

# PORTLAND

## DESTINATION ACTION PLAN

### 2023 – 2027





# Acknowledgements

Portland is located on Gunditjmara country. We acknowledge and pay respect to the Gunditjmara people, their elders: past, present and emerging, and their ongoing connection to country.

The development of the Portland Destination Action plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd.

The process brought together representatives from stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy; local government, industry and the community to develop a plan.

Specifically we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

**Facilitator:** Liz Price

## Destination action plan leadership group:

Rob Hunt –Cape Nelson Lighthouse, Hotel Bentinck & Mac's

Sandra Duncan –Holiday Lifestyle Henty Bay

Denis Carr–Portland Tourism Association and Seaview Lodge (deceased)

Jen Johns –Friends of the Great South West Walk

Georgie Knight –BudjBim Cultural Landscape Tours

Mark Johns –Port of Portland

Navreet Gill –Whaler's Rest

Mike Risk –Portland Visitor Information Centre

Kristy Hutchins – Portland Visitor Information Centre

Deb Craib – Hotel Bentinck and Mac's

Gordon Stokes – Cape Nelson Lighthouse Tours

Jane Young – Glenelg Shire Council

Councillor Anita Rank – Glenelg Shire, Glenelg Producers Group, Committee for Portland

Councillor Scott Martin – Glenelg Shire, Bridgewater Bay Café

Geri Torpy – Bay of Whales Gallery

Jodie Vaughan, Glenelg Shire Council – events team

Jo Birley – Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism





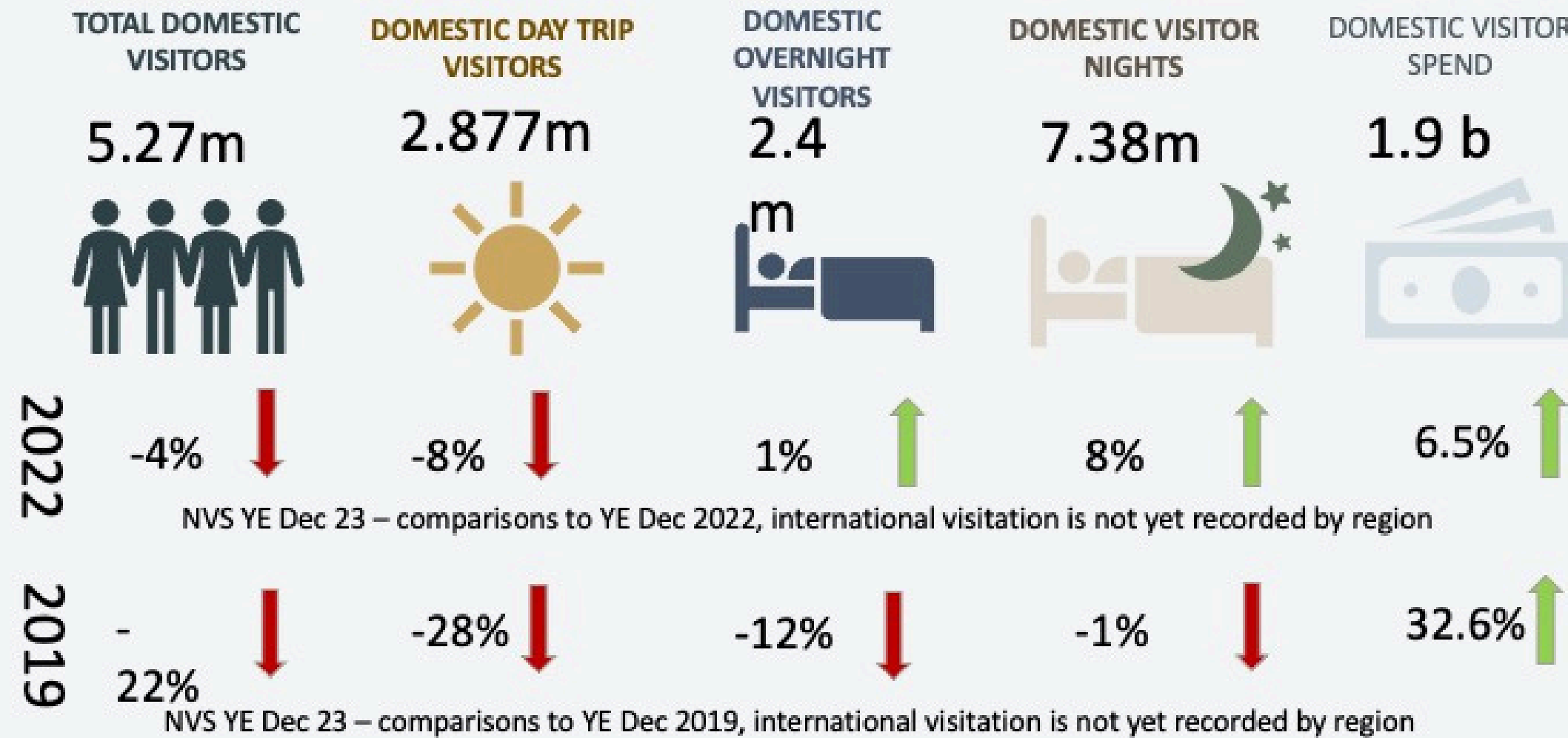
# Introduction

This Destination Action Plan for Portland identifies priority strategies and actions which, if implemented over the next three to five years, will enhance the competitiveness of Portland within the Great Ocean Road region and beyond. These strategic actions will also be reflected in the Master Plan for the Visitor Economy for the region to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Portland Destination Action Plan has been prepared by a facilitated workshop process involving business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities along with addressing the challenges. The group has identified and agreed upon the key priorities and actions that will make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Portland visitor economy and experience.

