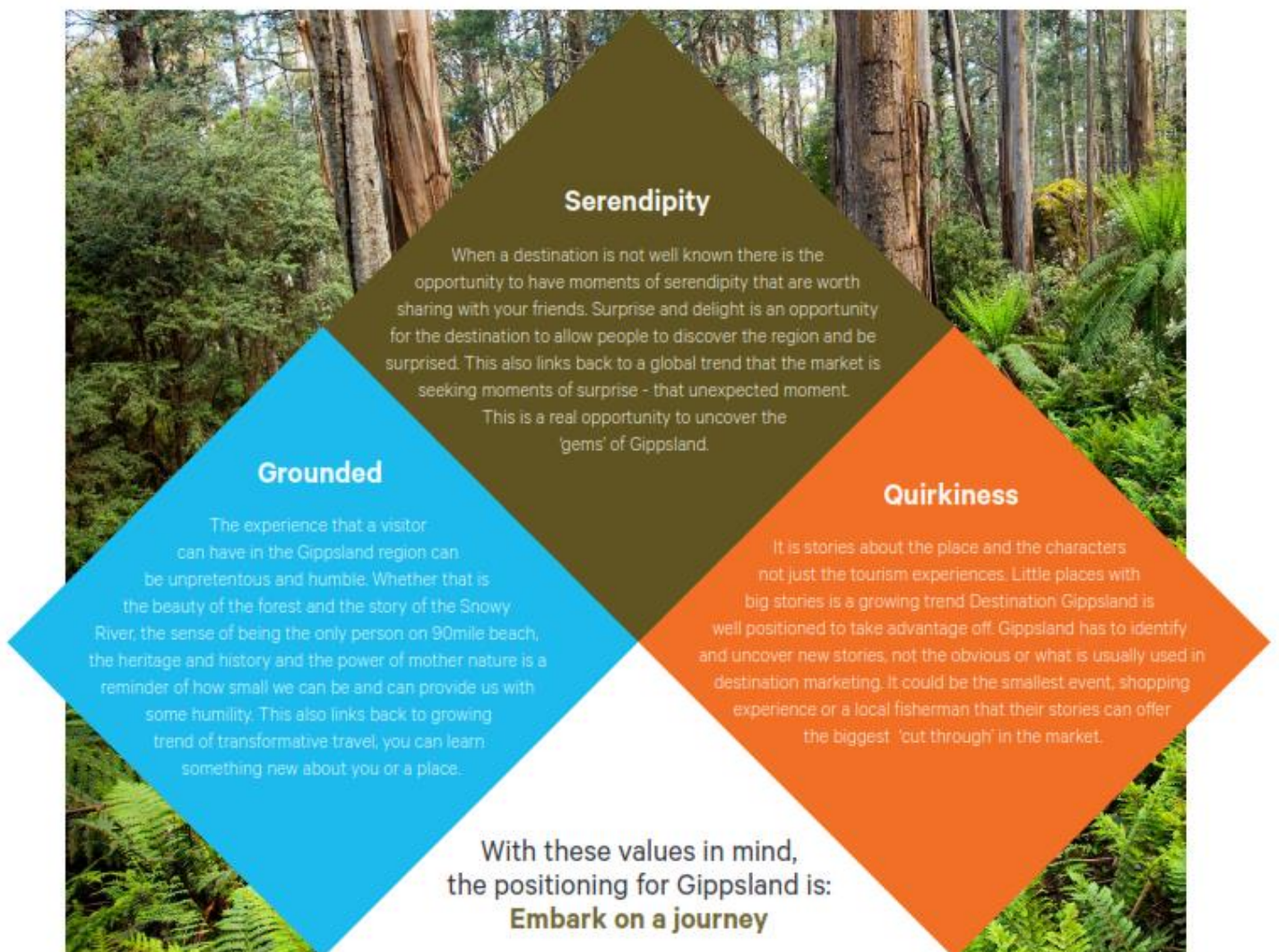
The new guidelines offer regional flexibility, with some examples below.

FIGURE 9: CAMPAIGN IMAGERY EXAMPLES

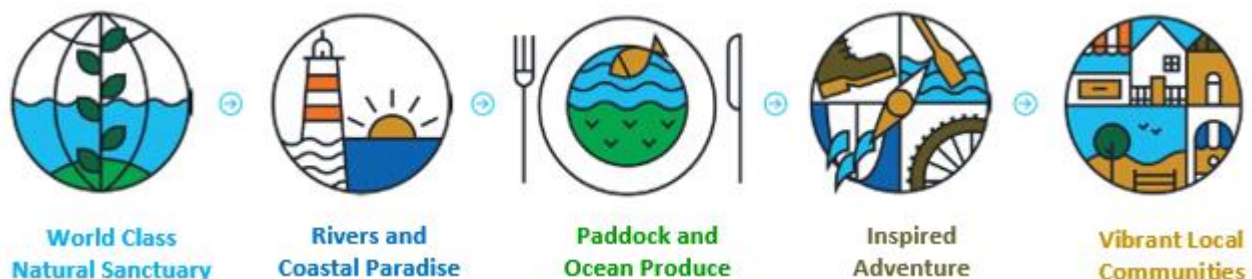


Values

Research indicates that Gippsland has three key value attributes that define the content and product offering and add value and depth to the region's story. These values are grounded, serendipity and quirkiness.



Building on the strategic brand framework, Gippsland has a unique opportunity to provide experiences that are distinctive to the region and have the potential to deliver these brand values for the visitor.



This brand framework provides Gippsland's tourism industry a focus for its marketing effort and the development of new products and experiences.

An integrated approach to marketing

The new brand framework provides Gippsland’s tourism industry a focus for its marketing effort and the development of new products and experiences.

By coordinating marketing effort across the region, DGL and its partners will be able to:

- Build awareness and preference for Gippsland and its experiences
- Create and distribute content to build customer knowledge and understanding of the destination
- Develop offers and information that lead to bookings based on visitor search and content and make it easy for visitors to book, increasing the number of visitors and spend.

Moving to a single website to market Gippsland is the first step toward successful marketing coordination across the region. One website will build awareness and preference for Gippsland, and make it easy for visitors to book, increasing the number of visitors and spend throughout the entire region.

The suggested roles and responsibilities in relation to marketing functions, brand leadership and product development focus, as well as an existing target market summary are outlined in the Appendix Documentation.

Other ways for DGL, Local Government and industry to coordinate their marketing effort are summarised below.

Stage of the Customer Journey	Co-ordinated Marketing for Gippsland
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a destination awareness campaign for the region based on the new brand and experience pillars to develop content and story headlines • Undertake out-reach brand activation in the key source market of Melbourne • Develop a micro-site for each campaign that sits within the Destination Gippsland site to drive traffic for specific campaigns • Continue with PR and social media activities • Work to achieve one Visit Gippsland website with all the sub regional websites under one brand and URLs to take the visitor directly to that section of the website • Showcase each sub-region’s character in context of the new Destination Gippsland brand • Invest in improving the Destination Gippsland Customer Relation Management (CRM) system
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the local tourism organisations to develop and implement a content strategy (video, images and copy) that delivers on the brand and DMP pillars and is relevant to all target markets
Consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop personalised content that is based on search results and the visitor to understand how they would experience the destination. This would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packages and itineraries • Bundling experiences • Repurposing content created in the knowledge phase to be personalised and use to distribute through channels that visitors use when in the consideration phase
Booking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the opportunity for a booking and e-commerce platform as part on the Visit Gippsland website
Experience and visitor service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new content and experiences for the Gippsland region including through bundled experience and offers through marketing channels • Ensure that it is easy and convenient for the visitor to book online (including accommodation, tours, restaurants and event tickets)
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue working with the industry to undertake customer service training across all ‘on the ground’ visitor touch points • Develop a customer service benchmark program including mystery shopping to encourage an improvement in customer service offering
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an opportunity for visitors to the destination to share and tell their friends about the experiences they had in Gippsland and encourage them to create and share their content through their own social channels • Develop campaigns that target visitors that have already travelled to the region to encourage a return visit and an incentive to invite their friends and family to travel

Strategic Priority 2.

Strengthen destination appeal through brand awareness & coordinated marketing

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
2.1	Adopt a singular focused approach to deliver on the Gippsland brand with the local areas providing relevant content to underpin and deliver on the destination brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Gippsland Local Govt Network (GLGN) and Visit Victoria to agree on appropriate funding and input model to support Destination Gippsland as the primary brand manager and marketing focus for the destination 	Short term	DGL/GLGN/Visit Victoria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the approach to marketing for the destination at different points in the customer journey 	Short – medium term	DGL/GLGN/Visit Victoria
2.2	Encourage industry commitment to the new Gippsland brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an industry development program to support the use of the brand with content to encourage industry use 	Short - term	DGL
2.3	Support industry to embrace the positioning and brand through experience development training and mentoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive increased visitation in the low and shoulder seasons by implementing a training and mentoring program creating collaboration amongst operators to develop new experiences and products 	Short – medium term	DGL
2.4	Develop commissionable product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to achieve more commissionable product that will be attractive to wholesalers packaging and selling experiences in the region 	Short – medium term	DGL and industry
2.5	Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the new brand, positioning and marketing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research to determine the effectiveness of marketing activities in the short, medium and long term. 	Short term- medium term	DGL/GLGN

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Develop Gippsland’s experiences to encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend

Gippsland requires more visitor experiences and supporting infrastructure to attract new visitors; extend the length of stay of existing visitors and increase spend across all segments. These experiences need to be consistent with the new brand and positioning for Gippsland and the experience themes.

There are all kinds of wonder to be found in Gippsland. This includes natural tourism assets from pristine coasts, to inland lakes, mountains and winter snow, forests, deserted sandy beaches and lush vineyards.

Gippsland is unpretentious, humble and grounded. There is something special about its experiences and diverse offerings that suit a range of tastes. Excitingly, there are already some significant tourism experiences either on offer, being developed, or given approval for development. Some include:



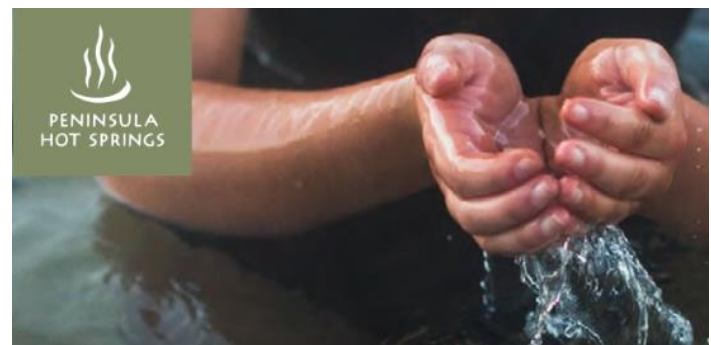
Seacombe West Regenerative Project (Hot Springs Retreat)

Seacombe West will create Nunduk, a new luxury spa retreat using regenerative and sustainable principles. The Council approved project is located on the southern shores of Lake Wellington. Currently planned to be 6 star Greenstar, including using geothermal energy for spas and associated agricultural activities. Nunduk Spa Retreat will promote local employment; health & wellness tourism (therapeutic & recreational), geothermal & renewable energy systems, water, infrastructure services, retail, Aboriginal stories and values, active research and recreation facilities.²²



Pennicott Wilderness Journeys – Wilsons Promontory

Wilsons Promontory Cruises is the latest addition to the award winning Pennicott Wilderness Journeys yellow boat ecotours. Travel in world first, custom built amphibious boats, designed for cruising waters in comfort and safety. Witness iconic South Point, the southernmost tip of mainland Australia and cruise into the waters of Bass Strait and Victoria's first marine national park, exploring The Glennies, Anderson Islets and Anser Island.²³



Metung Hot Springs

Peninsula Hot Springs owners plan to emulate their Mornington Peninsula success with the development of a year-round geothermal mineral springs attraction at Metung, including social, family-friendly and wellness bathing options. The \$40 million local investment has forecasts injecting up to \$95 million in the East Gippsland regional economy.²⁴

²² eacombwest.com.au/#project
²³ www.promcruises.com.au

²⁴ www.peninsulahotsprings.com

Creating outstanding experiences

Results from a combination of the Product Audit review and an extensive community and industry consultation process on potential product/experiences identified a range of opportunities that will help broaden and deepen the visitor experience in Gippsland, keeping visitors in the destination longer and spending more. The experiences need to be consistent with the current brand position for Gippsland and leverage off the primary marketing focus of the destination and the five experience themes:



Experiences with potential to make a difference are categorised as followed

Hero experiences

These are exceptional experiences (whether existing or aspirational) that:

- Provide a destination with a real competitive advantage over other destinations
- Focus on what is truly unique, memorable or engaging about a destination
- Meet the needs of the identified target markets.

Supporting experiences

These are experiences that are important across the region, either to strengthen the overall visitor experience or for the local community.

No one experience is going to change the trajectory of the visitor economy in Gippsland in the short term. There is a need to progress a range of improvements that deliver on the brand positioning, create awareness of the destination, and encourage dispersal across the region. The recommended hero and supporting experiences for Gippsland are summarised in the following table and described in more detail in **Section 8** with associated investment and benefits.



Some of these experiences are achievable in the short term, some are highly aspirational, and they can be game changers. The experiences will be delivered by a combination of public and private sector investment. Each experience complements the many current tourism products available across the region, to ensure that future growth forecasts are realised.

Collectively, the potential impact of the hero experiences is estimated to be significant. For example, under a low growth scenario, it is estimated that the hero experiences could generate 235,500 additional visitor nights and increase visitor expenditure by \$49.2million each year. Under a high growth scenario visitor expenditure is likely to increase by \$80 million per annum.²⁵

²⁵ TRC Tourism estimates based on MCa economic modelling for each hero experience

Hero and Supporting Experiences

Refer to **Section 8** for more detail on the below projects, associated investment and benefits.

Experience Theme	Hero Experiences	Support Experiences
 <p>World Class Natural Sanctuary</p>	<p>Wilsons Promontory A New Future Wilsons Promontory National Park is one of the stunning natural assets of Gippsland and easily accessible from Melbourne as well as from Phillip Island. As one of the iconic natural sanctuaries in Gippsland, Wilsons Promontory needs to be fit for purpose for the modern visitor. The offer will be led through the development of an iconic sanctuary that delivers world class conservation outcomes while presenting the park in a new and improved way to visitors using adaptive planning that considers such things as carrying capacity during the busy periods and accessible tourism facilities in Tidal River. Consideration of the Circuit Walk and its operating model is also important to ensure that it remains current, while acknowledging that the management plan may preclude some options.</p> <p>Buchan Caves Visitor Experiences An exciting Visitor Experience Hub at Buchan Caves will transform the current offer and create a compelling destination that is adapted to meet contemporary visitor expectations.</p>	<p>Gabo Island The Gabo Island experience will showcase to the world this remarkable natural sanctuary where the view is unobscured, and the sea life is wild. The project will see an upgrade of lighthouse keepers' accommodation as the base for a two-night premium wildlife experience as well as developing a rodent free sanctuary for the wildlife that people will come to see.</p> <p>Raymond Island Koala Sanctuary This experience will showcase koalas in their natural habitat and could involve Gunaikurnai as well as conservation with expert programs at a Koala and Wildlife Shelter in partnership with a recognised conservation brand or attraction.</p> <p>Experiencing Gippsland's Great Outdoors The opportunity to be immersed in nature and the outdoors in Gippsland provides a huge range of opportunities for growth. While this plan outlines some specific examples as hero or support experiences, this experience flows through the forests, parks, jointly managed parks and other natural areas of Gippsland.</p>
 <p>Rivers and Coastal Paradise</p>	<p>Coastal Wilderness Walk The development of an iconic experience-based trail on Victoria's Wilderness Coast, predominantly within Croajingolong National Park offering full serviced 'glamping' or hut-based accommodation (partly off park), self-guided or fully supported options with tour operators will show case one of Australia's most exciting and wild coastlines. The proposal also links in with the destination hub proposed for Point Hicks with the improved visitor offer, accommodation and service upgrades necessary.</p> <p>George Bass Coastal Walk The southern Gippsland Coast between Phillip Island and Inverloch has the potential to be one of the great coastal experiences in Australia leveraging existing accommodation in local towns and villages as well as showcasing the proposed Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park.</p>	<p>Wild River Journey – Mitchell River Lodge / Glamping Following the Mitchell River as it winds its way down the gorge, visitors would enjoy a guided walking and rafting experience with storytelling, gourmet meals using regional produce, and the comfort and style of lodge or luxury tent. This park is jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people.</p> <p>Boating and Ocean Journeys Added to the wonderful natural setting most coastal villages and towns exist in, and a range of services, Gippsland is well positioned to grow its boating offer through improved facilities and services. From Mallacoota to San Remo, and all the locations in between, better boating access provides opportunities for the growing boating markets both from within Gippsland and from Melbourne.</p>



Paddock and Ocean Produce

Lakes Entrance Marine Precinct
The area has the potential to be lifted from a commercial centre to an array of marine and lake activities where you can be assured that the catch of the day will be available from the jetty, where the visitor facilities showcase the Lake environs and the entrance to Bass Strait.

Destination Restaurant in Gippsland
A destination restaurant is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw customers from beyond its community and create demand from both domestic and international markets.

The Pinot Coast
The Pinot Coast Project is creating a competitive and recognised brand and visitor experience around a ‘one wine tourism proposition’ that is single minded in its marketing focus on Pinot Noir and is aiming for a leadership position for this variety in the world market.

Destination Fishing and Fishing Villages
Catching fish provides people with a huge sense of achievement and the ability to eat their own catch which for many urban based people is a significant experience. If you cannot catch a fish or do not want to, then the ability to buy a fish direct from a trawler or shop in a seaside village is the next best thing. Providing access and facilities to achieve this will grow the demand for the sport and for the produce.

Paddock & Ocean Produce
Gippsland’s produce is world class - a growth in products from the food grown in Gippsland would see a value add and a likely increase in return on investment for farmers as well as creating a significant experience across the region for visitors and residents alike. One element of showcasing Gippsland’s produce is to hold an annual event bringing the chefs of Australia and the world to Gippsland and connect food producers with chefs and consumers.



Inspired Adventure

Mount Baw Baw Adventures
A strong all year offering based on family alpine adventures and outdoor active pursuits such as walking, cycling, mountain biking and photography also requires sound base infrastructure.

Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail
The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail experience with potential Gunaikurnai involvement takes in the magnificent coastline, estuaries, beaches, views, Aboriginal history and local produce of the region. This self-guided or exclusive, fully serviced and catered experience will become a distinctive experience for nature and culture adventure-based tourism that could take advantage of private property inholdings around the lakes.

Creating the Central Gippsland Mountain Biking Hub
With Haunted Hills MTB park at the centre of this ‘hub’ – visitors will have the choice of staying in a central location and riding one of many MTB parks within 30 minutes’ drive. It creates a unique offering and diversity that other destinations do not have.

Tall Trees Ride
This project proposes the development of a bespoke trail for mountain biking in the forested foothills of West Gippsland close to the timber towns of Noojee, Neerim and Powelltown (outside Gippsland).

Developing Gippsland's Trail Network
The Gippsland Trail Feasibility Study has identified several strategic trail corridor extensions that would, if built, form a ‘trail spine’ through Gippsland from Melbourne’s outer eastern growth suburbs and rail corridor in the west to Orbost in the east. Other trail developments could also provide an outstanding network.

Making Gippsland Australia’s Preferred 4WD Adventure Region
Gippsland has a natural advantage in Victoria and more broadly in Australia with the Australian Alps and foothills providing the perfect terrain, landscape and setting for responsible 4WD adventures, and outdoor activities including remote camping, driving, touring and associated activities such as walking.

Omeo Adventure Hub
This project will see Omeo develop as a nationally recognised alpine and high-country adventure hub. The centre piece will be the Omeo Mountain Bike Hub feeding directly into the town centre. Additional features will include potential to fish, horse ride, raft, and do other adventure activities aligned to the high country theme.



Vibrant Local Communities

Touring Memories
Drive tourism is vital in facilitating regional dispersal and access to the region’s many and varied visitor experiences. Itineraries will enable visitors to become aware of the breadth of the regional offering and encourage repeat visits to specific places they discover or to explore further.

Positioning the Villages of Gippsland
Visitors travelling around the region are looking for opportunities to stop and experience the local and authentic nature of Gippsland. This can contribute to the overall experience of people travelling through the region and encourage greater dispersal, spend and positive feedback. This project will support the development of drive journeys and capitalise on the unique villages and towns of Gippsland and all they have to offer.

Cross Cutting Experiences

There is a range of Gippsland experiences and products that are considered cross-cutting experiences – these are opportunities that may be appropriate under any one of the experience themes:

Aboriginal tourism experiences

Aboriginal culture belongs to Aboriginal people, who are best positioned to determine the content and any interpretation of culturally based tourism.

Gunaikurnai, Bunurong and Wurundjeri people all have an interest in Gippsland. Gunaikurnai hold Native Title over much of Gippsland, have a Recognition Settlement Agreement with the State of Victoria, and are a Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for cultural heritage. Gunaikurnai are joint managers of ten national parks and reserves with Parks Victoria.

Opportunities for development in Gippsland include:

- Partnerships: between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal businesses can potentially address business development challenges (see the partnership section of this DMP for further information)
- Participation: Aboriginal people in mainstream tourism ventures
- Mentoring and training: The provision of mentoring and training services to Aboriginal businesses is required on an ongoing rather than a one-off basis. These services could cover a range of areas including product development, planning and marketing
- Marketing and awareness: There is a need to make it easier for people to learn about Aboriginal culture through the vehicle of tourism
- Investigate options for more guided Aboriginal nature walks, guided tours, cultural talks and travelling exhibitions
- Investigating park products in the Gunaikurnai joint managed Parks, including the potential of a cultural centre at Tarra-Bulga National Park.

Regional produce

Gippsland is renowned for the quality of much of its produce. Consumers around Australia are slowly being introduced to the produce showcasing a Gippsland brand. Recent additions to the providence labels include Gippsland Jersey, high quality rich and creamy milk, a welcome addition to cheeses such as Jindivick and Maffra, as well as prime beef, lamb and seafood. It is becoming more common to see Gippsland Beef or Prime Gippsland Lamb on the menus of some of Australia's best restaurants.

Gippsland's food and fibre industry is set to continue its growth and market presence with the establishment of Food & Fibre Gippsland. Food & Fibre Gippsland is building upon the region's strengths and unique talents to promote, influence and create positive outcomes for the whole of the food and fibre sector in Gippsland. The Latrobe Valley Authority is working closely with Food & Fibre Gippsland to provide new opportunities to Gippsland producers and businesses operating within the food and fibre sector. Recent support has been provided to Gippsland Jersey, Maffra Cheese, Toms Cap Vineyard, Gippsland Natural Beef and Sailors Grave Brewing to grow their businesses.

With the global movement of markets seeking information on food providence, sustainable harvesting and farming, and appropriate labelling, Gippsland has an opportunity to position itself in a market seeking the produce it has. Paddock to the Plate often seeks to remove the middle person in a supply chain with farmers and producers selling direct to restaurants and consumers.

While taking produce to the world is a common approach to building a brand for high quality food and wine, this project seeks to bring the best in the world to Gippsland. The project seeks Destination Gippsland to develop a partnership with Food & Fibre Gippsland and other food and wine producers to develop a program to bring some of the world's great chefs to the region to cook locally with local produce. The event can be Gippsland wide and would also seek to showcase Gippsland wines. It would also be run in concert with Gippsland's finest restaurants to help ensure that the brand of local restaurants grows as does the brand of local produce. The event would not only seek to directly link the great produce of the region with the chefs and restaurateurs of Australia and other parts of the world, it would continue to position Gippsland's brand and positioning aligned to this DMP and the other marketing campaigns.

Adrenalin experiences

This plan has several references to experiences that offer visitors an adrenalin experience, for example the proposed National White-Water Adventure Park and the Gippsland Motorsport Complex. That is, they are adventure based and offered to a range of user groups, skill levels and activities. Gippsland has a strong opportunity to grow this market. Work underway in the Latrobe Valley on adventure sports, sporting infrastructure and support services aligns with products on offer elsewhere in Gippsland. This includes a range of snow sports, water sports, motor racing, a proposed new cable water ski park at Lardner Park and other adventures. While the new experiences are described in the experience pillar, the theme also runs generally through many of the experience pillars and destination hubs.

Heritage

Gippsland has a rich history and many of the destination hubs contain historical sites, buildings and other products that small but important markets seek out when visiting. The mining history of the area, coupled with the rich history in agriculture, fishing, timber production and other forms of resource utilisation, coupled with elements of living history remain important and where possible can be woven into the experience pillars in this plan.

Several of Gippsland's heritage themes are expressed in strong tourism offerings that continue to provide attraction to visitors. Walhalla is a living historical town with modern services that provides visitors with experiences including access to original gold mining tunnels and tours, historical buildings and a streetscape that breathes history.

For thousands of years Gippsland was home to many proud and strong indigenous communities. The stories of the region's history can be found in collections held by volunteer historical societies, museums and Keeping Places. Heritage and culture tourism are complementary to many of the touring opportunities.

Creative industries

The creative industries are a broad but interconnected field spanning arts, culture, screen and design. Arts drive energy, awareness, stories, editorial opportunities and word of mouth among travel influencers – and will be an essential element in delivering on the brand attributes of quirky and serendipitous.

With exhibitions held at the flagship galleries in Port of Sale and Latrobe Regional Gallery, the region is home to a concentration of art and culture that has spread from the larger centres to the smaller villages and hubs including Meeniyan, Warragul, Traralgon, Wonthaggi, Bairnsdale, Fish Creek and others.

Creative Gippsland was formed in 2000 to promote and encourage cultural tourism in the region. Their aspiration is to ensure arts, culture and heritage brings vibrancy and prosperity to Gippsland.

Gippsland's established and emerging creative scene is anticipated to have greater influence on tourism into the future. The newly formed Gippsland Arts Network comprising representatives from all visual arts organisations and local Government authorities spanning the region is currently working towards a region-wide festival of the arts. An investment in the creative industries is an investment in enriching the Gippsland experience for visitors and local communities. The FLOAT project is one of many happening in the region - it is a Small Town Transformation project based at Lake Tyers Beach, East Gippsland.²⁶

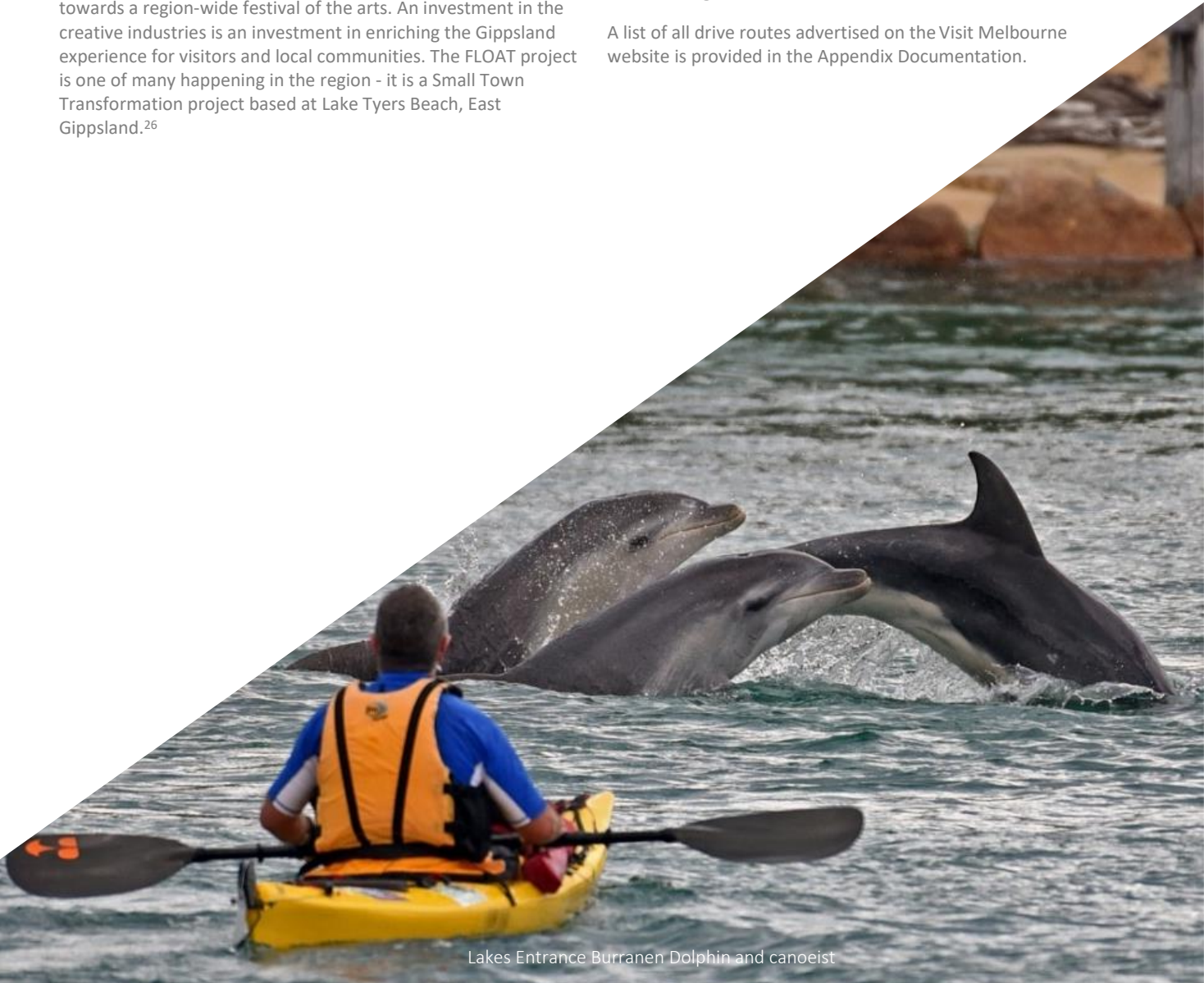
A note on touring routes

Listed as a hero experience under the Vibrant Local Communities theme, touring routes are vital in facilitating regional dispersal and access to the region's many and varied visitor experiences. Great touring routes are high quality drives that offer significant experiences along the journey.

There are several touring routes in Gippsland including the well-recognised Great Alpine Road that crosses from Gippsland to Northeast Victoria. The Sydney to Melbourne Touring Route drive is similarly promoted by Tourism Australia, Visit Victoria, and Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc. A number of other routes encourage people to venture to the north and south of the Princes Highway, between Wilsons Promontory and Phillip Island and along the south coast.

The short-term drive tourism focus for Gippsland should be in partnering to ensure these significant routes are marketed to the public. The medium-term focus should be on ensuring experience development occurs along a series of routes to guarantee this market has memorable experiences to share – and that tourists can deviate off the main route to explore the smaller villages and activities on offer with ease.

A list of all drive routes advertised on the Visit Melbourne website is provided in the Appendix Documentation.



Lakes Entrance Burranen Dolphin and canoeist

²⁶ <http://www.finc.org.au/float-a-small-towns-transformation/>

Strategic Priority 3.

Develop experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
3.1	Investment in new and improved experiences that deliver on brand and positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek investment in the priority hero and support experiences as described in the DMP Develop and undertake an Expression of Interest process for identified tourism development sites (such as hero experiences or other available opportunities) and distribute the documentation widely 	Short – medium term	DGL and Councils
3.2	Aboriginal Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Gunaikurnai Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council, Wurundjeri Tribe Council and others as appropriate, to ensure the region’s Aboriginal tourism potential is realised 	Medium	GLaWAC/BLC/WTC/DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit resources to capacity building and support for the development of Aboriginal tourism including the implementation of the Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Tourism Plan 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a feasibility of developing a cultural centre at Tarra-Bulga National Park 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an enriched visitor cultural experience through investing in the Bataluk Cultural Trail 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
3.3	Regional Produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the food and beverage producers of Gippsland to participate in Global Table (Taste Victoria) the ‘Chefs of the World Come to Gippsland’ campaign, aiming to link restaurateurs and producers, and build the brand of high quality, sustainably sourced food and wine in Gippsland, that then helps local producers in other markets 	Short – Medium term	DGL and local producers including Food & Fibre Gippsland
3.4	Creative Industries, Culture and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow the arts and events industry and culture within Gippsland through local initiatives and work with Councils. Seek to develop village hubs arts and industrial heritage, as appropriate in Local Destination Action Plans 	Medium Term	Councils
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to capitalise on the small but important market for history lovers in Gippsland including packaging history trails, destinations and building experiences with land managers such as Parks Victoria and Gunaikurnai, where appropriate. 	Medium Term – Ongoing	Councils. DGL, Land Managers

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Invest in diverse and exciting regional events

Events attract large participant numbers who experience Gippsland and become advocates for future visitation – either by themselves and their families, or through their own networks and contacts.

The economic impact of events in Gippsland can be broad and far-reaching from increased visitation and the localised expenditure associated with holding the event. This additional spending can provide significant stimulus to local businesses. According to Tourism Australia, for every dollar spent on tourism activities, another 91 cents is generated in other parts of the economy.

The audience reach of major events provides opportunities for longer term visitation, economic and industry benefit to the region. Major events attract large participant numbers who experience the region and become advocates for future visitation – either by themselves and their families, or through their own networks and contacts. The media, broadcast and digital exposure provided by events expands the audience even further – showcasing the region’s attractions and activities directly to consumers and potential future visitors.

Visit Victoria has identified four key event pillars as part of its event strategy. These are sports, creative, culinary and festivals. For the Gippsland region new sporting venues and a growing reputation for food and wine represent opportunities for the region to grow the calendar of events. By focussing on brand strengths and supporting these with events, the region has an opportunity to build both brand and event credentials.

The Gippsland event advantage

Event organisers have indicated that finding venues near Melbourne is becoming extremely difficult because they are at capacity. Gippsland offers an attractive alternative to Melbourne and surrounds. This is particularly the case for business events.

There are many reasons why Gippsland could become a destination of choice as a host for events.

1. Gippsland is a holiday destination - Gippsland is known as a desirable visitor destination which has the potential to drive attendance for major events. Participants choosing event options from a crowded national calendar could be drawn to the region’s attractions and climate – not just for their chosen event activity, but also for the short break to explore the region’s attractions during their stay.
2. The region offers infrastructure, venues and facilities - and has both natural and man-made assets at its disposal to offer promoters. All types of events have the potential to be well accommodated, either along the beaches, roads or pathways, or public venues and sporting facilities.
3. Gippsland is accessible and affordable – the region is easily accessible with a good road network and rail services, and it is within one-hour (in the west and south) drive from Melbourne.

A Regional Events Strategy

While Gippsland has some excellent events, there is no coherent regional strategy that drives event outcomes and growth for the entire region. Developing new events (and benefitting from events in neighbouring regions) and ideas will be critical in presenting a healthy and vibrant annual program of events that delivers positive results to the region’s visitor economy.

Attracting events requires focused investment. Other destinations such as the Sunshine Coast are committed both strategically and financially to invest in major events that bring benefits to their region. For example, Sunshine Coast Council provides significant investment through the Major Events Sponsorship program to provide direct funding support to targeted events. A dedicated team of major events and tourism staff work with all sponsored events to negotiate Council support and provide specialised local advice and guidance.

The development of a co-ordinated regional events strategy in partnership with the Gippsland Local Governments, with a focus on attracting events that develop, promote and encourage visitation will generate financial and social benefits to the Gippsland region. It will:

- Build on the existing events schedule to include local government event listings
- Leverage the new Gippsland brand positioning and imaging, broadening and highlighting the region’s visitor offering through new events
- Provide a framework in partnership with Local Government for developing, funding and running local and regional events, with a seasonal and geographic spread
- Maximise economic gains for the event location and the wider Gippsland region, by increasing visitor nights spent
- Attract investment in signature accommodation. Hotel accommodation is a key opportunity that is recognised as being needed to expand Gippsland’s tourism capacity, and which an enhanced events calendar would help to make more viable
- Identify Gippsland as an attractive place to host and to attend events
- Increase utilisation of existing facilities through the continued development of local and regional events and enable further expansion of event infrastructure
- Be cognisant of Local government’s role in developing and working with community to develop events in LGA areas
- Increase local involvement and interaction with the visitor industry
- Align local council involvement with the regional strategy
- Develop ways to leverage events (e.g. Motor sports events occurring on Phillip Island) for increased travel opportunities throughout the region.

This strategy will be aimed at improving the economic benefit from events in Gippsland as a region:

- Growing yield and visitor nights in Gippsland through better utilisation of existing quiet periods in the annual cycle
- Targeting events that strengthen the Gippsland brand and position the region in the marketplace outside events
- Growing the liveability of Gippsland for the people who live and visit the area
- Better utilising the range of event spaces and infrastructure across the whole region.

Specific elements of the strategy will need to include:

- Approach to event procurement options through development of an independent regional events agency with specific funding dedicated to attracting events or core group of industry representatives working collaboratively to attract major events
- Audit of events across all council areas
- Working with regional and local communities, business and tourism to identify and maximise new and existing potential around events
- Ensure the website structure enables accurate listing of major, regional, niche and community events, links to relevant websites and showcases the wider Gippsland offering
- Developing effective marketing and PR around events, to benefit the event, the local government area hosting the event and the region.

Strategic Priority 4. Invest in diverse and exciting regional events

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
4.1	A Regional Events Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Gippsland regional events strategy that focuses on leisure, sport and business / conference events in partnership with Local Government 	Short	DGL, GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the development of an independent regional events agency with specific funding dedicated to attracting events or core group of industry representatives working collaboratively to attract major events – subject to recommendations that come from the Regional Events Strategy 	Short	DGL/GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt an appropriate methodology for effective economic impact analysis and reporting around events 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Key Performance Indicators and ROI models for entities funding events 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of potential seed funding and other forms of funding to assist events 	Short	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of umbrella event insurance for Gippsland events 	Short	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist event managers to develop sustainable event management practices including recycling, compostable products and efficient energy practices, minimising the event carbon footprint, minimising disruption to communities and developing effective risk management practices 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage a ‘host’ mentality within communities hosting events, including developing a unified community volunteer network 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate new events that capitalise on Gippsland’s brand and positioning such as: 	Short	DGL

4.2

New events that capitalise on brand and positioning

- A River Festival, building on river health and conservation projects
- Sea to Plate jetty festival
- A bike festival, celebrating all things cycling
- A motoring festival to link to Phillip Island events
- Pinot Coast concepts
- Conservation events – Dark Sky
- Aboriginal inspired educational events.

- Destination Gippsland and local councils consider financial investment in 2-3 signature large-scale regional events per year that align to positioning. One may be an 'umbrella' event with the potential to have a range of smaller aligned locations and themes underneath it.