# The Visitor Economy

## GOR region domestic visitation data Dec 2023





# The Glenelg Shire Visitor Economy

Total visitation to Glenelg Shire	Dec 18	Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21	Dec 22	Dec 23
Annual visitors	297,061	528,880	356,390	396,047	337,976	378,121

- 47% of total visitation to Glenelg Shire is mid-week (mon-fri), on par with the region. 52% of visits are on weekends.
- Average length of stay for overnight visitors to Moyne is 1.27 nights, lower than the regional average of 1.45 nights
- 68% of visitors to Glenelg Shire come in the off-peak season, April to November (regionally only 58% of visitors come out of peak times)
- 45% of visitors to Glenelg Shire stay at least one night, on par with the regional average
- 3.9% of jobs in Glenelg Shire are in the tourism sector, compared to 7.9% regionally

\*National Visitor Survey data sourced from Tourism Research Australia, based on YE December 2023

## Top Ten Source Markets for Glenelg Shire (FY 23/24 - Commbank IQ data - transaction based)

- |                       |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Southern Grampians | 6. Ballarat      |
| 2. Moyne Shire        | 7. Grant         |
| 3. Warrnambool        | 8. Wyndham       |
| 4. Greater Geelong    | 9. Horsham       |
| 5. Mount Gambier      | 10. Wattle Range |



# Success Factors

## Diagnostic Rating

Industry research has established that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving the above objectives. The workshop participants considered these factors relative to Portland in reaching consensus on the priority strategies and actions. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the competitive growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of Portland.

Characteristics	2016 Rating	2022 Rating	Change
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	4	5	>1
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5+	6	>0.5
3. Local Government support	6+	6.5	>0.5
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	4	6.5	>2.5
5. Strategic planning for the regional with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	4	5	>1
6. Consistent visitor service excellence	3	5.5	>2.5
7. Research driven cooperative marketing	3	5	>2
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	7+	6	<1
9. Risk management plans in place	7+	5	<2
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism	4+	6	>2