Medium

DGL

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS



Tinamba food and wine festival

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy

The way Gippsland invests in facilities and services that support visitors during their stay such as accommodation, roads, signage, walking tracks, lookouts, night-time activities all impact on their willingness to stay longer and spend.

Infrastructure in Gippsland has traditionally provided for a range of purposes including liveability, support of industry with an emphasis on agriculture, mining, power generation and forestry. Tourism infrastructure has been provided in some areas, is old in others, and is absent in some parts of Gippsland.

It is time that we take a destination perspective of infrastructure and how it is perceived by visitors. The level of investment in facilities and services that support visitors during their stay such as accommodation, roads, signage, walking tracks, lookouts, night-time activities all impact on the visitors' perception of our region and their willingness to stay longer and spend.

A coordinated planning and investment framework for infrastructure that supports the visitor economy across Gippsland will provide a sustainable framework for growth and greater certainty to industry and investors about what is possible and appropriate in terms of future development.

Investing in destination hubs

Destination hubs are a key element to the makeup of Gippsland's character as a destination. There are 7 destination hubs that have developed over time and these areas include some of the existing products for which the region is best known. There is a considerable amount of investment planned for these areas, some of which is directly related to tourism.

There is an opportunity to develop the visitor experience in each of these hubs focussed on their 'story' in Gippsland along with experiences and supporting infrastructure to better connect the visitor economy to these communities.

While Destination Hubs could be applied to almost all areas in Gippsland, the Hubs described in this plan generally have one or more of the following characteristics:

- The hubs provide a significant part of the experience offer for one or more significant market for Gippsland
- The hubs have invested, or are investing in, infrastructure or new products that will attract additional visitors
- The hubs have the potential to grow their offer based on the recommendations within this plan
- The hubs are strategically located within Gippsland such that they contribute to the journey or travellers.

By taking a coordinated approach to planning and investment, the destination hubs will support growth and dispersal of visitors across the entire region.

A description of the opportunity and economic benefit of the potential investment in the destination hubs is presented in this section.

DESTINATION HUB

Gippsland Lakes

The Gippsland Lakes and adjoining wetlands occupy approximately 600km² in a catchment that comprises almost 10% of the land area of Victoria (GRP, 2015) and represents the largest inland lake system in the southern hemisphere. A significant number of visitors to the region enjoy aquatic experiences (fishing and boating) as part of their trip (13% of day trip visitors and 23% of overnight visitors). In addition to water-based activities, the Gippsland Lakes provide access to the Lakes National Park, Ninety Mile Beach and Loch Sport.

Both the maritime services industry and the tourism industry play a critical role in the local economies of Lakes Entrance, Paynesville, Loch Sport and Metung with the maritime services industry providing year-round economic activity and tourism providing peak period economic activity. The Port of Sale is an important area forming the start of the Lake system, and a strong commercial precinct attractive to visitors and residents alike.

Opportunity

- The hero experiences for this part of the Gippsland Lakes will be the Lakes Entrance growth strategy, master planning and marine upgrade, Raymond Island Koala Experience, Signature Restaurant and Gippsland Lakes Aquatic trail with signature accommodation. Supporting experiences will include game fishing, Gippsland lakes accommodation and potentially Aboriginal tourism.
- As part of the government's commitment to return the Gippsland Lakes to recreational fishing and the cancellation of commercial fishing licences, a redevelopment of the Lakes Entrance Fishermen's Cooperative will see a revitalised public area including Bullock Island and a new fish café.
- Improving the Raymond Island koala experience could see upgraded and new walking tracks, interpretation, a digital guide for smartphone use and viewing areas. An art project at Raymond Island and Paynesville using koalas as the theme to further promote this attraction is currently being discussed by the local business association.
- New entrants into the restaurant market in Paynesville and other areas are showing that the market exists for quality restaurants built off local produce. Continuing to develop destination restaurants will drive new markets and support businesses including accommodation.
- The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail has been proposed for some time. Complementary work in the Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study provides a more detailed summary of this exciting opportunity.
- Gunaikurnai have a rich and proud history as the traditional owners of the Gippsland Lakes area. Developing Aboriginal based cultural tourism in the Lakes, should Gunaikurnai wish to pursue this, would be very attractive in the marketplace.
- Showcasing Sale as the closest point of the Lake system to Melbourne markets, and a vibrant hub that includes the Port of Sale building and other visitor services, including the potential to travel downstream through the Lake system by boat.
- The Lakes are inaccessible for many people without a boat. Developing a water-based resort on the Lakes would activate the Lake and provide contemporary market aligned accommodation that supports other experiences.

Investment

The attraction of these hero and supporting experiences will need to be supported by continued investment in key assets to enhance the appeal of Lakes Entrance, Metung, Loch Sport and Paynesville. Some of these investments have been identified in master plans prepared by East Gippsland Council and together with private sector investment these projects will significantly improve the appeal of these destinations for visitors. The following infrastructure improvements specifically relevant to improving visitor facilities in these towns are:

- The Esplanade/Boardwalk that links the fishing boat precinct to the beach, Bullock island redevelopment and an exceptional lookout with restaurants and cafes would enhance Lakes Entrance as a destination with unique character. Improvement works within the town centre to further improve pedestrian access between the commercial/retail area and the foreshore areas as identified in the Lakes Entrance Master Plan. Projects such as waterfront cafes, swimming pontoons and visitor interpretation centre identified in the plan will significantly improve facilities for visitors
- Implementation of the Metung Master Plan focusing on village development and opportunities for private sector investment that leverage off the proposed Metung Hotsprings and Wellness spa
- Provision of quality infrastructure, providing for contemporary & innovative design, allowing for appropriate placement and providing for diversity in experience and appeal with pedestrian linkages and improved signage consistent with the Paynesville Foreshore Management Plan, 2017
- Walking tracks and lookouts, incorporating short walks and links to the Gippsland Trails Strategy in each of the precincts including associated interpretation
- Boat ramps, jetties and car/trailer parking to support marine and boating experiences
- Strategies that encourage operators to invest in products and experiences that appeal to the target markets and changing consumer expectations is critical to retain existing and attract new markets and increase yield.

The type of accommodation has an impact on the delivery of tourism, perceptions and opportunities for growth. It will be challenging to build a year-round offer in a destination that is heavily dependent on holiday parks and camping accommodation such as Lakes Entrance. Operators will need encouragement and guidance to undertake accommodation upgrades that will match future market demand and that are in-line with a destination's future product offering in order to achieve year-round occupancy.

DESTINATION HUB

Wilsons Promontory

Wilsons Promontory (the Prom) is one of Victoria's oldest and most loved national parks. For many Victorians, it has been their first camping experience, their first bushwalk, and a place which they have visited time and time again. The Prom is one of the stunning natural assets of Gippsland easily accessible from Melbourne as well as from Phillip Island. It has been a destination for Victorians for a very long time and is becoming increasingly popular with visitors including in combination with a visit to Phillip Island.

Wilsons Promontory National Park's current visitor offer is limited to certain types of market and there is limited accommodation within the park. Large numbers of day visitors often see the car parks and experiences at capacity during busy periods. Wildlife viewing is an important element for day visitors, and they are not well catered for nor are multi-cultural visitors. This has seen visitor survey responses reducing in the percentage of visitors likely to recommend the experience to others, and a reduction in those who intend to revisit. Surveys have also indicated the need for more and better toilet facilities as well as more camping and offering different levels of accommodation.

As one of the iconic natural sanctuaries in Gippsland, there is potential to create an exceptional visitor experience that truly is world class.

Opportunity

There is a need for a review of how the Prom works to create a vision for the next 20 years and address the overall visitor experience, infrastructure, access and circulation.

The exercise would need to address:

- The plan to create a Sanctuary on the Wilsons Promontory Isthmus that can also form a key part of the visitor experience while improving the conservation outcomes of the park
- Vision in terms of the visitor experience and future growth
- Expanded range and type of experiences to encourage shoulder and off-peak visits, longer stay and repeat visits
- Access, circulation and infrastructure needs (including considerations for off park parking)
- Accommodation options including off park accommodation development
- Partnerships with the neighbouring towns and tourism industry to provide a range of product options
- Sustainable management (environmental, social and financial)
- Consideration of potential hero experiences within or complementing the park.

Improvements at Wilsons Promontory could directly appeal to the *'lifestyle leaders'*.

DESTINATION HUB

Mount Baw Baw/ Walhalla and Surrounds

The villages of West Gippsland are stunning settings that offer a set of visitor experiences strongly linked to the pillars of this DMP and are aligned to the target markets for Gippsland. The project seeks to position the villages as a cluster that together form a living natural heritage, offering outstanding walks and trails, timber and gold mining history, food and wine, culture and link to one of Victoria's alpine resorts at Mount Baw Baw.

Walhalla is a unique village nestled in the foothills of the Victorian Alps, and within close proximity to the Latrobe Valley and the villages of West Gippsland. The recently drafted Central Gippsland Public Land Study (CGPLS) provides a strong foundation for growth of not only Walhalla, but also the surrounding villages of Erica and Rawson, as well as the connections into other parts of Gippsland including Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort.

The villages sit on the edge of the Great Divide. Bringing the surrounding villages into a cluster adds scale and diversity to the experience, as well as the opportunity for Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort to partner with those villages including Noojee and Neerim South, Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and villages further afield in providing a destination that appeals to several markets.

Opportunity

Partnerships

Southern Alpine Resort Management Board private sector and the local governments of Baw Baw Shire Council and Latrobe City.

Investment

- The implementation of the Local Destination Action Plans for Noojee and surrounds, and Walhalla will likely cost \$5 million to \$10 million to implement over a 4-year period.
- Investing in short walks has some cross over with the above investment projects. An additional \$5 million would see world class trails linking the natural and cultural assets of the area.
- The Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy addressing regional public infrastructure needs (roads, village enhancement, Mount Baw Baw village, Walhalla Goldfields Railway) is seeking \$47.5 million over 4 years to fully implement the strategy.

Potential benefits

Improvements in the village products and experiences could directly appeal to the *'lifestyle leaders'*. We know that the Melbourne day visitor market has strong potential to grow in number as well as yield. Diverting the Sydney Melbourne Touring Route visitors northward and off the Princes Highway could increase the length of stay in Gippsland as well as potentially increase spend.

Further investment into Walhalla including the walks around the village, the Long Tunnel Mine and the extended Goldfields Railway will provide benefits for the visitor economy.

Creating a revitalised Walhalla Goldfields Railway that travels from Erica to Walhalla and return has the potential to significantly change the region. The train, modelled on the West Coast Railway in Tasmania, would run to a regular timetable and provide visitors with an outstanding railway experience. It would also activate significant commercial opportunities in Erica including the potential for niche products such as a micro-brewery. The train would also provide another form of transport into Walhalla.

DESTINATION HUB

Latrobe Valley

The Latrobe Valley has seen significant industry transformation and disruption over the past decade, including the closing of one mine and power station and a significant softwood timber mill. The Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA), formed in part as a response from government to the disruption, aims to bring together community, business, industry, government and education sectors to facilitate outcomes that provide for sustainable economic and social development in the region.

The LVA and Latrobe City Council have several significant programs underway that are likely to have a positive impact on long term visitor economy outcomes. Of note are the sporting events and supporting infrastructure developments occurring that will leave the Latrobe Valley with the ability to host major sports tourism events, and to promote 'adrenalin' tourism in facilities such as white-water rafting.

The development of the Latrobe Regional Gallery as well as the Creative Precinct brings a strong arts and cultural focus to the region. The Latrobe Creative Precinct will see state of the art theatre facilities with 750 seats available to attract new performances to the area.

This project aims to capture those projects and support their ongoing implementation, acknowledging the strong and well-founded collaborative framework in place.

Opportunity

Investment

State and local government support for the continued support of Latrobe Valley projects is critical.

Morwell Recreation Reserve, Latrobe City Sports and Entertainment Stadium, Ted Summerton Reserve, Traralgon Sports Stadium, Sale Tennis Centre, and a host of community managed reserves are all among the current facilities now receiving grants through the state government's \$85 million Latrobe Valley Sports and Community Initiative. The \$57 million Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre, and the \$19 million Traralgon Sports Stadium are also critical.

The development of the Latrobe Creative Precinct has received \$30 million from State, Federal and Local Government and will significantly expand the ability of the Central Gippsland area to offer events across more than one destination, with a network of theatres.

The Creative Precinct will drive art and culture as well as provide meeting facilities. It will provide scale that previously did not exist and will provide an opportunity for commercial accommodation and other services.

New experiences

The future use and redevelopment of the Hazelwood mine site is also being investigated with the feasibility of a range of recreational and tourism activities being reviewed. The future of the mine site, (and the pondage) can play a role in the visitor economy dependent upon existing government processes.

The ability of the Latrobe Valley to host major sporting events is also being significantly upgraded. This will lead to demand for increased accommodation and other service industry growth in the region.

There are several products within proximity to one another progressing or being considered that can contribute to an Adventure Precinct in the Latrobe Valley. Existing facilities include a national standard Hill Climb facility, Blue Rock motocross track, world standard water-skiing on Lake Narracan. Approved developments include the Haunted Hills Mountain Bike (MTB) Park. The facilities being developed at Haunted Hills for mountain biking can form part of a Central Gippsland MTB Hub – of which Haunted Hills forms a strong centre piece, with other parks forming part of the hub including Erica MTB park, Blores Hill MTB park, Maryvale Pins MTB park Avon Mt Hendrick MTB park and Glengarry MTB park, as well as a national standard Moto X facility. Feasibility studies are also under way for a motor sports and events complex. There is also a concept of an epic downhill MTB trail from Baw Baw to the Latrobe Valley. This combination of facilities could create a very strong hub. Additionally, planning is underway on a cable water ski park at Larder Park. While not technically part of the Latrobe Valley, it continues to provide growth to this potential market in a nearby 'hub'. A longer-term proposal for a man made white-water adventure park also deserves investigation.

Benefits

Long term economic and social benefits to the valley are the key driver of the LVA. Current projects will deliver capability that does not exist now to host large events, leading towards development of new complementary products and services (accommodation, food and beverage etc).

DESTINATION HUB

The Wilderness Coast (Mallacoota to Point Hicks)

The eastern gateway to Gippsland, the Wilderness Coast includes Orbost, Mallacoota, the surrounding Croajingolong National Park and Point Hicks. Experiences connected to the natural assets of the area and proximity to Croajingolong National Park and Gabo Island provide major opportunities for this part of Gippsland. Orbost is a gateway and service centre to many other destinations in East Gippsland such as the mouth of the Snowy River, Corringale foreshore reserve and camping area, Snowy River National Park, Errinundra National Parks and the Rainforest walk and the Snowy River trail loop to McKillops bridge and Buchan.

The strategic importance of the Wilderness Coast to Gippsland as a destination is the gateway experience it presents to the travellers on the Sydney-Melbourne Touring Route. It is a jumping off point for Gabo Island, and has an established wilderness coastal walk. It offers outstanding opportunities for recreational and commercial fishing as well as boating and is a centre for Australia's abalone industry.

Opportunity

- The Coastal Wilderness Walk aims to provide a world class 3 to 4 day walk between Cape Conran and Point Hicks. The walk will be modelled on the type of experiences on offer at Three Capes in Tasmania, with different levels of service and price points available including the option of a fully serviced and escorted private hut-based trip, or bookable public hut-based walks.
- Point Hicks becomes an important accessible visitor hub that allows the lighthouse to be visited, and the trail for the coastal wilderness walk to be accessed. Other elements include increased accommodation in the area, and access to a range of short walks including one of Australia's largest accessible sand dunes. Significant investment in facilities and infrastructure will be required to achieve this outcome.
- Supporting experiences will include short walks upgrades, and a feasibility study for the proposed Sea to Summit 120 km trail from the Errinundra Plateau to the Bemm River. The short walks off the Princes Highway are important in keeping visitors in the region and enabling the highway to be an experience, not simply a road.

Investment

The attraction of these hero and supporting experiences will need to be supported by continued investment by the public sector in key assets to enhance the destination's appeal, and by the private sector through seeking out new markets and providing quality services aligned to the market needs. These investments include:

- Improvement works within the Mallacoota town centre to further improve pedestrian access between the commercial/retail area and the wharf
- Walking tracks and lookouts, incorporating short walks and links to the Gippsland Trails Strategy and associated and appropriate quality interpretation
- Boat ramps, jetties and car/trailer parking to support Mallacoota marine and boating experiences
- The sealing of the Point Hicks Road likely to be in the vicinity of \$10 million
- The upgrading of infrastructure in the Point Hicks area including power, water and waste management that will facilitate the sustainable development of the site including provisioning for additional accommodation, visitor hubs, potential trail head facilities etc
- Sea to Summit walk – Victorian Government has committed \$1.5 million to a feasibility assessment of the proposal.

DESTINATION HUB

South Gippsland / Bass Coast Villages

The villages of the Bass Coast and South Gippsland are unique and sit in an outstanding setting where the coast meets the hills. From Inverloch, which has outstanding coastal scenery including the Bunurong Marine and Coastal Park and Andersons Inlet to the villages of South Gippsland that have arts and culture at their heart including Meeniyan and Fish Creek – the villages all present a unique character and ongoing investment in their strengths will continue to see their importance and their ability to attract visitors rise.

The State Coal Mine in Wonthaggi provides a window into the world of underground coal mining and the tours often led by actual coal miners breathe life into the story telling. Continued investment and marketing of the coal mine with other local heritage will provide growth opportunities.

The fishing villages including Port Welshpool with its recently refurbished and reopened Long Jetty are core to the hub.

Opportunity

Investment in place making at several of the smaller villages as well as encouraging the art and culture of the area through the continued development and implementation of Local Destination Action Plans will provide ongoing benefits.

Additional investment in the parks, walks and features of the area through Local Destination Action Planning will contribute to the product of the region.

The potential for a 'Destination Golf Course' has been recognised at the State level on the Bass Coast. This type of development opportunity could rival the recent developments in Tasmania including King Island and provide a stimulus for accommodation development.

Investing in the 'Fishing Villages' along the south coast of Gippsland, such as Port Albert, Port Welshpool, Loch Sport, San Remo and other hamlets presents an opportunity described in the experience framework of this DMP.

Investment

1. Invest in the development of place based Local Destination Action Plans to continue to grow the ability of the small villages to work collectively on their product strengths.
2. Promote the Bunurong Coast as a spectacular coastal drive with access to the historical features of the area and the villages of the Bass Coast and South Gippsland.
3. Work with Visit Victoria to attract a destination golf course to the Bass Coast.

DESTINATION HUB

Gippsland's High Country

Gippsland has outstanding high country and experiences that have developed over many years. Towns such as Omeo, Dargo, Licola all provide visitors with not only a sense of living mountain culture, but also the important element of provisioning, information and visitor servicing.

Omeo has a strong historical link to the high country through gold mining, mountain cattlemen and more recently, skiing and other forms of adventure.

Drive tourism is vital to feeder towns such as Orbost where the Snowy River drive takes visitors to McKillops Bridge and deep into the East Gippsland mountains, and Heyfield where visitors can branch off to Licola and Dargo.

Touring routes such as the Great Alpine Road link visitors with neighbouring regions such as the North East and provide an important link to Mount Hotham.

Investment in the Omeo Mountain Bike Hub continues and will see a world class facility developed. This coupled with the history of the area and the adventure tourism opportunities position Omeo well into the future.

The high country also provides significant camping and 4WD opportunities as well as the base for much of Victoria's remote and challenging hiking offer. The Falls to Hotham walk development will also provide a strong element to the neighbouring area and in summer through the linkages to the Bogong High Plains and Falls Creek.

Deer hunting is very popular in Gippsland and continuing to invest in access and facilities including appropriate camping to support deer hunting provides an increasing opportunity.

Victoria's 4WD adventures are at home in the Alps with many of the State and country's foremost drives and adventures on offer including the Wonnangatta Valley, Davie Plains and the Snowy River.

Investment

- Invest in the development of strong planning for Omeo (underway) and the implementation of the Omeo Adventure Hub.
- Invest in drive-based tourism facilities and information to support high country drives such as the Licola, Dargo and Snowy River Drive.
- Develop partnerships with neighbouring regions including NE Victoria to capitalise on developments underway outside Gippsland.
- Invest in Local Destination Action planning and experience development to aid smaller high-country towns.

Investing in National Parks and Public Lands - Camping

The planned improvements and expansion of current campground facilities, new campgrounds and improved access to the region's national and state parks and public lands, will develop and encourage increases in visitation to the Gippsland region. This will generate financial and social benefits and visitors will be invigorated to stay longer within the region and have a better story to tell to promote word of mouth. Activation is about access, the quality of amenities and increasing awareness.

Camping is a holiday tradition for many Victorians and an important part of Victoria's tourism industry. Camping and recreation in Victoria's State and National Parks is worth \$2.1 billion to the Victorian economy each year and supports 20,400 jobs around the state²⁷.

The Gippsland region can improve camping facilities by:

- Upgrading current facilities at major attraction sites
- Improving the links to, and quality of, walking tracks, cycle routes and 4WD trails
- Investigate options for new campgrounds along popular driving routes
- Review the cost of camping fees and allocation of sites in accordance with the state government pricing policy announced at the time of this plan aiming to make parks more affordable for Victorians and visitors.

There is a need to create a network of high value and high yield products to meet and exceed the expectations of target markets. Nature based tourism forms a significant component of Australia's visitor economy, ranking among top travel motivators for domestic and international visitors.

Delivering on the positioning and the themes of the region, Gippsland will require growth in the range of nature and adventure experiences to diversify what is currently on offer within its state and national parks. Whilst planned investment in walks and mountain biking will contribute, there is a need for additional types of activities and more commercial business offerings. An important part of experiencing a destination is the lookout and viewing opportunities, a safe place to take photos and capture memories. Promoting active experiences in nature and specialty producers of the region will diversify the visitor experience and encourage longer stays.

Complementary to increasing nature based and adventure experiences is the types of accommodation available within or close to state and national parks. Whilst camping amenities should be upgraded, so too should the type of accommodation on offer, from eco-pods and cabins to five-star anchor accommodation.

²⁷ Victoria's great outdoors – Fact Sheet

Investing in the Night-Time Economy

The night-time economy is a key driver of growth and a significant contributor to the economy. The various towns in Gippsland provide a range of important services including accommodation, retail and fuel. The potential to create greater attraction and increased economic benefits exists - growing the night-time economy is one area that could be pursued, aligning with the destination hub concept.

There is a range of improvements that could deliver results including ideas such as:

- The visual amenity of different towns through lighting for both safety and attraction
- Heating of streets with outdoor gas heaters and, where appropriate, fire pits
- Creating more vibrant café and restaurant culture in the towns
- Night-time events that underpin what each village is most recognised for e.g. food/wine, creative industries and heritage
- A 'field of lights' product in an appropriate setting like that of the Albany Field of Lights spectacular www.fieldoflightalbany.com.au
- Night light shows or night movies.

Local government plays an important role in supporting and managing the development of local night-time economies. It is essential councils be equipped to advance this important part of the 24-hour economy so that it is vibrant, safe and sustainable at a local level through economic development and partnerships; place making and urban design; strategy, policy and research; planning and regulation; culture and creativity and services; infrastructure and safety.

As important as these new industry drivers are to local governments, it is necessary to plan for the impact these social venues place on their resources. This includes improvements on licensing for entertainment, alcohol service, promoters, sidewalk and rooftop seating, and start-up business technical assistance.

Local Councils can assist by:

- Adjusting night and weekend parking rates / restrictions to support visitation into village centres
- Improving legibility and wayfinding
- Enabling independence to flourish by making applications for small events simpler and easier
- Offering small business workshops covering topics such as later trading, food businesses, small bars, and live music
- Undertaking research to better understand the range of requirements for incubator and creative spaces in towns.

Public Investment in Infrastructure

Implementing the range of experiences and recommendations within this plan will take investment from Government sources. These sources may include Local Government capital expenditure, State Government grants or capital programs, and Federal Government grants. Ongoing commitments that would generally be funded from recurrent budgets have not been included in this section.

Infrastructure by its definition is the basic physical and/or organisational structures and facilities needed for the effective operation of an enterprise or a community. Infrastructure in Gippsland has traditionally been provided for a range of purposes including liveability, support of industry with an emphasis on agriculture, mining, power generation and forestry. Tourism infrastructure has been provided in some areas, is old in others, and is absent in some parts of Gippsland.

It is proposed to prioritise the public infrastructure recommendations in this plan based on a set of criteria that deliver the benefits along with the costs of investing in infrastructure. The plan also seeks to deliver multiple outcomes, aligning what is good for tourism to what is good for local communities. Multiple beneficiaries of infrastructure will lead to a greater return on investment.

No recommendations are made on investment in private infrastructure, other than the development of the concept and experience, and the opportunity it provides. It is rightly the role of private enterprise to determine the worthiness or otherwise of business investment and the returns it may generate.

The following criteria have been developed to enable a priority rating of High, Medium or Low to be applied to the public infrastructure in this plan.

High Priority

- The infrastructure provides multiple benefits including to local communities
- The infrastructure enables significant business investment in hero or support experiences
- The infrastructure is at least part way through the planning and regulatory approvals process
- The infrastructure has a high return on investment including enabling the ongoing generation of regional income and employment creation.

Medium Priority

- The infrastructure provides benefits to the development of visitor economy
- Longer term business development may eventuate from the investment
- The infrastructure may assist in delivering a hero or support experience
- The infrastructure requires further planning and regulatory approval
- The return on investment is likely to high.

Low Priority

- The infrastructure has a single beneficiary
- The infrastructure is not aligned to the delivery of the experiences in this plan
- The infrastructure is unplanned yet may have longer term potential
- The return on investment is unknown or low.

Proposed infrastructure is provided in Section 9.

Strategic Priority 5.
Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
5.1	Investment in priority infrastructure across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an investment guide for the region - listing key projects, available support and incentives and economic indicators - that can be used as a tool for attracting potential investors, particularly for accommodation 	Short – medium term	DGL/ GLGN (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify incentives and resources that will be committed to support the investment attraction process (including staff resources) 	Short – medium term	DGL/ GLGN (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an action plan for development of the region’s cruise sector in the region covering the years 2019 to 2030 	Medium term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a network of ‘wayside stops’ on Sydney Melbourne touring route to capture and service the touring and travelling visitor market with the intent to direct visitors to local towns 	Medium term	DGL/GLGN
5.2	Plan and implement strategic improvements to the destination hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake strategic planning and improvements to the destination hubs as outlined in the DMP that include accessible infrastructure 	Short – Medium term	GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.3	Investment attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and undertake an Expression of Interest process for identified tourism development sites (such as hero experiences or other available opportunities) and distribute the documentation widely 	Short	DGL/GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.4	Encourage continual improvement in private sector offerings including accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a strategic product review aimed at delivering improvements to established accommodation and experiences for existing and new markets Review what additions and improvements need to be made to current stock 	Medium term	DGL
5.5	Plan and implement strategic improvements to the national parks, reserves and public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer incentives to encourage a broader range of commercial operators delivering nature based and adventure experiences in the region This should range from small drive tours, tag along tours, walking, riding, white water and others. Incentives might include reduced or suspended fees for the initial three years of operation and access into National Parks 	Short term	Parks Victoria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sites suitable for adventure experiences (e.g. ziplines, rafting, climbing etc) and undertaking necessary land clearances to encourage investment 	Short – medium term	Parks Victoria / Gunaikurnai

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a program of experience development workshops for current and emerging operators to develop more commercialised experiences and packages, including working with adjoining regions 	Short term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the State Government's commitment to upgrade camping sites across Victoria and seek to deliver several prioritised campground upgrades at destinations complimentary to this DMP recommendations 	Medium term	DGL (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with National Park authorities to assist investment in park accommodation 	Short term	DGL/ Parks Victoria (in association with RDV)
5.6	Develop the night-time economy across Gippsland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a night-time economy strategy for the Gippsland region 	Short term	DGL/GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include consideration of night-time impacts and benefits in town visioning and beautification projects 	Short term	DGL/GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.7	Review Touring Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form an industry working group to determine the future of currently advertised drive touring routes to align them to Destination Hubs 	Medium term	DGL, Local Councils

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS



Marlo Fishing on Sunset

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6

Revitalise visitor servicing across the region

High quality visitor engagement plays a critical role in enhancing the overall visitor experience by creating a positive image of our region. We have a distinct opportunity to embrace the change that is required for visitor servicing and attract new markets through a new model of engagement.

Visitor Engagement & Servicing

Visitor engagement has become an all-encompassing term for communication with visitors throughout the entire trip cycle (refer Strategic Priority 2). It describes the ways in which visitors interact with a destination, its tourism products and with one another. High quality visitor engagement plays a critical role in enhancing the overall visitor experience by creating a positive image of Gippsland and Australia, providing a hospitable and friendly welcome and supporting authentic experiences. It presents an opportunity to inspire visitors to explore the tourism product that is distinctive to the region including its culture, heritage, local produce, natural attractions and its people.

Rethinking visitor information centres

Every destination needs its visitors to have positive experiences, and a well-managed visitor centre is one way to help make that happen. Delivering physical visitor information in Gippsland is challenging given its large area and distance between towns. There are seven accredited Visitor Information Centres (VICs) and five non-accredited VICs in Gippsland (including Phillip Island).

Today fewer visitors want to be identified as tourists - they want to seek out experiences that immerse them in a destination. They want to live like a local enjoying the best a destination has to offer and, as a result, local knowledge and insight is more valuable than ever before.

To respond to this change in visitor needs and expectations we need a shift in thinking - visitor servicing is not just about in-destination visitor information provision from a fixed location. We need to intercept visitors at multiple points in their journey. Visitor servicing needs to do more than satisfy the information needs of a minority of people who stop into a Visitor Information Centre. It needs to go digital and face-to-face engagement needs to also get mobile and go to where people are as well as letting them come to us.

We need to evolve the current focus on Visitor Information Centres and instead reimagine the concept of visitor servicing that is:

- Borderless and integrated with destination marketing, websites and social media
- Aligned with the visitor trip cycle, including via co-location with complementary LGA services and local businesses to bring connection and vitality e.g. Port of Sale model in Sale
- Providing connection with community through local 'Host' Network or community/industry ambassadors such as being conducted in Bass Coast, where an online customer service training program is running for businesses and community members. The program aims to build an army of ambassadors equipped with the product knowledge to promote what Phillip Island has to offer, providing outstanding customer service.

From information centres to experience hubs

The traditional visitor engagement services such as those offered by Visitor Information Centres across Gippsland will need to adapt to the needs and wants of new visitor markets. The centres will need to develop new value-producing roles and relationships with visitors in the redefined marketplace and transform their role or they will find themselves underutilised and potentially irrelevant in the longer term.

They need to become strategically located Experience Centres that offer high quality information, booking functionality, innovative technology and a retail outlet offering tourism product and local produce. High quality fit outs will encourage local experts and local groups to use them. For example, if local governments reduced the ongoing commitment to visitor information centres in Gippsland and invested instead in resources to work with the communities and the tourism industry to create new and revitalised products, there would be a more compelling story to tell to attract visitors across the region.

Personal Interaction

The personal interaction that the visitor has with Gippsland will be the story they tell when they return home. It should be the way they engage and experience the region, the first and the last memory they gather. It could be the region’s core strength.

Tour operators, accommodation and transport providers, experience centre staff and local communities are all Gippsland experience ambassadors. Other destinations are embracing the concept of roving ambassadors that provide a push rather than pull approach to visitor servicing. Roving ambassadors are most effective when they have access to the information that visitors request. In a mobile situation this is best delivered via a tablet. Therefore, the option will work well in association with a single Gippsland website (Strategic Priority 2).

iBeacon technology offers the ability to push information to visitors based on location. In addition to providing the ability for DGL members to provide real time offers and a potential revenue source for Destination Gippsland, the collection of real time visitor information has many possibilities.

The Importance of Shareable Social Moments

Strategic provision of information at all stages of the trip cycle is key as visitors are looking for curated information, customised to their needs and requirements. DGL and its partners have a role in this journey from beginning to end that includes helping people dream and plan their trip (Strategic Priority 2), developing and delivering the experiences that make people happy (Strategic Priority 3, 4 and 5) and doing so in a way that builds advocates for the destination.

Outstanding travel experiences lead to positive stories told online and offline. These stories inspire new visitors who plan new trips. Tourism experiences and word-of-mouth reinforce one another and together offer an opportunity to drive tourism growth to Gippsland. Social media allows visitors to share their experience as they travel, advocating for further conversion to visit a range of destinations. Other organisations and entities, including businesses, play an important role in social media.

We can better serve our visitors’ needs by helping them document and share their experiences in a clever and valuable way. As they do so, our visitors will help us by creating stronger and more effective peer-to-peer promotion.

Strategic Priority 6. Revitalise Visitor Servicing

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
6.1	Agree to a Visitor Information Servicing Strategy to balance the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This strategy should allocate resources to highest priority needs – this needs to adopt a multi-channel, visitor-centric approach to maximise the use of resources to achieve an increase in awareness of the destination within target markets. This could mean that Local Government Areas deliver the services under a shared strategy 	Short term	GLGN
6.2	Transition visitor information centres to Experience Gippsland centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the provision of information services across Gippsland and reduce the number to strategically located experience centres in each of the destination hubs 	Short term	DGL/GLGN
6.3	Develop virtual VIC technology to support visitors that encourages them to stay longer and spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial the use of a virtual VIC including a variety of digital maps and consider deployment of iBeacons in key locations across Gippsland 	Short – Medium term	DGL/GLGN
6.4	Local content and best kept secrets – Gippsland Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Ambassador program at destination hubs during peak seasons. There are several options for Ambassadors: community, business, roaming seasonal volunteers and online social content 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop social media ambassador program that interact with visitors sharing moments and local tips on Instagram platforms 	High	DGL/GLGN

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 7

Create industry partnerships to foster and grow the Gippsland visitor economy

This DMP relies on the partnerships and alignment between industry, government and community government investment, grants, support and sponsorship opportunities to help underwrite the resources needed to deliver the DMP strategies and actions.

Industry Development

Destination Gippsland's role is to grow and serve the Gippsland tourism sector and work in partnership with the industry and government to deliver rewarding and lasting economic, environmental and social outcomes. To do this DGL needs to:

- Enable operators to make the best use of their assets and deliver a sound return on their investment
- Grow income and stimulating new business development opportunities across the entire tourism supply chain
- Earn and attract capital for future investment.

Local Destination Action Plans

Local Destination Action Plans (LDAPs) bring a local area or town into focus and concentrate on bringing the community, business and local government together to plan a series of practical, achievable and affordable actions. Developing LDAPs for several of the region's most important towns and sub regions will help deliver a united industry and government view on actions to lift the towns' ability to offer strong visitor experience and satisfaction. The resourcing and funding can be significant to complete a LDAP and it is important that recommendations in this plan are considered by Councils.

The priority for developing and implementing LDAPs will be aligned to this plan's recommendations. Destination hubs identified in this plan would ideally all have LDAPs to bring the village to life aligning the villages' strengths, products, infrastructure and experience offering to the themes described in this plan.

Additionally, many Councils are continually undertaking local area planning in one form or another. This can be in the form of structure plans, streetscape renewals etc. Aligning those plans to themes in this plan, and to an overarching goal of improving the visitor economy and liveability for communities will help drive a consistent and improved outcome.

Aboriginal Communities

Aboriginal communities and their respective organisations are seeking to develop long term sustainable businesses in the tourism sector. This can include businesses based on Aboriginal culture, or Aboriginal corporations being involved in tourism businesses focussing in areas other than Aboriginal Heritage and Culture.

Destination Gippsland and the partners to the implementation of this plan, will help develop tourism product and business capability more broadly in the region by partnering with the Aboriginal Corporations and groups in the region seeking to develop tourism and commercial skills. These partnerships will help drive an improved capacity in the Aboriginal sectors as well as help drive a collective understanding of Aboriginal culture across the region.

The Education Sector

This plan will work across a period of unprecedented change in society based on technology, industry disruption, artificial intelligence and potential climate change impacts to the region and more broadly across Australia.

Working with the education sector will be more important than ever to ensure that the skills available to Gippsland businesses are future focussed, ready for adaptation and change, and aligned to changing marketplace expectations on service and knowledge.

Gippsland education institutions including TAFE Gippsland (with campuses in Warragul, Yallourn, Morwell, Traralgon, Leongatha, Sale, Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance) and Federation University can work with operators and the sector more generally to assist with visitor servicing improvements. This can include courses on visitor engagement, food and wine, customer service, information, media and marketing etc.

As the potential for more sectors to change during the period of this plan, and workers move into service industries such as the visitor economy, the education institutions have a vital role to play.

Partnerships with Neighbouring Regions

Gippsland sits uniquely with the ocean as a boundary on the south, and the Victorian Alps forming much of the northern boundary. The opportunity to create partnerships is therefore focussed and aligned to entry points into the region. Visitors entering on the Sydney Melbourne Touring Route come in from the Sapphire Coast of NSW. Visitors entering from Melbourne enter from Melbourne, or Phillip Island. The Yarra Valley and NE Victoria are the other main entry points.

There is much to be gained by Gippsland continuing to work with and develop partnerships with its neighbouring regions e.g. Phillip Island, Tourism NE, Sapphire Coast (NSW) and Yarra Valley. Strength in the marketplace will come not from competing with neighbours, but in creating a sense of regional identity and delivering touring routes and drive journeys that showcase the best of all partners. This approach will grow the market for all.

Working with Destination Southern NSW, Canberra and Surrounds, the High Country and touring route partners from outside the Gippsland region, and the State, presents many opportunities for joint marketing and increasing length of stay.

Engage Local Communities

It is important to ensure that local community members are strong advocates for the region with their friends and relatives. This is a solid market that has the potential to strongly influence new markets for Gippsland through word of mouth and social media.

Continued effort is needed to communicate with and develop the appreciation of local residents about the region's visitor offerings. This will encourage them to visit those places and attractions themselves and recommend experiences to visitors from outside the region.

A program of activities and promotion is recommended to enable residents to visit and learn about places they may not otherwise know. It needs to include the primary visitor attractions, local small events, artisan experiences and to be combined with walks and talks that motivate the community to engage with visitors. The former Destination Melbourne's *Discover Your Own Backyard* program is a good example.