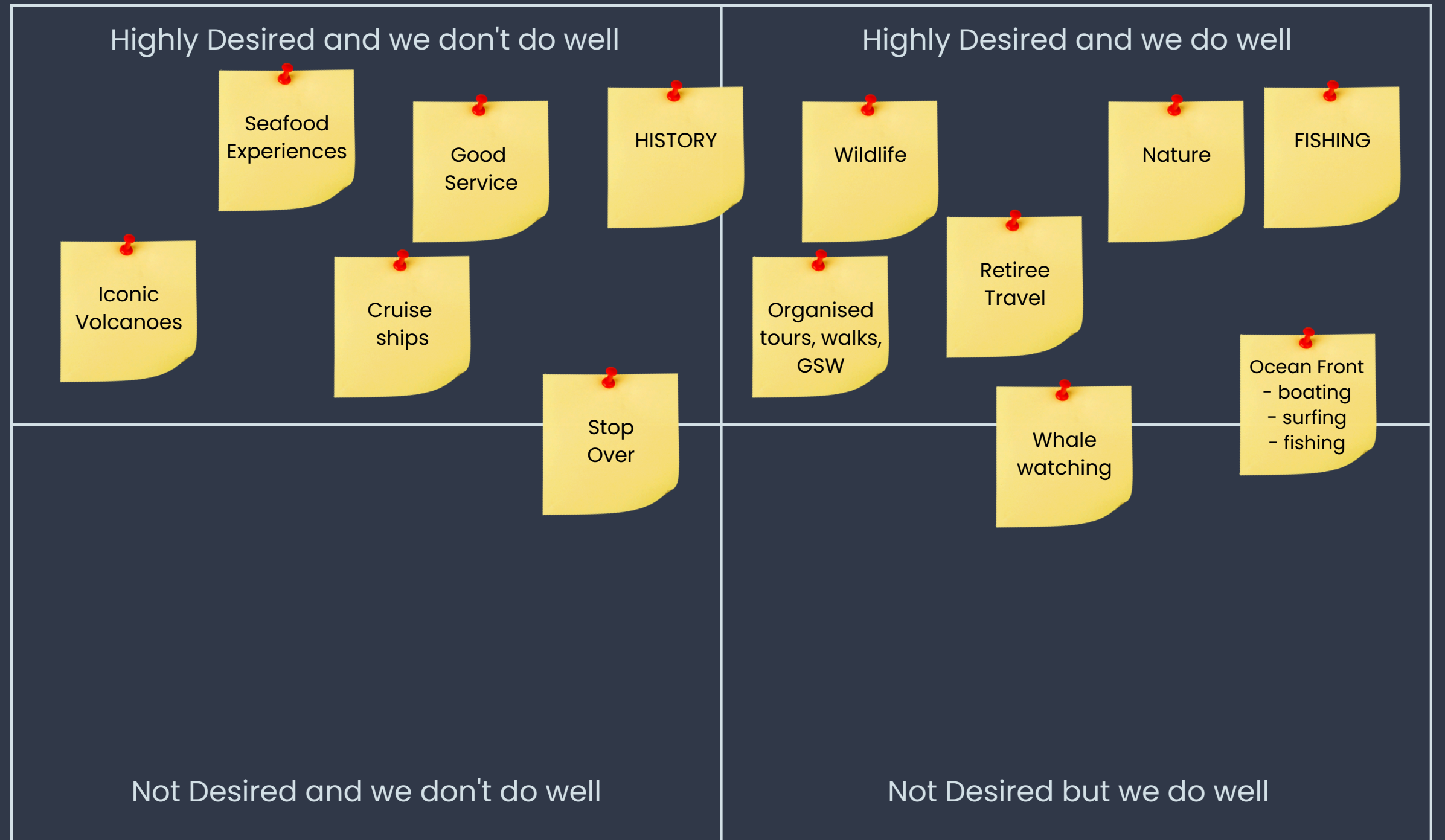


# Our Strengths

Recognising visitor expectations in relation to the current product offering in Portland, this matrix identifies what Portland as a destination needs to focus more and less effort on to generate a greater return from the visitor economy.

Signature big nature and wildlife experiences are key to Portland's strengths.

We could improve by developing the product around these strengths.







# Objectives

Visitor economy objectives for the Great Ocean Road Region are:

- To increase visitor length of stay
- To increase visitor expenditure
- To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
- To increase visitor satisfaction –build a visitor servicing culture
- To increase industry and community engagement, participation and support

Additional destination objectives for Portland

- Grow our product offering
- increase visitation from new markets
- Investment in infrastructure to increase accessibility & support management practices that support and protect our key natural attractions
- Increase recognition and awareness
- Increase business co-operation and collaboration



## Our vision

Portland is renowned for its unique, sustainable and spectacular nature and cultural experiences.

The diverse and immersive nature-based activities available on land and water cater for a range of domestic markets and international visitors to the area, who come for sport, fishing, walking and heritage and cultural experiences.

Businesses in the tourism sector work collaboratively and are thriving. Portland offers a range of quality accommodation, food and produce experiences catering for all types of visitors.

People are drawn to the relaxed seaside community, the space, the wild beauty and unique wildlife, and the passionate and welcoming locals with rich stories to tell.