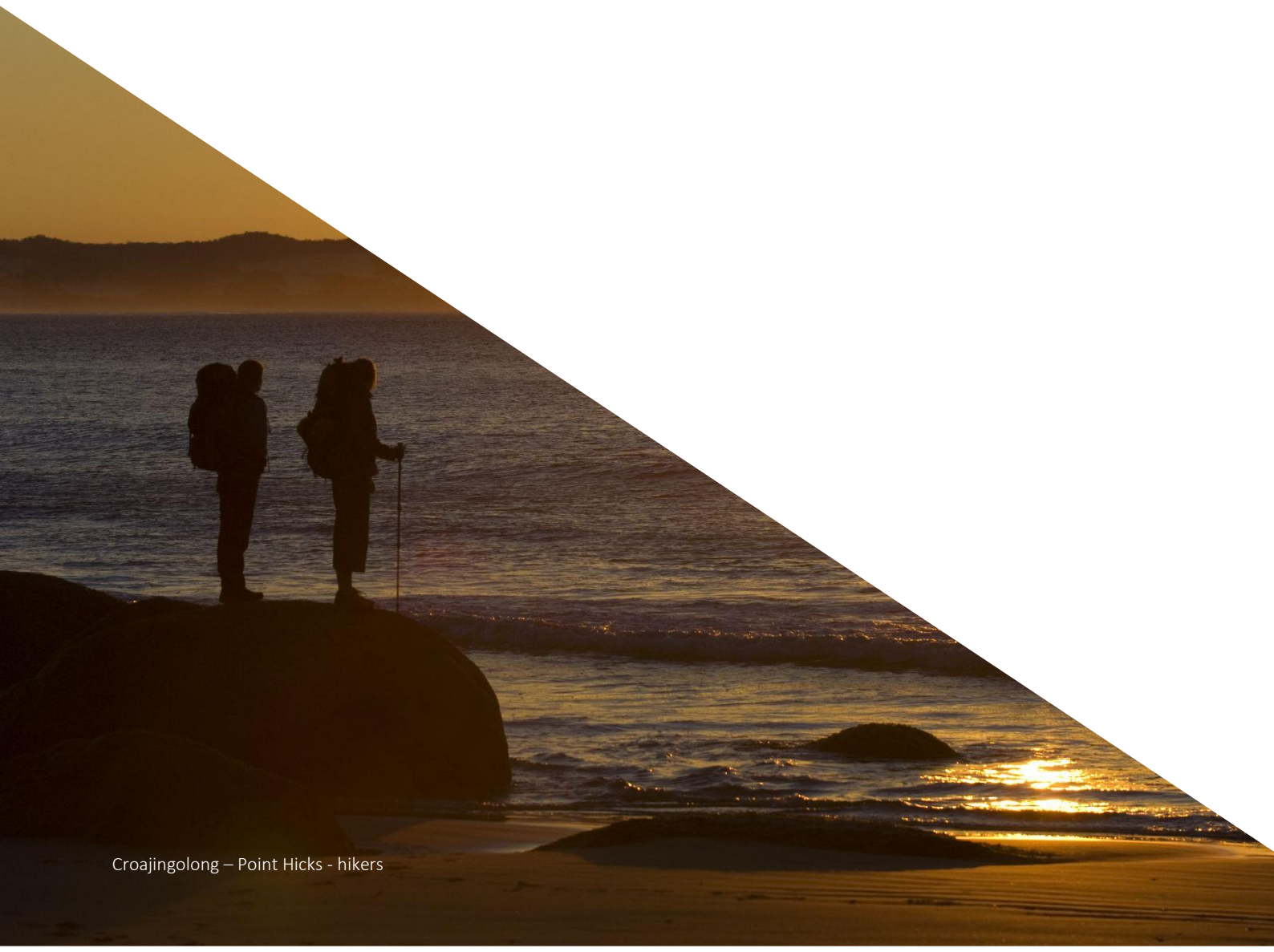
Strategic Priority 7.

Create partnerships to foster and grow tourism

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
7.1	Consolidate and build the partnerships and alignment between government and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to assist current and future operators develop technical capacity and competencies, including through technical advice, research and focused workshops 	Medium term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run experience development workshops across Gippsland in selected locations to develop content and experiences including product packaging 	Short term	DGL
7.2	Develop Local Destination Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Areas to undertake Local DAPs for the destination hubs identified in this plan, and other specific town and village clusters. DGL coordinate and influence the actions ensuring alignment to the overall Gippsland brand and positioning 	Short – medium term	DGL/GLGN
7.3	Engage Community and develop Ambassadors across Gippsland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a well-planned, promoted and branded strategic programme of open days, famils and activities across the region where locals are encouraged to participate and achieve greater awareness of the needs of visitors and opportunities to enhance their visit 	Medium term	DGL

7.4	Build enduring partnerships with Aboriginal organisations in Gippsland and Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive to develop meaningful long-term partnerships with Aboriginal groups and corporations in Gippsland, and central agencies and bodies in Melbourne to grow the visitor economy opportunities for Gunaikurnai and other groups as well as developing cultural tourism opportunities 	Medium Term	DGL, LGAs, PV, DELWP
7.5	Grow Partnerships with the Education Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with the Gippsland education sector to deliver fit for purpose staff with visitor economy service sector skills, and to position the workforce for the future 	Short to Medium Term	DGL

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS



6. Review

This DMP provides the framework for delivering tourism growth, dispersal and yield across the region. The inherent social, economic and other benefits will require investment from government and the private sector. Marketing will need to be targeted, focussed on the core strengths of the region, and responding to the changing needs of consumers.

There will need to be new experiences, improvements to existing infrastructure and product, and a recognition that some products will be regional heroes, others supporting, but together, working as a destination, will create the momentum for the desired growth.

Implementation will require strong leadership, effective and enduring partnerships and a visionary and committed tourism industry.

It is recommended that the DMP be reviewed each three years to ensure its currency with best practice and changing circumstances. In addition, should new experiences, infrastructure or projects that have the potential to make a significant contribution to the visitor economy be identified or proposed, these need to be considered in the context of this plan.





7. Summary of Actions

Strategic Priority 1.

Collaborative and effective leadership and governance across industry and community

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
1.1	Review and then implement a revised structure and governance of tourism in Gippsland through GLGN, drawing on the State Government's regional tourism review (late 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake an analysis of the Victorian government's regional tourism review when released in late 2019 Undertake a review of the structure of tourism in Gippsland led by GLGN that includes LGAs and industry Implement the review and ensure that the partners and industry acknowledge their accountabilities and roles within the new framework Once the governance review is completed, develop funding models to implement the review. 	Short term	DGL, Visit Victoria, GLGN

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

Strategic priority 2.

Strengthen destination appeal through brand awareness & coordinated marketing

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
2.1	Adopt a singular focused approach to deliver on the Gippsland brand with the local areas providing relevant content to underpin and deliver on the destination brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Gippsland Local Govt Network (GLGN) to agree on appropriate funding and input model to support Destination Gippsland as the primary brand manager and marketing focus for the destination 	Short term	DGL/GLGN/Visit Victoria
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the approach to marketing for the destination at different points in the customer journey 	Short – medium term	DGL/GLGN/Visit Victoria
2.2	Encourage industry commitment to the new Gippsland brand.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an industry development program to support the use of the brand with content to encourage industry use 	Short - term	DGL
2.3	Support industry to embrace the positioning and brand through experience development training and mentoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drive increased visitation in the low and shoulder seasons by implementing a training and mentoring program creating collaboration amongst operators to develop new experiences and products 	Short – medium term	DGL

2.4	Develop commissionable product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to achieve more commissionable product that will be attractive to wholesalers packaging and selling experiences in the region 	Short – medium term	DGL and industry
2.5	Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the new brand, positioning and marketing activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake research to determine the effectiveness of marketing activities in the short, medium and long term. 	Short term- medium term	DGL/GLGN

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

Strategic Priority 3.

Develop experiences that encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
3.1	Investment in new and improved experiences that deliver on brand and positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek investment in the priority hero and support experiences as described in the DMP Develop and undertake an Expression of Interest process for identified tourism development sites (such as hero experiences or other available opportunities) and distribute the documentation widely 	Short – medium term	DGL and Councils
3.2	Aboriginal Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Gunaikurnai Lands and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council, Wurundjeri Tribe Council and others as appropriate, to ensure the region's Aboriginal tourism potential is realised 	Medium	GLaWAC/ BLC/ WTC/ DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit resources to capacity building and support for the development of Aboriginal tourism including the implementation of the Lakes Entrance Aboriginal Tourism Plan 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a feasibility of developing a cultural centre at Tarra-Bulga National Park 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an enriched visitor cultural experience through investing in the Bataluk Cultural Trail 	Medium	GLaWAC/DGL
3.3	Regional Produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the food and beverage producers of Gippsland to participate in Global Table (Taste Victoria) the 'Chefs of the World Come to Gippsland' campaign, aiming to link restaurateurs and producers, and build the brand of high quality, sustainably sourced food and wine in Gippsland, that then helps local producers in other markets 	Short – Medium term	DGL and local producers including Food & Fibre Gippsland

3.4	Creative Industries, Culture and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow the arts and events industry and culture within Gippsland through local initiatives and work with Councils. Seek to develop village hubs arts and industrial heritage, as appropriate in Local Destination Action Plans 	Medium Term	Councils
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to capitalise on the small but important market for history lovers in Gippsland including packaging history trails, destinations and building experiences with land managers such as Parks Victoria and Gunaikurnai, where appropriate. 	Medium Term – Ongoing	Councils. DGL, Land Managers

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

Strategic Priority 4. Invest in diverse and exciting regional events

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
4.1	A Regional Events Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Gippsland regional events strategy that focuses on leisure, sport and business / conference events in partnership with Local Government 	Short	DGL, GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the development of an independent regional events agency with specific funding dedicated to attracting events or core group of industry representatives working collaboratively to attract major events – subject to recommendations that come from the Regional Events Strategy 	Short	DGL/GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt an appropriate methodology for effective economic impact analysis and reporting around events 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Key Performance Indicators and ROI models for entities funding events 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of potential seed funding and other forms of funding to assist events 	Short	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of umbrella event insurance for Gippsland events 	Short	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist event managers to develop sustainable event management practices including recycling, compostable products and efficient energy practices, minimising the event carbon footprint, minimising disruption to communities and developing effective risk management practices 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a ‘host’ mentality within communities hosting events, including developing a unified community volunteer network 	Medium	DGL
4.2	New events that capitalise on brand and positioning	<p>Investigate new events that capitalise on Gippsland’s brand and positioning such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A River Festival, building on river health and conservation projects Sea to Plate jetty festival A bike festival, celebrating all things cycling A motoring festival to link to Phillip Island events Pinot Coast concepts Conservation events – Dark Sky Aboriginal inspired educational events. 	Short	DGL

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination Gippsland and local councils consider financial investment in 2-3 signature large-scale regional events per year that align to positioning. One may be an ‘umbrella’ event with the potential to have a range of smaller aligned locations and themes underneath it. 	Medium	DGL
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SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

Strategic Priority 5. Invest in place-making to support the visitor economy

	PRIORITY	KEY ACTIONS	PRIORITY/ TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
5.1	Investment in priority infrastructure across the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an investment guide for the region - listing key projects, available support and incentives and economic indicators - that can be used as a tool for attracting potential investors, particularly for accommodation 	Short – medium term	DGL/ GLGN (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify incentives and resources that will be committed to support the investment attraction process (including staff resources) 	Short – medium term	DGL/ GLGN (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an action plan for development of the region’s cruise sector in the region covering the years 2019 to 2030 	Medium term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a network of ‘wayside stops’ on Sydney Melbourne touring route to capture and service the touring and travelling visitor market with the intent to direct visitors to local towns 	Medium term	DGL/GLGN
5.2	Plan and implement strategic improvements to the destination hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake strategic planning and improvements to the destination hubs as outlined in the DMP that include accessible infrastructure 	Short – Medium term	GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.3	Investment attraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and undertake an Expression of Interest process for identified tourism development sites (such as hero experiences or other available opportunities) and distribute the documentation widely 	Short	DGL/GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.4	Encourage continual improvement in private sector offerings including accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a strategic product review aimed at delivering improvements to established accommodation and experiences for existing and new markets Review what additions and improvements need to be made to current stock 	Medium term	DGL
5.5	Plan and implement strategic improvements to the national parks, reserves and public lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer incentives to encourage a broader range of commercial operators delivering nature based and adventure experiences in the region This should range from small drive tours, tag along tours, walking, riding, white water and others. Incentives might include reduced or suspended fees for the initial 	Short term	Parks Victoria

		three years of operation and access into National Parks		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify sites suitable for adventure experiences (e.g. ziplines, rafting, climbing etc) and undertaking necessary land clearances to encourage investment 	Short – medium term	Parks Victoria / Gunaikurnai
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a program of experience development workshops for current and emerging operators to develop more commercialised experiences and packages, including working with adjoining regions 	Short term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the State Government’s commitment to upgrade camping sites across Victoria and seek to deliver several prioritised campground upgrades at destinations complimentary to this DMP recommendations 	Medium term	DGL (in association with RDV)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with National Park authorities to assist investment in park accommodation 	Short term	DGL/ Parks Victoria (in association with RDV)
5.6	Develop the night-time economy across Gippsland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a night-time economy strategy for the Gippsland region 	Short term	DGL/GLGN
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include consideration of night-time impacts and benefits in town visioning and beautification projects 	Short term	DGL/GLGN (in association with RDV)
5.7	Review Touring Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form an industry working group to determine the future of currently advertised drive touring routes to align them to Destination Hubs 	Medium term	DGL, Local Councils
SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS				

Strategic Priority 6. Revitalise Visitor Servicing

	Priority	Key Actions	Time Frame	Responsibility
6.1	Agree to a Visitor Information Servicing Strategy to balance the approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This strategy should allocate resources to highest priority needs – this needs to adopt a multi-channel, visitor-centric approach to maximise the use of resources to achieve an increase in awareness of the destination within target markets. This could mean that Local Government Areas deliver the services under a shared strategy 	Short term	GLGN
6.2	Transition visitor information centres to Experience Gippsland centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the provision of information services across Gippsland and reduce the number to strategically located experience centres in each of the destination hubs 	Short term	DGL/GLGN
6.3	Develop virtual VIC technology to support visitors that encourages them to stay longer and spend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial the use of a virtual VIC including a variety of digital maps and consider deployment of iBeacons in key locations across Gippsland 	Short – Medium term	DGL/GLGN
6.4	Local content and best kept secrets – Gippsland Ambassadors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Ambassador program at destination hubs during peak seasons. There are several options for Ambassadors: community, business, roaming seasonal volunteers and online social content 	Medium	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop social media ambassador program that interact with visitors sharing moments and local tips on Instagram platforms 	High	DGL/GLGN

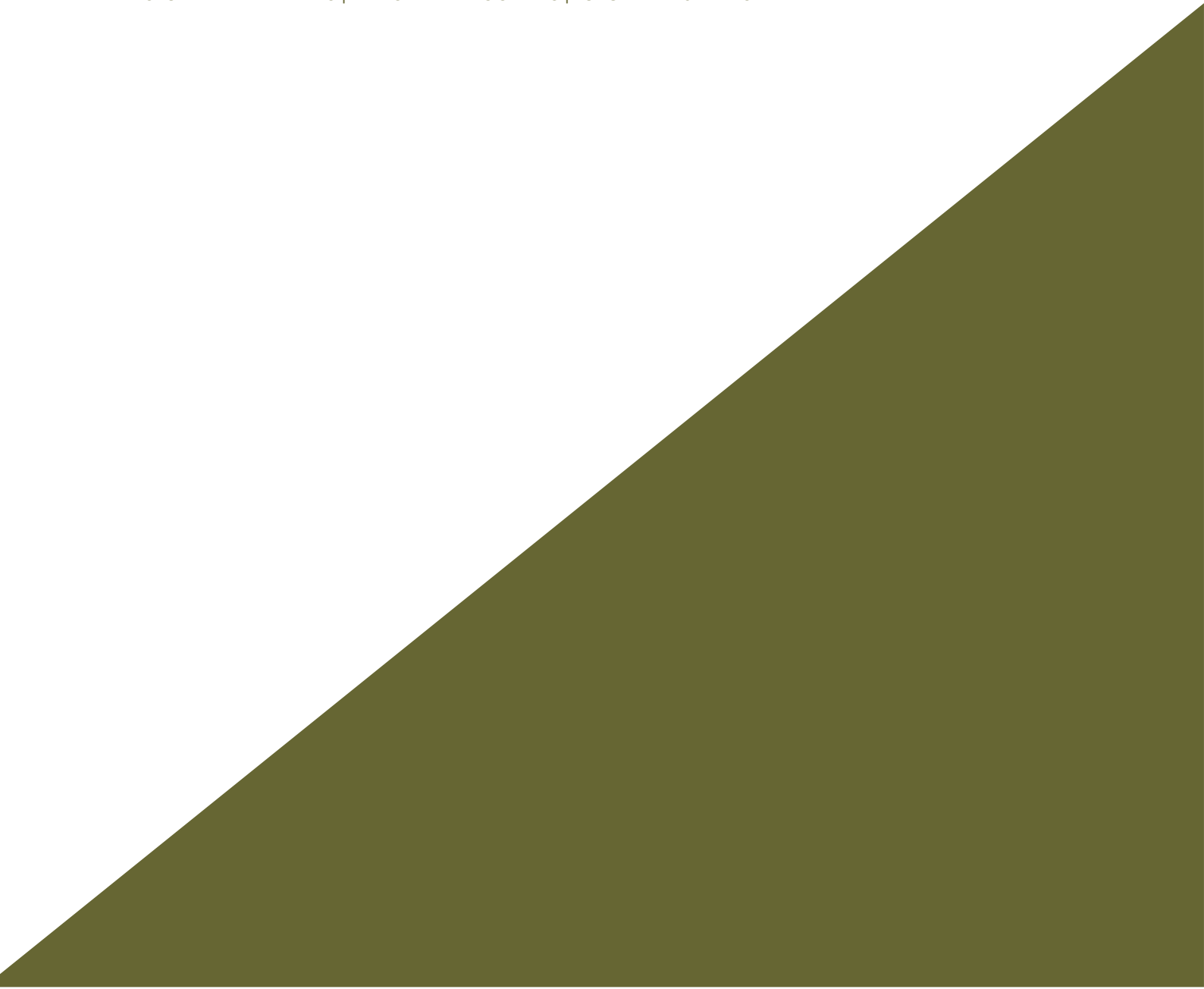
SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS

Strategic Priority 7. Create partnerships to foster and grow tourism

	Priority	Key Actions	Time frame	Responsibility
7.1	Consolidate and build the partnerships and alignment between government and industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to assist current and future operators develop technical capacity and competencies, including through technical advice, research and focused workshops 	Medium term	DGL
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run experience development workshops across Gippsland in selected locations to develop content and experiences including product packaging 	Short term	DGL
7.2	Develop Local Destination Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Government Areas to undertake Local DAPs for the destination hubs identified in this plan, and other specific town and village clusters. DGL coordinate and influence the actions ensuring alignment to the overall Gippsland brand and positioning 	Short – medium term	DGL/GLGN

7.3	Engage Community and develop Ambassadors across Gippsland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a well-planned, promoted and branded strategic programme of open days, famils and activities across the region where locals are encouraged to participate and achieve greater awareness of the needs of visitors and opportunities to enhance their visit 	Medium term	DGL
7.4	Build enduring partnerships with Aboriginal organisations in Gippsland and Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strive to develop meaningful long-term partnerships with Aboriginal groups and corporations in Gippsland, and central agencies and bodies in Melbourne to grow the visitor economy opportunities for Gunaikurnai and other groups as well as developing cultural tourism opportunities 	Medium Term	DGL, LGAs, PV, DELWP
7.5	Grow Partnerships with the Education Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with the Gippsland education sector to deliver fit for purpose staff with visitor economy service sector skills, and to position the workforce for the future 	Short to Medium Term	DGL

SHORT TERM = 1-2 YEARS | MEDIUM TERM = 3-5 YEARS | LONG TERM = 6+ YEARS





8. Expanded: Hero & Supporting Experiences



World Class Natural Sanctuary

HERO EXPERIENCE

Wilsons Promontory - a new future

Wilsons Promontory National Park (The Prom) is one of the stunning natural assets of Gippsland and easily accessible from Melbourne as well as from Phillip Island. As one of the iconic natural sanctuaries in Gippsland, Wilsons Promontory needs a review and development of its experiences based on the concept of a Sanctuary and looking outside the Prom boundaries for the additional capacity it will require in coming years. In short, a series of adaptive approaches to planning to cater for visitors outside the peak season and to expand on the visitor offer including accessible tourism. The objective is to ensure ongoing protection of one of the world's great parks, but also re-imagine the offer and experience people seek. Much of 'The Prom's' offer was developed in the 70s and 80s and while still strong, is not contemporary. In addition, much of the southern part of the park is struggling with peak season visitation. This includes car parking and associated experiences for visitors, while the northern part of the park often has capacity.