# Our Values

Positive Relaxed  
Whales  
Champions Friendly Culture of Care  
Authentic Heritage Welcoming  
Pride in our town  
Value environment Ships  
history and culture  
Clean Our people  
Unique Memorable  
Experiences



# Opportunities

- Promote the seafood industry and local food experience –celebrating local produce and providing opportunities to buy it
- Community engagement in a shared vision and goal
- Promoting a consistent brand and local pride
- Emphasise promotion of the port, and waterfront orientation of township
- Continued promotion to capitalise on post pandemic consumer sentiment –safety & space
- New infrastructure and products to broaden appeal to markets including cruise ships, recreational port users, heritage, cultural tourism, sporting tourism and capacity to accommodate group tours
- Development of first nations people led products and experiences –extending the UNESCO world heritage BudjBim cultural landscape experience with partnerships and events and the implementation of the [Budj Bim Cultural Landscape Masterplan 2022-2030](#).
- New and existing product and experience development to maximise recreational opportunities in nature, adventure tourism, volcanic tourism (and potential for recognition of Kanawinka geo-plain by UNESCO) and our diverse natural wildlife
- Leverage and maximise opportunities for Great South West Walk and Camino tourism



# Challenges

- Quality of visitor servicing –Businesses focussing on the visitor and their needs (product, opening hours, customer service, training)
- Lack of collaboration in promoting a consistent distinguishing brand for Portland –pride of place for local ambassadors
- Lack of consumer recognition of the breadth of signature natural assets and recreational opportunities
- Ongoing maintenance and preservation of the Great South West Walk as a hero asset for the region
- Distance and transport access from key source markets –lack of air services, port/marine amenities, public transport
- Lack of local transport services
- Lack of wider expertise and knowledge to inspire change and innovation
- Lacking in range (and quantity?) of accommodation –no luxury offering
- Labour/workforce shortages
- Lack of Infrastructure and facilities to attract new markets
- Lack of collaboration and cohesion between local businesses and stakeholder groups
- Orientation –interpretation / wayfinding



# Action Plan Implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for stakeholders to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, a Reference Group will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and, in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Reference Group will consider and review this progressively. One key consideration will be the availability and securing of resources to progress the implementation of the Plan in a timely manner. It may also be appropriate and necessary to involve other organisations and to seek funding for specific projects.

The Plan does not commit any organisation to the actions proposed but is a guide to pursuing priorities and actions which will make a positive difference to the achievement of the tourism objectives noted above.

The priority actions have been assigned a KPI priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

HIGH within the first two years

MEDIUM within two to three years

LOW within five years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by GORRT in consultation with the Reference Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in five years.



# Priority 1

Build a strong collaborative approach to marketing and promotion of a consistent Portland brand narrative

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>1.2 Build on and embrace a consistent brand narrative for Portland</b>            Develop a brand playbook that identifies tools for use by all stakeholders and businesses, ensuring we utilise existing branding work completed by Council (Glenelg Vic) and GORRT (<a href="#">Portland Brand Toolkit</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of Content pillars</li> <li>• Identification of signature products &amp; experiences</li> <li>• Identification of customer profiles (utilising and building on existing <a href="#">Great Ocean Road Customer Profiles</a>)</li> <li>• Images</li> <li>• Web content</li> <li>• Social media content</li> <li>• Utilise existing Glenelg Vic and Portland Brand Story development and toolkit</li> </ul>		HIGH
<p><b>1.3 Increase Portland’s digital footprint</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximise Portland business listings across key websites including leveraging the opportunity of free ATDW listings to have businesses on <a href="#">visitvictoria.com</a>, <a href="#">visitgreatoceanroad.org.au</a>, <a href="#">iamportland.com.au</a> + the Glenelg VIC app</li> <li>• Encourage businesses to have strong digital presence –websites and social media</li> <li>• Ensure all businesses have and maintain Google My Business</li> <li>• Explore fun and interesting marketing campaigns: for example –rename./ Change the nomenclature for Portland to "Portland Bay"</li> </ul>		HIGH
<p><b>1.4 Leverage regional and cross regional marketing and participate in existing regional marketing programs and activities for</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Ocean Road</li> <li>• Adelaide to Melbourne Touring Route</li> <li>• Volcanic Lakes and Plains, Winter Whale Trail and other cross-council programs (with Limestone Coast, Southern Grampians)</li> </ul>		MED - ongoing