The 'Circuit Walk' has the potential to become a world class trail visiting some of the outstanding features of the area including the eastern beaches of Sealers Cove and Refuge Cove, the southernmost point of mainland Australia and the Wilsons Promontory Lighthouse. Often nominated as one of the best walks in the state, the trail rewards visitors with a natural beauty that includes a spectacular golden beach sheltered from prevailing winds, crystal clear turquoise waters and an abundance of wildlife. By investigating the opportunity for a revised walking and accommodation model – recognising that the current management plan may preclude some rooved options, ensuring it remains market focussed. Implementing a new model may see the walk become more popular in shoulder and off seasons.

Planning for the Telegraph Saddle to Tidal River trail is underway and this addition to the trail network will support the Circuit Trail as well as providing a strong day walk offer.

In short, the Wilsons Promontory experience needs a modern renovation through strong planning identifying core infrastructure needs, construction, interpretation and signage, marketing and management to ensure it is protected into the future and the experience matches the outstanding natural and cultural values within the park.

Investment

Estimated \$10-15 million following a feasibility study and associated planning.

Likely Benefits

- Extend length of stay and attract repeat visitors
- Flow-on benefits through development of complementary activities, products and services
- Under a low growth scenario, the **Wilsons Promontory Circuit Trail and associated works at the Prom** will generate an estimated 20,000 additional visitor nights and \$3.3m in additional visitor expenditure each year
- Under a medium growth scenario, it will generate an estimated 34,500 additional visitor nights and \$5.4 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- With a high growth scenario, the trail will generate an estimated 52,000 additional visitor nights and \$8.0 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.



Wilsons Prom



HERO EXPERIENCE Buchan Caves Master Plan

This plan recognises that Buchan Caves is jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people through the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Corporation (GLAWAC) with Parks Victoria. Buchan has been a popular visitor destination for many years. The guided experience is successful and enjoyable for visitors, however the site condition in both the visitor precinct and natural areas requires revitalisation to meet the needs of emerging markets.

An exciting Visitor Experience Hub at Buchan Caves combined with improved ticketing and Gunaikurnai involvement will transform the current offer and create a compelling destination that is adapted to meet contemporary visitor expectations. The hub would include new adventure experiences beyond cave tours, walking and swimming to experiences such as wild caving, zip lining as well as function and accommodation facilities for new and emerging markets. Additionally, the Caves can provide new and alternative commercial uses while at the same time protecting the environmental, ecological, geological and cultural values of the site. These might be, for example; weddings, events, evening meals for small groups, unique accommodation options and other services.

Investment

A Master Plan is the first step and will cost in the order of \$200,000 to provide the site vision and development guidelines.

Likely benefits

- Encourage longer length of stay by current large numbers of day visitors
- New markets
- New and innovative products including on site accommodation options
- Focused marketing and visitor servicing
- Target priority new markets through appropriate channels.

Support Experience Gabo Island

The Gabo Island experience will showcase to the world this remarkable natural sanctuary where the view is unobscured, and the sea life is wild. Coupled with a program to make the Island rodent free, and be an outstanding wildlife experience, the project will see an upgrade of lighthouse keepers' accommodation as the base for a two-night premium wildlife experience with gourmet meals prepared from fresh produce and wines from the region, while listening to stories about the fascinating history of Gabo Island.

During the day visitors can enjoy a tour of the 47-metre-high Gabo Island Lighthouse, visit the world's largest known colony of Little Penguins and the Monumental City Shipwreck memorial. Guests can take an exhilarating Zodiac boat ride around the island, sea kayak, rock hop, swim and fish. The option for conservation and voluntourism exists.

Investment

\$4 million

Likely Benefits

- It is estimated that the Gabo Island Experience will generate 3,000 additional visitor nights and \$0.6m in additional visitor expenditure for the region each year.
- Additional economic benefits include Island servicing, boat and aircraft transport services both to Gabo Island and Mallacoota as well as trades and other indirect services required to support Gabo Island.
- Aimed at a higher market, and priced accordingly, this experience could target room nights in excess of \$600 per night. Assuming 4 houses/units are available at a 75% occupancy, that drives revenue of at least \$660,000 per annum while acknowledging that costs are high on Gabo Island.
- Returning some of the benefits to continual improvement of the facilities on the Island will see the Island well protected and maintained.



Support Experience Raymond Island - Koala Sanctuary

This plan recognises that the parks and reserves on which the proposed Koala Raymond Island experience are in part jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people and Parks Victoria. Raymond Island has a thriving koala population that live in their natural habitat. This experience could support conservation with expert programs at a Koala and Wildlife Shelter in partnership with a recognised conservation brand or attraction e.g. Melbourne Zoo or Healesville Sanctuary or Phillip Island Koala Reserve. The centre could be located either on Raymond island or on the mainland in Paynesville.

Boardwalks and viewing platforms could enable visitors to view the habitat and koalas. Visitors will also be able to take a self-guided tour through the natural Australian bushland on the island and enjoy the abundant bird life and animals including wallabies, echidnas and bats. Educational tours would be offered by the Koala and Wildlife Shelter. Visitors will be able to paddle from Paynesville or take the ferry and explore the Raymond Island Koala Sanctuary. The package could include dinner at one of Gippsland’s signature restaurant’s (Sardine) and existing 4 star accommodation in Paynesville. Paynesville Business & Tourism Association Inc are proposing a major art project at Raymond Island and Paynesville using koalas as the theme to further promote this attraction.

Investment

- \$200,000 for the infrastructure to support the Raymond Island Koala Trail
- \$150,000 for feasibility study for a Koala and Wildlife Shelter

Likely benefits

- Extend length of stay by providing another day visit to region.

Support Experience Experiencing Gippsland’s Great Outdoors

Gippsland is blessed with outstanding natural environments that offer visitors the chance to walk, picnic, camp, cycle, or simply spend time in nature. These range from the foothills and forests of the Victorian Alps, the many National and State Parks, the tall forests and wilderness coasts of East Gippsland, the Strzelecki Ranges, to the coastal areas of the Bass Coast and South Gippsland with wetlands, lakes and beaches. Importantly many of these areas offer easy access to the large population of Melbourne that often travel into the western parts of Gippsland for a natural experience including the Baw Baw foothills and the west and south Gippsland areas.

The importance of these areas to the VFR markets, day visitors and more traditional users cannot be under-estimated with the Victorian Government having recently announced halving of camping fees in Victoria’s National Parks from July 2019.

For international markets, places such as Ninety Mile Beach – believed to be the fourth longest uninterrupted beach in the world, would be appealing.

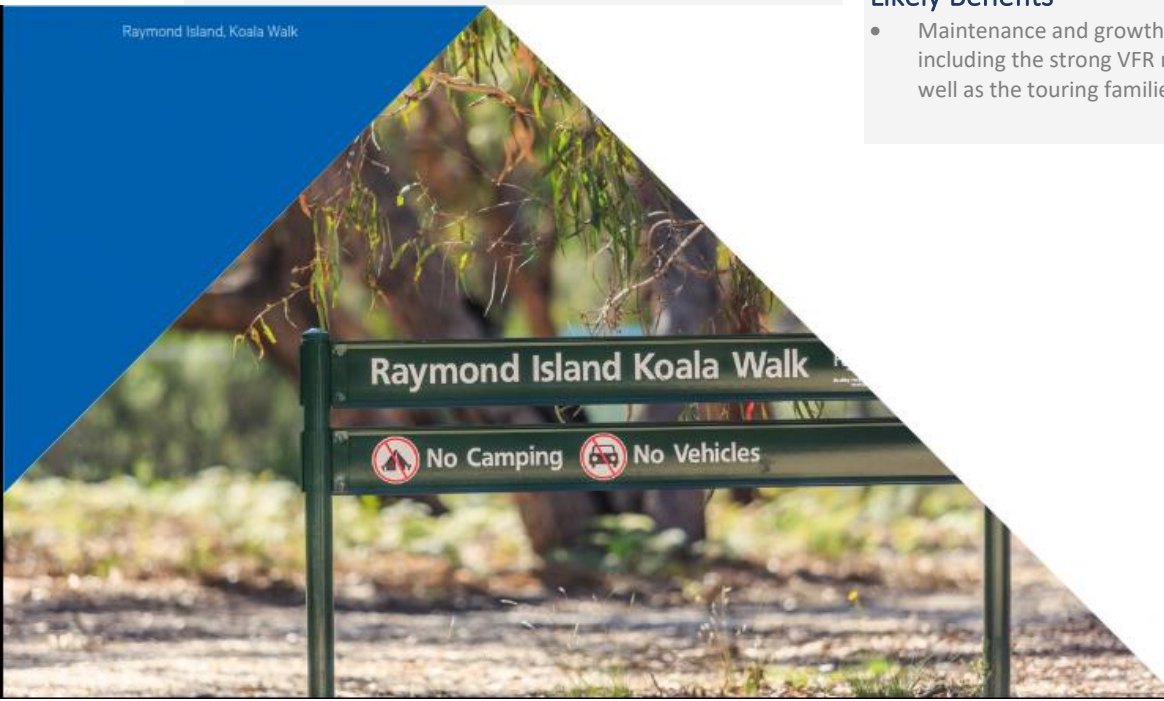
Investment

- Continuing to invest in Gippsland’s nature based experience could include the announced upgrade to camping areas, general maintenance and accessibility for the parks and forests will be undertaken across the life of this plan.
- Investing in partnerships with community groups, local government and business to drive improvement in the quality of assets, services and connection to the local community will be required.

Likely Benefits

- Maintenance and growth of the existing traditional markets including the strong VFR market attracted to Gippsland, as well as the touring families and older people.

Raymond Island, Koala Walk





HERO EXPERIENCE Coastal Wilderness Walk

East Gippsland and Croajingolong National Park are places of outstanding natural beauty. While they are rich in self-reliant recreational opportunities, there are very few supported 'high-end' opportunities for markets that seek that type of experience and are willing to pay. The development of an iconic experience-based trail on Victoria's Wilderness Coast, predominantly within Croajingolong National Park offering full serviced 'glamping' or hut based accommodation (partly based outside the National Park where possible), self-guided or fully supported options with tour operators will show case one of Australia's most exciting and wild coastlines.

Much of the trail exists now but will need to be developed to standard and potentially re-routed in some areas. The serviced walk option will be a 3 to 4 day offering, from Cape Conran to Point Hicks. The Point Hicks area is subject to separate recommendations in this DMP including the sealing of the road and upgrades to the Lighthouse accommodation and additional accommodation in the general area. This creates a visitor node at Point Hicks which offers day visitors attractive walks and lighthouse tours, overnight accommodation on the wilderness coast, and the trail head for this walk. The Destination Hub describes some of the elements that are proposed for Point Hicks.

It is acknowledged that this proposal will require consideration and planning by Parks Victoria. It also notes that the Wilderness Coast Walk continues eastward to Mallacoota but will continue to serve a self-reliant market.

Investment

- Investment of \$7-\$12million will see the facilities and infrastructure required to develop the trail. Careful consideration of the overnight stops provides for off park accommodation development options as well as the option to develop in park camps and huts dependent upon feasibility assessments.
- Further investment by the private sector could match the government contribution in the trail and facilities.
- Detailed planning is required to ensure the national park development constraints are met and that sustainability is at the forefront of the trail and its operation.
- Investment aligned to the Point Hicks visitor hub is also required and would be subject to an appropriate planning exercise to be undertaken by Parks Victoria.

Likely Benefits

- The business case completed in 2012 forecast the creation of 15 jobs in the early years of the trail's operation growing to 40 jobs when operations are mature.
- Gross value Add (GVA) starts at \$1.4 million in the first years of operation growing to \$3.5 million later years.
- These figures do not include the expected additional night's stay in Gippsland from walkers, and the additional nights stay due to the Point Hicks node offering visitors the chance to access and experience the wilderness coast.

HERO EXPERIENCE George Bass Coastal Walk

The southern Gippsland Coast between Phillip Island and Inverloch has the potential to be one of the great coastal experiences in Australia. The extension of the George Bass Coastal Walk between Cowes in the west and Inverloch in the south east provides a great opportunity to develop products and services similar to the 'South West Coast Walk (UK)' with walkers travelling with a light day pack on a serviced walk from village to village where they stay, eat and relax between segments of the walk. Rugged cliffs, walks, beaches, dinosaur footprints, the Bunurong Coastal Park, Kilcunda Harpers Haven and Cape Paterson Coastal Reserves coupled with accommodation in the villages of Cowes, San Remo, Kilcunda, Wonthaggi, Cape Paterson and Inverloch including the RACV Resort at Inverloch make this an ideal opportunity.

The proposed walk extension is also part of the process to create a Bass Coast Marine and Coastal Park underway at the time of this plan's development.

Investment

The Victorian Government has committed \$19.6 million to the project as part of its election platform in 2018. At least \$10 million has been committed for land purchases and around \$9.6 million for new campgrounds, tracks and paths to access remote beaches. Revegetation and coastal protection works are included in this package. This budget will allow for a world class experience to be built, and innovative accommodation options considered as well as the village-based stays operating model initiated.

Likely benefits

- Under a low growth scenario, the George Bass Coastal Walk will generate an estimated 10,000 additional visitor nights and \$2.0m in additional visitor expenditure each year.
- Under a medium growth scenario, the George Bass Coastal Walk will generate an estimated 19,500 additional visitor nights and \$3.2 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.
- With a high growth scenario, it is estimated that the George Bass Coastal Walk will generate \$4.0 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.



Support Experience Wild River Journey - Mitchell River Lodge / Glamping

It is recognised that the Mitchell River National Park is jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people through GLAWAC. The Mitchell is one of Australia’s most spectacular wild rivers. A Mitchell River Lodge/luxury tent accommodation would offer ultimate bush luxury and river valley based immersive adventure, surrounded by impressive river scenery, serene rainforest gullies, rugged landscapes and some of Victoria’s more unusual vegetation communities.

The Mitchell River Trail (18km) cuts through the heart of the Mitchell River gorge and offers stunning views of the river and unique access to areas of the park that is home to a staggering amount of wildlife and unique vegetation. Following the Mitchell River as it winds its way down the gorge, visitors would enjoy a guided walking and rafting experiences with storytelling, gourmet meals using regional produce, and the comfort and style of lodge or luxury tent accommodation.

Investment

- \$2 million inclusive of feasibility, business development and construction of accommodation and support infrastructure.

Likely benefits

- Outstanding accommodation experience in world natural sanctuary
- Increase length of stay in region with high yield market.

Support Experience Boating and Ocean Journeys

Gippsland currently has access to some of the best boating in Australia. Whether on sailing boats, or power boats, San Remo and Westernport, Port Welshpool, Anderson Inlet, the Gippsland Lakes, the Corner Inlet Waters, Lake Tyers, or Bass Strait boating opportunities, boaters can generally find waters and boating opportunities to suit their needs, equipment and skills.

Further, Gippsland has a wealth of inland boating experiences including Blue Rock Lake and Lake Narracan.

Added to the wonderful natural setting most exist in, and a range of services, Gippsland is well positioned to grow its boating offer through improved facilities and services.

The Victorian Government has recently created the Better Boating Victoria Authority to oversee the development of better boating infrastructure in Victoria. The opportunity to work with the new organisation and grow the infrastructure and support services for boaters, if developed, can see Gippsland grow its market share of boating across all the coastal and estuary waters. from San Remo to Mallacoota.

Investment

Improved boat ramps, parking and other marine boating services including boat washes and fishing tables (aligned to other experience and infrastructure development within this plan). Estimated expenditure of \$5 million over the life of this plan.

Likely Benefits

- Additional boating markets from Melbourne stay in Gippsland
- Win market share from other coastal boating destinations including game fishing and other boating
- Improved lifestyle infrastructure and residential appeal of small Gippsland coastal communities.



George Bass Walk



HERO EXPERIENCE

Lakes Entrance Marine Precinct

Set on the edge of Ninety Mile Beach where the Gippsland Lakes meet the ocean, Lakes Entrance is a significant commercial precinct and offers a range of lifestyle and recreational services. The area has the potential to be lifted from a commercial centre to an array of marine and lake activities where you can be assured that the catch of the day will be available from the jetty, direct from the fishing boat every morning.

Land being considered for a marine precinct including the renovation of the Lakes Entrance Fishermen’s Coop (LEFCOL) provides an outstanding opportunity to put the visitor economy front and centre with the coast and its produce. Lakes Entrance should ideally be explored by foot - where nothing ever feels out of walking distance for visitors. This will require sound planning and well-designed infrastructure to support pedestrian access in this precinct particularly during peak season. Complimenting this investment and leveraging the growth in food and wine tourism, a destination restaurant that puts Lakes Entrance on the map for food and wine travellers would attract new markets, creating demand for high quality products and services in Lakes Entrance. This precinct would ideally also offer easy access to boutique accommodation suited to new markets whilst maintaining the current family holiday accommodation market.

Investment

- Master plan for the precinct including the proposed Tatungalong Circuit on Cunningham Arm. The Tatungalong people are a clan group of Gunaikurnai
- Consideration of the East Gippsland Shire’s current development of the Lakes Entrance Growth and Adaptation Strategy 2050 and alignment of the outcomes of this DMP with the Council Strategy
- Infrastructure to support new visitor precinct including an extension to current walking path network to the Fishing Coop and a major lookout
- A review of current accommodation styles with the view to encourage a broader range of options for new markets
- Market testing for destination restaurant
- Interpretation and points of interest
- Way finding signage.

Likely benefits

- Increases length of stay for visitors on Sydney Melbourne Touring Route
- Target destination’s appeal and improves its positioning in the marketplace from a relatively old destination to one with new and exciting products and experiences.
- Increase spend across broad range of services
- Under a low growth scenario, the Lakes Entrance Marine Precinct will attract an estimated 25,000 additional visitors and \$3.0m in additional visitor expenditure each year.
- Under a medium growth scenario, the Lakes Entrance Marine Precinct will attract an estimated 27,500 additional visitors and generate \$4.6 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.
- With a high growth scenario, it is estimated the Lakes Entrance Marine Precinct will attract 30,000 additional visitors and generate \$6.5 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.

HERO EXPERIENCE

Destination Restaurant in Gippsland

Driven by today’s intense social media activity around unique culinary experiences coupled with the natural environment, fresh and local produce and nationally important architecture, destinations are developing local food-themed travel products and promotions to evolve their brand story. A destination restaurant is one that has a strong enough appeal to draw customers from beyond its community and create demand from both domestic and international markets.

As an example, a world class architectural showpiece that delivers customers to an underwater restaurant somewhere on the Gippsland Coast would attract the Lifestyle Leader market from far and wide. Inspired food and creative approaches like those used in Norway (shown below) would transform the view of Gippsland in the market – both domestically and internationally.