# Priority 2

Collaboration between all visitor economy stakeholders, businesses and the community

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>2.1 Develop and engage in opportunities led by council and GORRT to enhance business co-operation and collaboration, and training and development opportunities.</b></p>		
<p><b>2.2 Develop a collaborative advocacy plan for Portland –one strong voice representing key stakeholder groups and community engagement in a shared vision and goal for the visitor economy</b></p>		
<p><b>2.3 Explore co-operative marketing, product development and promotional opportunities to support businesses to work together</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate a packaging workshop bringing like-minded businesses together</li> <li>• Support new opportunities for businesses to partner and develop collaborative new products and experiences</li> <li>• Consider "Product Showcase" events for industry</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2.4 Develop pathways for greater coordination and collaboration of effort between tourism sector representative groups who share a vision for Portland’s visitor economy –including Portland Tourism Association, Promoting Portland and Committee for Portland. Consider representation of Gunditj Mirring Traditional owners, Port of Portland, Glenelg Producers Group, the arts community and Friends of the GSWW.</b></p> <p>Opportunities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all groups and map key stakeholders and their goals/vision</li> <li>• An opportunity to socialise this priority to stakeholders –incorporate into the launch of this plan</li> </ul>		



# Priority 3

Product development – planning and supporting Infrastructure

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>3.1 Support strategic planning to identify infrastructure and amenity, including cruise, port and sporting infrastructure, to grow a more sustainable and vibrant visitor economy ie.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cruise ship facilities –shore power access to attract more ships &amp; public toilets</li> <li>• marina &amp; recreational port user boat maintenance facilities, amenities and access</li> <li>• sporting tourism and world class sports facilities</li> <li>• Airport capacity upgrade and airline/flight attraction project</li> <li>• Transport solutions including airlinks, taxi &amp; shuttle services for walkers</li> <li>• Access harbour (closed Port facilities) for tours, potential mural artwork</li> </ul>		HIGH
<p><b>3.2 Support strategic research to support growing the range of accommodation to cater for new markets including:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luxury &amp; 5 Star options</li> <li>• Ability to accommodate large groups/tours</li> <li>• Backpacker/ hostel accommodation</li> <li>• GSWW and Glenelg River Trail luxury lodge accommodation / pods or eco-tourism hut, glamping</li> </ul>		MED
<p><b>3.3 Map current amenity to plan for future priorities, then advocate for the prioritisation of maintenance and development of key natural attractions and assets to protect the natural environment and enhance our nature-based experiences.</b> Priorities include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrades and maintenance of essential infrastructure –trails, boardwalks, lookouts, toilets on Great South West Walk</li> <li>• Enabling infrastructure for accessibility</li> <li>• Interpretation –signage or digital for self-guided tours</li> </ul>		LOW
<p><b>3.4 Advocate for improved transport and access to Portland and across attractions –including increased frequency of public transport services, community transport options, safe cycling and existing Glenelg Shire Trails Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated shared use trail for cycling to Cape Bridgewater on Old Coach Road</li> <li>• Transport solutions including air-links, taxi and shuttle services for walkers and visitors to Budj Bim Cultural Landscape</li> </ul>		MED



# Priority 4

Product Development – Support the development of products, services, experiences and activities to cater to new markets and encourage longer stays

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>4.1 Promote new product development based on investment pipeline, gaps, visitor demand and the Portland brand.</b></p> <p>Could consider;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Product gap audit</li> <li>• Investment pipeline</li> <li>• Innovations and ideas forums to identify gaps and opportunities</li> <li>• Product incubators</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4.2 Development of first nations people led products and experiences –extending the UNESCO world heritage Budj Bim cultural landscape experience with partnerships and events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support business partnerships, packaging and collaboration with the new attraction and tours</li> <li>• Promote seasonal activities and events being showcased on the Budj Bim Cultural landscape</li> <li>• Develop opportunities that facilitate ongoing partnerships to support the new markets the cultural attraction will bring to the region.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4.3 Connect visitors to the rich local produce of the region:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a representative from the Glenelg Producers Group to participate in the Destination Action Plan Reference Group.</li> <li>• Encourage local cafes &amp; restaurants to include and showcase local products on their menus and in their venues with a "signature dish"</li> <li>• Support the growth and development of new &amp; existing events that showcase our produce as a strength –Hooked on Portland.</li> <li>• Partner with producers to celebrate key seasons with in-restaurant promotions eg. Gunditj Mirring; eel and seasonal bush foods</li> <li>• Encourage cafes &amp; restaurants to have a dedicated local offering eg. Taste of Portland Set menu.</li> </ul>		