Other excellent examples are the Royal Mail Hotel at Dunkeld and the Prairie Hotel at Parachilna.

Investment

- Develop concept in conjunction with suitable investors
- Planning and Design support, possible public/private partnership depending on the business model.

Likely benefits

- Strengthened brand
- Length of stay extended and increase in yield
- Under a low growth scenario, a Destination Restaurant will generate 17,000 additional visitor nights and \$4.0m in additional visitor expenditure each year
- Under a medium growth scenario, it will generate an estimated 25,000 additional visitor nights and \$5 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- With a high growth scenario, it will generate an estimated 34,000 additional visitor nights and \$6.4 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.





Support Experience The Pinot Coast

Gippsland is increasingly being recognised as one of the best places in Australia to grow and produce Pinot Noir. Wines made from Pinot Noir are now attracting a huge following from wine enthusiasts around the world. The cool ocean and our temperate climate create consistent, high quality, slow ripening Pinot Noir grapes. The Pinot Coast Project is creating a competitive and recognised brand around a “one wine tourism proposition” that is single minded in its marketing focus on Pinot Noir and is aiming for a leadership position for this variety in the world market.

The Pinot Coast has huge potential to attract wine enthusiasts who also are drawn to the Gippsland coastline, waterways, lakes, ecology and wildlife. The project’s targets are globally minded, independent adventure seekers who want to experience the region’s wine, produce and people.

This project aims to take Victorian wine internationally and nationally through a program funded by Visit Victoria and supported by Wine Victoria to create 5 branded regions. Gippsland will be positioned in the Pinot Coast pillar. Scattered through Gippsland are over 100 vineyards and 30 cellar doors, with Australia’s most expensive Pinot Noir currently produced in the region - the only Pinot Noir to be classified by Langton’s in the highest band of wines – Exceptional.

While having such well recognised wine produced in the region, the region is not well known in the market, nor considered a wine destination.

Investment

- The initial investment in the development of the Victorian brand pillars is being undertaken through Visit Victoria supported by Federal Government grant funds
- The Gippsland wine industry support to develop and implement the pillar is critical
- Wine Victoria and Visit Victoria marketing funds to help deliver the marketing initiative and supported product and experience growth to the market
- Ongoing use and implementation of the brand in conjunction with Visit Victoria will be a collaborative partnership with industry.

Likely Benefits

- Gippsland wines including Pinot Noir varieties will be marketed to a broader audience than currently
- Collaboration with regions such as Mornington Peninsula that currently does not occur
- Continued development of the industry and growth of the scale
- The ability to develop food and wine experiences aligned to the market positioning.

Support Experience Destination Fishing and Fishing Villages

The click-clack of bobbing boat masts, the squawk of seagulls and the call of the fishermen as they return to harbour are the sounds of fishing villages in Gippsland. Gippsland’s authentic fishing villages are little gems with interesting shops, day cruises, and great restaurants serving the catch-of-the-day making for a unique experience. Fishing villages of Port Franklin, Port Albert, Port Welshpool, Loch Sport, Paynesville, Metung as well as Lakes Entrance, Bemm River, Cape Conran, Mallacoota all offer the fishing experience however, they are not marketed as a collective experience for visitors to Gippsland. The ability to cluster unique and themed fishing village experiences has the potential to drive visitation to these areas and strengthen the sustainable seafood brand and food and wine profile of Gippsland.

Developing fisheries linked to the fishing villages will also support people wanting to catch their own fish. These are likely to be significant opportunities include the Southern broad Billed Sword fishery off Lakes Entrance which is now beginning to attract national and international visitors willing to spend large sums to catch fish, Lake Tyers dusky flathead fishery due to the accessibility of the fishery, as well as Bass fisheries in inland rivers of East Gippsland

This opportunity relies on the development of a cluster of linked experiences around fishing and seafood. These experiences include:

- Sustainable fisheries offering fresh seafood fished caught from the ocean - fresh from the boat or fishermen’s co-operative
- Seafood Havens – signature restaurants serving up catch of the day e.g. Sardine in Paynesville and other signature restaurants in each of the villages
- Bustling Harbours with fishing charters – Lakes Entrance and Mallacoota
- Markets, marinas and maritime museums – Port Albert and Paynesville, Metung, Mallacoota,
- Seaside Charm – Port Albert, Port Welshpool, Port Franklin, San Remo and Metung
- Events – Wild Harvest Seafood Festival Mallacoota, Blessing of the Fleet, The Boat Muster and the Wooden Boat Festivals.

Partnering with the Victorian Fisheries Authority is essential to ensure that licence classes enable and encourage fishermen to provide direct Ocean to the Plate sales in fishing ports, and even add value through cooking opportunities near the boats.



Investment

- Event start-up
- Signage
- Signature experiences packaged
- The state government is seeking to develop fishing tourism. \$250,000 is available during the term of the government from 2018 to 2022. It is proposed Gippsland work in partnership with the VFA to capture a significant share of that to develop the concept, undertake feasibility assessments and develop a prospectus for market testing. The initial feasibility, business case and prospectus will require \$100,000 from this fund.

Likely benefits

- Extends length of stay
- Increases spend in local communities
- Promotes Gippsland Sustainable Fishery.
- Improved employment opportunities through guiding, accommodation and food and beverage services as well as transport services
- Improved fisheries management of a destination fishery (or fisheries)
- Further positioning of Gippsland as a destination capitalising on paddock or ocean to the plate, and the outstanding landscapes on offer.

Support Experience Paddock and Ocean Produce

Gippsland's produce is world class from award winning dairy products, to beef and lamb production, now mostly branded 'Gippsland' in world leading restaurants and marketplaces. Much of Gippsland's produce is 'commoditised' and sold into market markets as bulk commodities. While this plan acknowledges that business decisions on farmers products rightly remain with the farmers, a growth in products from the food grown in Gippsland would see a value add and a likely increase in return on investment for farmers as well as creating a significant experience across the region for visitors and residents alike.

The recent creation of Food & Fibre as a Gippsland wide organisation that aims to be an integral support and stakeholder in projects, initiatives and activities that make a positive impact on productivity, profitability, prosperity, people and in the bigger picture. Partnering with Food & Fibre Gippsland to remove barriers to the growth of the farm gate sector in Gippsland and promote and encourage the development of small regional producers will see a collective regional attraction develop that grows with the scale of offering.

Ultimately this experience could develop into a touring route with the food and beverage trail or similar for Gippsland being developed further encouraging development of the sector.

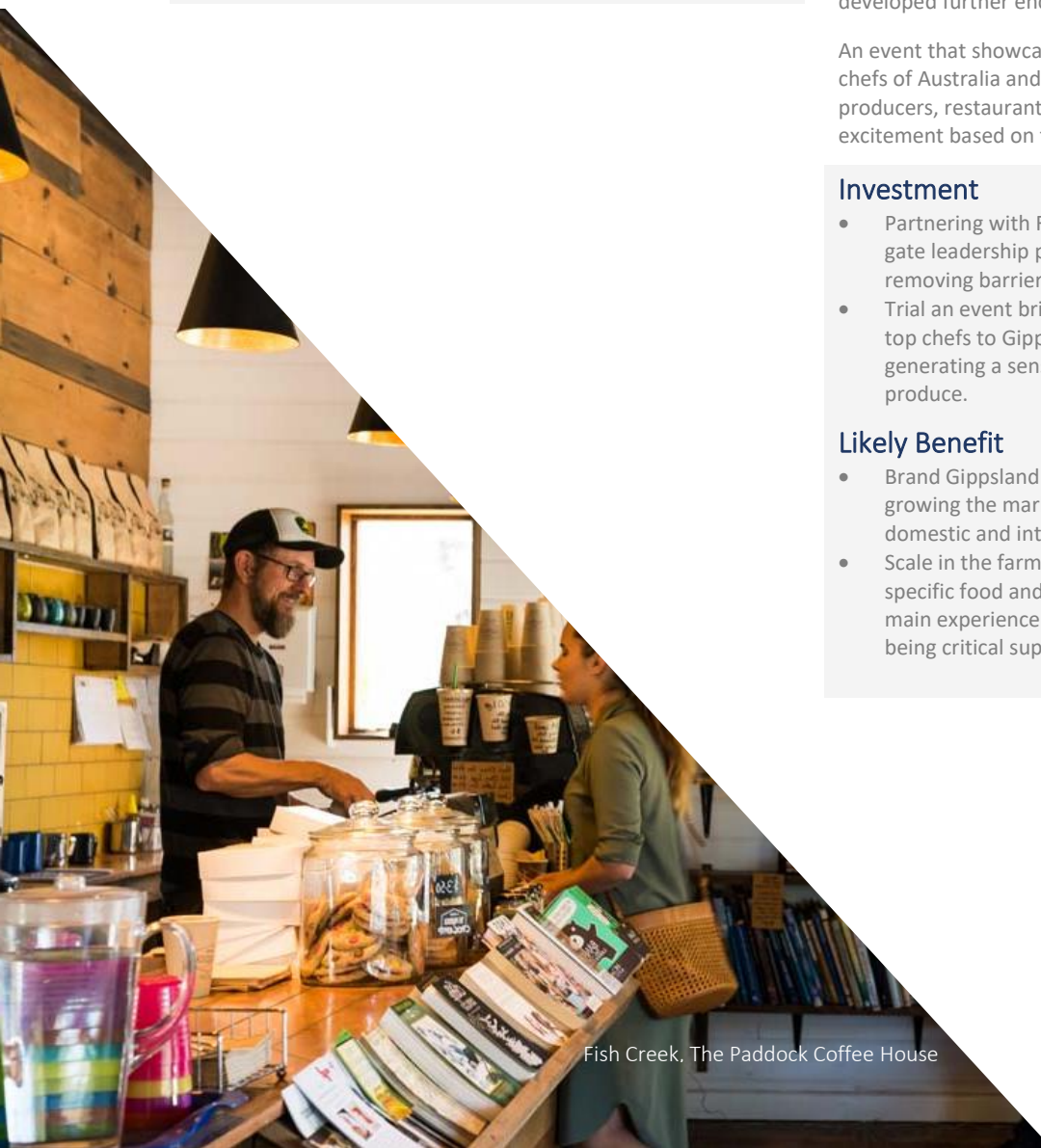
An event that showcases Gippsland's produce by bringing the chefs of Australia and the world to Gippsland would help connect producers, restaurants and consumers and generate a sense of excitement based on the produce of Gippsland.

Investment

- Partnering with Food & Fibre Gippsland to develop a farm gate leadership program working with the state government removing barriers to investment.
- Trial an event bringing some of Australia's and the world's top chefs to Gippsland connecting them to producers and generating a sense of excitement on the possibility of the produce.

Likely Benefit

- Brand Gippsland is attached to world class produce further growing the market knowledge of Gippsland in the main domestic and international markets.
- Scale in the farm gate sector leads to the development of specific food and beverage and other products forming the main experience people seek for short breaks in addition to being critical support for other experiences.



Fish Creek, The Paddock Coffee House



HERO EXPERIENCE

Mount Baw Baw adventures

Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort is the only alpine resort in Gippsland (although Mt Hotham Alpine Resort can be accessed from Gippsland via Omeo) and it occupies a commanding position above the Latrobe Valley and West Gippsland. Infrastructure on the mountain (such as power) is old and expensive to run and does not provide for an all seasons offer in a sustainable way. A strong summer offering based on family alpine adventures and outdoor active pursuits such as walking, cycling, mountain biking and photography also requires sound base infrastructure.

Many businesses in the small towns surrounding Mount Baw Baw are dependent upon the resort operating in a financially independent way into the future. These towns include Erica, Rawson, Walhalla and Noojee.

Investment

- Implement a range of measures from the Central Gippsland Public Land Study on and around Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort to continue to develop the resort as an all seasons mountain playground
- Government investment would be required as follows (also noted in the Destination Hub for Mount Baw Baw / Walhalla and Surrounds Destination Hub):
- Sealing of the South Face Road
- \$12 million
- Renewable Power Generation at Mount Baw Baw
- \$2.5 million
- Additional Investment – New Summit Chairlift
- \$3 million
- TOTAL for Mount Baw Baw - \$17.5 million

Likely Benefits

- The business case for the Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy provides detail on a range of costs and benefits of these initiatives plus other initiatives more aimed at Walhalla, including the extension of the Goldfields Railway to Erica
- The minimum investment case will lead to an additional \$17 million of net present value and the creation of 52 new jobs in the visitor economy in Gippsland, as well as providing a significant boost to the region's all-season product²⁸
- Under a low growth scenario, the Baw Baw Adventure will generate 14,000 additional visitor nights and \$2.5m in additional visitor expenditure each year
- Under a medium growth scenario, it will generate 24,500 additional visitor nights and \$4.0 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- With a high growth scenario, the experience will generate 52,000 additional visitor nights and \$6.0 million in additional visitor expenditure each year.

HERO EXPERIENCE

Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail

It is recognised that the Gippsland Coastal Park and the Lakes National Park are jointly managed by the Gunaikurnai people. The Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail experience takes in the magnificent coastline, estuaries, beaches, views, Aboriginal history and local produce of the region. This self-guided or exclusive, fully-serviced and catered experience will become a distinctive experience for nature and culture adventure-based tourism in the Gippsland Lakes. It will be designed as a flexible experience that can be tailored to meet the needs and preferences of different visitors in relation to the overall duration of the experience, the length of daily segments, types of activities and the location and style of accommodation offered. It would combine walking, cycling and paddling in various locations throughout the Lake system. Floating accommodation should also be considered as part of the offer. It would also feature the unique wildlife of the area including the Burrunan Dolphins, migratory birds and other animals.

Private property options for the accommodation are available as are remote public land areas.

Gippsland Lakes is Australia's largest inland waterway and a significant drawcard for visitors however there is very little product that leverages from this asset. The current offer is not packaged making it difficult for visitors to the region to know how to access Gippsland Lakes and all it has to offer.

Investment

- \$100,000 feasibility study and investment prospectus.

Likely Benefits

- Under a low growth scenario, it is estimated the Gippsland Aquatic Trail will generate 12,000 additional visitor nights and \$1.7 million in additional visitor expenditure each year in the region
- Under a medium growth scenario, the Gippsland Aquatic Trail will generate an estimated 19,800 additional visitor nights and \$2.8 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- With a high growth scenario, the Gippsland Aquatic Trail will generate approximately 28,800 additional visitor nights and \$4.0 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- In addition to the health and wellbeing benefits of the activity, the Aquatic Trail enables visitors to explore less accessible waterways and marine areas and their hidden ecosystems
- A strong commercial product that is available to inbound international markets
- A lead marketing product to attract other markets to the region to participate in the activities and stay, even if not on this product
- Increase spend across broad range of product and services
- Taps into potential opportunities for Aboriginal tourism.

²⁸ Business case for the Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy



Supported Experience

Creating the Central Gippsland Mountain Biking Hub

Haunted Hills Mountain Bike Park is currently in the final stages of planning and construction and will become a focal point of mountain biking not only in the Latrobe Valley, but also as an entree to Gippsland's trails and riding experiences.

The creation of the Central Gippsland Mountain Biking Hub provides an initiative where other mountain bikes within the area including Erica, Glengarry, Maryvale Pines, Blores Hill and Avon Mt Hendrick all form a consolidated offer. The proposed hub forms a strong offer with the various elements all contributing to a 'large' regional park with variability in terrain, trails and forests.

As a secondary element, planning has begun to develop an epic ride linking into Haunted Hills, or nearby, from a high point in the ranges to the north of Traralgon and the Latrobe Valley. The potential trail, in its conceptual development stage would ideally link Mt Baw to the Latrobe Valley, providing the missing link in Gippsland's mountain bike network – an epic downhill ride that attracts people to the region specifically for riding.

Investment

- Close to \$1 million has currently been committed to the development of Haunted Hills as a first stage. Further stages will be costed and developed at a later stage
- The next step in a proposed Epic ride is a feasibility assessment to determine alignments, regulatory issues and an initial business case. It is estimated that \$50,000 would achieve this first piece of work. Haunted Hills has been allocated the funding for stage 1 of the park's construction and the tender has been let
- Further investment in the MTB parks supporting Haunted Hills to bring them to regional or national level including infrastructure and management.

Likely Benefits

- The initial benefits of the Haunted Hills Park include the employment of four full time jobs during the construction phase of the project and eight direct and indirect full-time jobs in the region once operational
- The hub creates a driver for mountain biking in the Central Gippsland area. To attract riders from international markets as well as national and domestic sources, a hero product is recommended. Combining these projects provides, with Omeo's development, a focal point for riding in Gippsland
- Assuming all are developed over the life of this DMP, it would be expected to generate significant employment and regional income over time.

Support Experience

Tall Trees Ride

This project proposes the development of a bespoke trail for mountain biking in the forested foothills of West Gippsland close to the timber towns of Noojee, Neerim and Powelltown (in the neighbouring Yarra Valley). The trail, based on the very successful 'Timber Trail' model from the Pureora Forest in central North Island of New Zealand, could provide an outstanding experience utilising in part the old timber production tramways, trestle bridges and tracks of the area.

The trail will be market based and include private sector development linked to purpose-built mountain biking accommodation in the forest, and close to towns. Operators could develop shuttle services, food and wine packages and accommodation in the nearby villages. The trail is aimed at the intermediate sector of the mountain bike market and would be between 1 to 3 days in duration.

Partnerships

Strong partnerships with the neighbouring Yarra Ranges Council and Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort, as well as with the Baw Baw Shire Council will be essential. The land is most likely to be State Forest and requires the support of the Department of Environment, Land Water and Planning (DELWP).

Investments

- Based on the New Zealand model, an investment from government of an estimated \$7 million would be required to develop the trail, and to facilitate some private sector development (through supported grants, or through basic infrastructure provision)
- A business case and feasibility study on the details of the proposal needs to be undertaken as a first step.

Likely Benefits

- Based on feasibility assessment of trail developments (without accommodation) a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of around 2 to 2.5 can be expected (Yarra Ranges Mountain Bike Trail Development Feasibility Assessments). For every dollar invested in the trail, it is expected over \$2 is generated in income from that investment
- The opportunity for the accommodation would be a private sector led opportunity. A return on investment of over 10% would be expected for that element
- It is likely a stand-alone product such as the ride would generate over 10 jobs on a full time basis in the region.



Support Experience Developing Gippsland's Trail Network

The Gippsland Trail Feasibility Study currently being prepared has identified several strategic trail corridor extensions that would, if built, form a 'trail spine' through Gippsland from Melbourne's outer eastern growth suburbs and rail corridor in the west to Orbost in the east. The trail would offer several shorter more confined 'sub-regional' experiences, as well as the marketability of a single trail ride for 'bike packers'.

Significant parts of the trail exist now, but in shorter unlinked sections managed or developed through individual Councils. The elements include the Great Southern Rail Trail, the Bass Coast Rail Trail, the East Gippsland Rail Trail and the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail. Completing the missing links and improving the experiences on both the shorter experiences and the entire trail could lead to the 'Great Gippsland Trail'. Consideration should be given to the restoration of the Snowy River Bridge at Orbost.

Partnerships

A successful Gippsland Trail will require partnerships at multiple levels. Local government is vital in the successful management of the trail. Partnerships with industry and tour operators, with local chambers of commerce and groups to help build businesses and offerings for potential markets is critical.

Investments

- Trail developments such as this proposal typically receive grant funding from State and Federal Governments through regional development and economic development grant programs
- It is likely that to complete significant sections of this trail and move towards the concept of the Gippsland Trail, an investment of over \$20 million will be required over the 10-year period. This funds trail construction, land procurement/leasing, maintenance and other facilities including signs, rest stops, toilets and viewing platforms. It will also need to ensure the trail connects to villages and points of interest.

Likely Benefits

- Increased time spent in region, and the increased spend per person
- There is a significant economic benefit from investing in a market driven, fit for purpose cycle and trail network in Gippsland. Additional community benefits in recreation, social activity and economic development may also be realised.



Support Experience

Making Gippsland Australia's preferred 4WD adventure region

Gippsland has a natural advantage in Victoria and more broadly in Australia with the Australian Alps and foothills providing the perfect terrain, landscape and setting for responsible 4WD adventures, and outdoor activities including remote camping, driving, touring and associated activities such as walking. Gippsland currently has 3 of the 6 Victorian iconic 4-wheel drive adventures as promoted by 4WD Victoria and Icon 4WD website www.icon4wd.com.au:

- The Davies Plains Drive (shared with NE Victoria) – a drive through remote and challenging Alpine country
 - The Snowy River Drive -a journey into the heart of the legendary Snowy River
 - The Wonnangatta Drive – high country history and heritage.
- Other strong products that support bush driving and remote camping include the Aberfeldy Track, The Dargo High Plains Road, The Limestone Road, the Barry Way and McKillops Bridge area.

With more than 88 clubs and 8000 members across Victoria, the 4WD touring market is worth in excess of \$120 million annually into the Victorian economy²⁹. Further development of the infrastructure supporting the experiences, signs and interpretation and sustainability measures will see these icon trails and a few supporting trails, become the envy of the world and a target destination for these market segments. It is also important to continually review the experiences on offer.

Investment

- DELWP and Parks Victoria currently invest funds into the management of the road network and the camping facilities that provide the backbone of experience
- \$500,000 over the life of this Plan in developing outstanding 4WD campsite facilities aligned to the experiences on offer on the icon drives, coupled with targeted interpretation, and support materials
- Additional investment in targeted digital applications to support the experience on the icon drives, as well as marketing of \$50,000 per annum through events, shows, magazines, and social media.

Potential benefits

With a market worth over \$120 million per annum, increasing Gippsland's share of the market by 10% could add an additional \$1.2 million into Gippsland's economy. In addition, increased market share of the national touring market could increase that to an estimated \$6 million per annum.

Support Experience

Omeo Adventure Hub

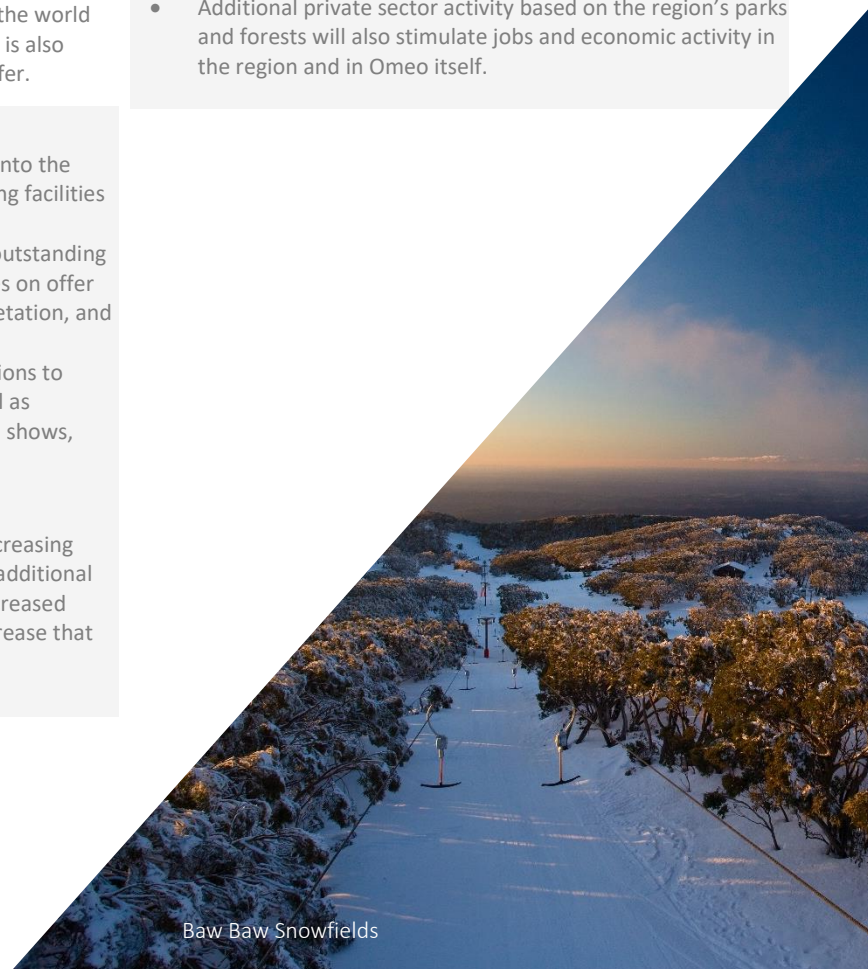
Omeo is situated in East Gippsland and is synonymous with Victoria's High Country and has a strong heritage focus. This project will see Omeo develop as a nationally recognised alpine and high-country adventure hub. Based on the existing pre-feasibility work undertaken on a world class mountain biking park, coupled with other opportunities including winter snow sports at nearby Mount Hotham, fishing, horse riding, and walking – Omeo will offer a hub for outdoor active pursuits. Completing the Adventure Hub will align with the current Gippsland Trails Feasibility Study, positioning Gippsland as a trail destination of choice.

Investment

- An estimated investment of over \$6 million³⁰ will see the construction of the trails network
- Further investment will help the destination position itself as a destination of choice and will need to include town uplift.

Likely Benefits

- The feasibility shows that over 60,000 new visitors would visit Omeo once the hub is completed. This would translate to over \$28.45 million in additional activity in the region per annum, creating 15 to 30 new FTE jobs and supporting an additional 6 new businesses in the region
- Additional private sector activity based on the region's parks and forests will also stimulate jobs and economic activity in the region and in Omeo itself.



Baw Baw Snowfields

²⁹ www.4WDVictoria.org.au/index.php/homepage

³⁰ Omeo MTB Feasibility Report. Dirt Art. 2018



HERO EXPERIENCE

Touring memories

Visitors need to be enticed across the region by the landscapes, events, nature and food experiences. Drive tourism is vital in facilitating regional dispersal and access to the region’s many and varied visitor experiences. Businesses in rural and regional communities rely on income from drive visitors (who stop), as they often buy local tourism products and services, as well as basic travel necessities like fuel, food and other supplies.

There are currently several tourist drives in Gippsland promoted on www.visitvictoria.com including the well-recognised Great Alpine Road that crosses from Gippsland to Northeast Victoria. The Sydney to Melbourne Touring Route drive is similarly promoted by Tourism Australia, Visit Victoria, Visit NSW and Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc. The challenge for Gippsland is to expand and market the current variety of experiences, attractions and accommodation that visitors will enjoy along these touring routes, encouraging longer stays as guests explore more of the region. Priority in experience development needs to go to the journeys that will encourage deviation off the Sydney Melbourne Touring route, travelling into Gippsland from Phillip Island and the Great Alpine Road. Itineraries will enable visitors to become aware of the breadth of the regional offering and encourage repeat visits to specific places they discover or to explore further.

Investment

Collaborative visitor experience planning for drive trails developed between neighbouring RTOs and LGAs focussing on:

- Infrastructure like town beautification, signage, lookouts and lighting
- Itinerary development and connecting to Hero Experiences
- Experience development with businesses on routes
- Marketing and communication strategies
- Experiences and pathways signage and content and messaging of the Gippsland brand
- Revision of existing tourist road maps highlighting these routes with attractions
- Developing a web-based resource as part of current website including: a mobile optimised, GPS based, app with routes, locations and attraction information.

Likely Benefits

- Under a low growth, medium and high growth scenario, the Touring Memories experience will generate between \$25 million and \$30 million in additional visitor expenditure each year
- Increased length of stay and greater regional dispersal
- Collaboration between LGAs and Destination Gippsland.

Support Experience

Positioning the Villages of Gippsland

Visitors travelling around the region are looking for opportunities to stop, experience the local and authentic nature of Gippsland, and potentially spend their money. Towns and villages need to determine the extent to which they wish to engage in the visitor economy and what they can deliver best to encourage visitors. This can contribute to the overall experience of people travelling through the region and encourage greater dispersal, spend and positive feedback. This project will support the development of drive journeys.

Investment

- By working with each of the primary towns and villages, define a vision for tourism, characteristics of the offer and a Local Destination Action Plan for the community to work towards utilising the Gippsland Tourism Town Excellence Project (GTTE)
- The project could be supported by seed funding for small business development that matches the community vision and regional positioning.

Likely Benefits

- Regional experience integration – Gippsland is promoted in its entirety as a destination offering various experiences as opposed to marketed in isolation
- Dispersal of visitors to towns and villages in the region will offer social and economic benefits commensurate with the level of investment and opportunities provided
- Expansion in business and employment opportunities in service, café and restaurants and retail
- Communities as advocates for the region, particularly encouraging the VFR market



As an example, the following town/village clusters could potentially offer on the identified experience themes:

Area / Towns	Experience Theme focus
Walhalla, Erica, Mt Baw Baw	Natural Sanctuary; Inspired Adventures
Gippsland Lakes	Natural Sanctuary; River and Coastal Paradise
Fishing villages of Port Franklin, Port Welshpool, Port Albert, Loch Sport, Paynesville, Metung Lakes Entrance, Bemm River, Cape Conran, Mallacoota	Rivers and Coastal Paradise; Paddock to Plate
Inverloch to Phillip Island	Rivers and Coastal Paradise
Strzelecki Ranges including walks within Tarra-Bulga NP, villages	Inspired Adventure
Mallacoota, Cann River, Cape Conran and Point Hicks	Natural Sanctuaries
Marlo and Orbost, including the Snowy River	Natural Sanctuary
Metung	Natural Sanctuary; Rivers and Coastal Paradise
Omeo and Great Alpine Road	Inspired Adventure
West Gippsland Noojee and Neerim with Yarra Valley connections	Inspired Adventure
Dargo, Licola and Heyfield as gateways to the Alps	Inspired Adventures



9. Proposed Infrastructure

Proposed Infrastructure recommended as part of the Gippsland Destination Management Plan

Suggested Infrastructure	Description	Predominant Pillar Supporting	Priority (HML)	Lead Agency	Cost Estimate (\$)	DGL Role
Wilsons Promontory Experience Development and circuit walk	Investment in the experience development at Wilsons Promontory aiming to improve the visitor experience in a contemporary way that adds protection to the values of the park. Included in the plan is a new Wilsons Promontory walk including alternative and modern accommodation options noting the change in management plan that may be required	Inspired Adventures	High	Parks Victoria	Experience development and sanctuary planning/consultation (\$150,000) likely to be in excess of \$15 million	Influence
Buchan Caves	Revitalised Accommodation Precinct – First Step is a Master Plan, then the potential provision of modern innovative sleeping pods. Also included is commercial space for weddings, meetings etc.	Buchan Caves	Medium	GLaWAC / Parks Victoria	\$200,000 for the Master Plan	Advocacy
Gabo Island Infrastructure	Refurbishment of the accommodation and improved facilities, and ideally the provision of new accommodation.	Gabo Island	Medium	GLaWAC / Parks Victoria	\$4million	Advocacy
Raymond Island Koalas Walk	Raymond Island koalas offer a significant wildlife viewing experience for domestic and international visitors alike. Improving the Raymond Island Koala experience could include improved walking tracks, digital interpretation etc	Gippsland Lakes	High	East Gippsland Shire Council, DELWP, GLaWAC / Parks Victoria	\$350,000	Advocacy
Coastal Wilderness Walk	Creating Victoria's 4 th iconic walk mostly on existing alignment. Tracks works and accommodation options from Cape Conran to Point Hicks for the 3 to 4 day experience. Modelled on Three Capes in Tasmania.	Coastal Wilderness Walk	High	Parks Victoria	\$7million	Advocacy and Marketing
George Bass Coastal Walk	Develop a master plan for the walk. Land purchases and track works, campgrounds, access tracks to beaches. Develop a European style coastal walk activating villages and commercial opportunities.	George Bass Coastal Walk	High	Parks Victoria	\$19.6 million	Advocacy and Influence
Mitchell River Journey / Glamping	Feasibility, support services and accommodation on the Mitchell River, including developing a potential Gunaikurnai business venture with Aboriginal tourism products	Mitchell River Journey	Medium	GLaWAC / Parks Victoria	\$2million	Advocacy and Influence
Boating and Ocean Journeys	Investment across Gippsland in a range of boating infrastructure to facilitate better boating including boat ramps, car parking, fish cleaning tables, etc	Rivers and Coastal Paradise	High	Better Boating Victoria, LGAs, Parks Vic, DELWP	\$5 million	Advocacy and Support
Lakes Entrance Redevelopment and LEFCOL Café	As part of the decision on commercial fishing in the Lakes, a redevelopment of the LEFCOL area and other commercial opportunities with a focus on the visitor economy will help deliver Ocean to the Plate and a possible fish restaurant.	Paddock and Ocean Produce	High	East Gippsland Shire Council, State Government	\$1.5 million committed	Advocacy

Suggested Infrastructure	Description	Predominant Pillar Supporting	Priority (HML)	Lead Agency	Cost Estimate (\$)	DGL Role
Destination Fishing	Complete a feasibility and tourism development plan for a new destination fishery that also enables private investment in lodges etc.	Paddock and Ocean Produce	High	DGL in partnership with the VFA	\$100,000 for the feasibility	Advocacy
Infrastructure improvements on Mount Baw Baw	Deliver a replacement chairlift for aging infrastructure on the mountain and upgrade the power supply system enabling renewable power and higher financial security.	Inspired Adventure	High to Medium	State Government/MtBBAR	\$5.5million	Support
Central Gippsland Mountain Biking Hub	Continue to develop the Haunted Hills and other Mtn Bike hubs in the Central Gippsland area.	Inspired Adventure	High	State Government, LVA, Latrobe City	\$1 million	Advocacy
Tall Trees Ride	Develop a customised mountain bike product including trail and opportunity for private investment in dedicated accommodation on trail. Includes activation of other business and community opportunities. Feasibility and Trail Infrastructure	Inspired Adventures	High	DELWP, Parks Victoria	\$ 5million	Influence
The Gippsland Trail Development	Develop Gippsland's diverse and disconnected trail network into a 'Gippsland Trail' that connects the most important missing links from a market perspective and provides the opportunity for business development and product growth.	Inspired Adventures	High	Councils with grant funding support	\$20million	Advocacy
4WD Adventures	Invest in the icon drives of Gippsland including track maintenance, signs, campsites, etc	Inspired Adventures	High	Parks Victoria, DELWP	\$500,000 (\$50,000 PA)	Advocacy
Omeo Adventure Rides	Develop the Omeo Mtn Biking Destination and invest in other adventures as identified and are proven feasible.	Inspired Adventure	High	East Gippsland Shire Council	\$6million	Advocacy
Short Walks of West Gippsland	Investing in lifting the short walks of the West Gippsland Village Hubs. This will provide an immediate uplift, and, in most cases, planning is minimal due to the trail alignment existing currently. Also improve car parking, signs, interpretation etc.,	Village Hubs – Mt Baw Baw / Walhalla and Surrounds	High	Baw Baw Shire Council, DELWP, Parks Vic	To Be Developed	Advocacy
Invest in the Development of the Walhalla Goldfields Railway	As a part of the Central Gippsland Public Land Strategy – invest in the completion of the Walhalla Railway from Erica to Walhalla.	Village Hubs – Mt Baw Baw / Walhalla and Surrounds	Medium to High	State Government	\$18million	Support
Seal the South Face Road linking Baw Baw and the Latrobe Valley	Seal the South Face Road surface enabling improved access between Mount Baw Baw and key markets in the Latrobe Valley. Access exists now but this will improve the ease of access.	Village Hubs – Mt Baw Baw / Walhalla and Surrounds	Medium	State Government	\$12million	Support
Hazelwood Mine Site	The Hazelwood mine and power station are currently being decommissioned. The longer-term future of the assets may include innovative and exciting visitor economy and local community benefits including a public access lake in the now mine. Planning is complex	Latrobe Valley Hub	Medium. Significant benefits may occur	Multiple Agencies	Unknown	Advocacy

Suggested Infrastructure	Description	Predominant Pillar Supporting	Priority (HML)	Lead Agency	Cost Estimate (\$)	DGL Role
	and involves both private sector and state and local government. The LVA is also facilitating outcomes.		longer term, but uncertainty is high.			
Sealing of the Point Hicks Road	Point Hicks is proposed to be a significant visitor hub on the Sydney Melbourne Touring Route. The provision of all-weather all vehicle access is important in facilitating several outcomes including the Wilderness Coast Track and the visitor node and increased accommodation at Point Hicks.	Wilderness Coast	High	Parks Victoria, DELWP, East Gippsland Shire Council State and Federal Government Grants	\$ 7million	Influence and Advocacy
Day Walk Improvements and additions	The day walks on the Sydney Melbourne Touring route are important as an attraction and experience that keeps travellers in Gippsland. Continuing to invest in these walks and adding new ones will generate economic benefits from additional nights and continue to position the SMT as a world class touring route.	Wilderness Coast	High	Parks Victoria, and DELWP, East Gippsland Shire	\$5million estimate	Advocacy
The Sea to Summit Link	The Government has committed to invest in the feasibility for a new iconic walk from Errinundra Plateau to Bemm River, passing through the tall forests of East Gippsland.	Wilderness Coast	Medium	Parks Victoria DELWP	\$1.5million	Influence
Various Villages	General uplift and upgrading of village precincts including vehicle parking, streetscapes, toilets and signs	Vibrant Local Communities	Ongoing	Various Councils	General Rate Services	Support
Various Trail Projects	The Gippsland Trails Feasibility Study is under development. Several of the key projects from the study have been included in this infrastructure list. Gradual implementation of the study's recommendations will deliver both community and visitor economy benefit over time.	Vibrant Local Communities	Ongoing	Various Councils, Parks Victoria and DELWP	Various	Support and Advocacy.
Public Transport	Continued improvement of the Gippsland train network is critical to continuing to develop transport options for visitors and community alike. Ideally, regional Victoria will be serviced by a reliable, frequent, fast train network much the same as exists in other countries in the world Helping create a bike friendly bus and transport network will also provide significant visitor economy benefits to trail users and residents.			State Government		Advocacy and Support
Telecommunication	The visitor economy like many other sectors requires strong digital connectivity. This includes the ability to book products and experiences online, and to use digital apps for information and support. Current services are variable and can be overrun in busy periods. Continued investment in digital upgrades are critical.			State Government Telecommunication Federal Government		Advocacy and Support



Buchan Caves Reserve, Family on Cave Tour

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Glossary

Appendix B – AEC Relevant Strategic and Planning Policy Frameworks

Appendix C – AEC Accommodation Analysis Snapshot 2018

Appendix D – Investment Commitments Across Gippsland

Appendix E – Drive Touring Routes

Appendix F – AEC Summary of Product Assessment 2018

Appendix G – Travel Trends

Appendix H – Gippsland Existing Target Market Summary

Appendix I – Marketing Direction – proposed roles and responsibilities

Appendix J – Proposed Allocation of Responsibilities

Appendix K – Aspirational Case Studies