# Priority 4

Continued

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>4.4 Promote local produce and the seafood industry and local food experience by encouraging new food and dining experiences and events that celebrate local produce and provide opportunities for visitors to experience it</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hooked on Portland and Wood Wine and Roses –continue to grow successful events</li> <li>• Tae Rak (Lake Condah) eel interpretation visitor experience</li> <li>• Create new events that showcase local food</li> <li>• Promote activities with Henty Food and Fibre group</li> <li>• Dining experiences</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4.5 Support the development of new products and experiences that deliver recreational opportunities in nature and support managing the sustainability of our natural assets.</b></p> <p>This could include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transport –including shuttle services to enable access to GSWW –encouraging backpackers to stay longer</li> <li>• Accessible products</li> <li>• Equipment hire –canoes/kayaks, SUPs and bicycles</li> <li>• Recreational opportunities in National Parks beyond walking</li> <li>• Special interest tours –flora, wildlife, the Port, heritage sites and buildings, geology (volcanic history)</li> <li>• Day tours from Portland to nearby attractions (Cape Bridgewater, BudjBim, Great Ocean Road, Coonawarra, Grampians)</li> <li>• Walking tours of CBD</li> <li>• Adventure tourism</li> <li>• Renewal energy –wind farm tours</li> <li>• Industrial tourism opportunities –explore reviving the smelter tour</li> <li>• Harbour and Port activities –Access to harbour for tours, potential mural artwork</li> </ul>		
<p><b>4.6 Leverage the opportunity of Cruise ships to build brand Portland and capture visitor expenditure including building premium product &amp; experience offerings Encourage collaborations and specialised tour opportunities for partnerships with cruise ships</b></p>		



# Priority 5

Customer Service Excellence – enhance the visitor experience and improve the quality of our visitor servicing

ACTIONS	Responsibility	Priority
<p><b>5.1 Encourage businesses to cater for the needs of visitors and build their product &amp; service offering including</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended opening hours to meet demand –egweekends and evening dining –being open when visitors arehere</li> <li>• Encourage businesses to roster closed days to maximise the week round offering for visitors</li> <li>• Diversification of product and business offering for new markets coming to the region</li> <li>• Encourage and promote ‘Night life’ and evening activities</li> <li>• Concierge/booking services –Visitor Information centre and accommodation businesses</li> <li>• Develop a system for businesses to share trading hours, promotions and events with each other</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5.2 Promote and develop opportunities to engage the community in visitor servicing and communicate that we canall contribute to enhancing the visitor experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer programs (eg: working with visitor information centres, friends of GSWW and event coordination)</li> <li>• Local ambassadors/ advocates (connecting to Priority 1)</li> </ul>		
<p><b>5.3 Celebrate, Promote and encourage opportunities for growing business excellence including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Glenelg Shire Business awards</li> <li>• Victorian Tourism Awards</li> <li>• Engagement in GORRT, Glenelg Shire Council and TAFE industry training and development opportunities</li> <li>• Development of local training and upskilling opportunities to engage businesses and potential staff</li> <li>• Ensure awareness of visitor needs –eg: accommodation operators to share occupancy info with hospitality venues</li> <li>• Customer service excellence program</li> <li>• Eco-tourism accreditation and programs to promote business sustainability (Eco-tourism Australia/ATDW program)</li> <li>• Packaging experiences to meet customer needs and expectations (refer to 2.4)</li> </ul>		

# Priority 5

Continued

## ACTIONS

## Responsibility

## Priority

### 5.4 Leverage government programs to counter our workforce shortages and support population attraction

- Backpacker/working holiday makers programs
- Tourism Jobs Bank, Jobs Victoria and other marketing and staff placement programs
- Glenelg Shire Council –population attraction



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This plan was published by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism and developed in collaboration with Glenelg Shire Council, the Portland Visitor economy stakeholders, businesses and the community. This planning process is supported by the Victorian State Government.

