

WARRNAMBOOL



Destination Action Plan 2015-2017

October 2014



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



Image: Wayne Quilliam



Acknowledgments

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

The process brought together representatives from all stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy; local government, state government agencies, industry and the community to develop a plan. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing Warrnambool and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase Warrnambool's competitiveness.

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

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GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



Introduction

Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd is undertaking the preparation of a Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region which extends from Torquay in the east to the South Australian border in the west. A core strategy is to recognise that visitors to the region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences. Therefore the development, marketing and management of the regions destinations is pivotal to the success of the whole region.

This Destination Action Plan for Warrnambool identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance the competitiveness of Warrnambool as a primary visitor destination of the region. These strategies will also be reflected in the Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the region to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The 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 and challenges. The group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Warrnambool visitor economy and experience.

The visitor economy

Visitors to Warrnambool are major contributors to the strength of the local economy. The visitors may be leisure travellers (domestic and international), visitors to friends and relatives, holiday residents, business visitors, students or day-trippers.

Their expenditure is 'new money' contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value and the provision of services, facilities and activities in the community.

The total tourism contribution to the Great Ocean Road region is \$1,832 million 20,000 jobs, 11.1% of Gross Regional Product and 11.6% employment share.

SOURCE: Victorian Regional Satellite Accounts 2011-2012 produced by Deloitte Access Economics.

Warrnambool attracted 278,000 domestic overnight visitors (spent 833,000 nights), representing 16.4% of total visitors and 15.6% of nights to the Great Ocean Road region. They spent on average \$130 per night in the region (Total \$108 million). International overnight travel to Warrnambool was approximately 21,600. The five year visitation trends for the region and Warrnambool are relatively flat. **SOURCE:** National Visitor Survey, YE Dec 2013, Tourism Research Australia.

International figures are considered statistically unreliable.



Success factors

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 Warrnambool 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 Warrnambool.

1. Strong local tourism organisations focussed on their core role of visitor servicing
2. Strong regional tourism organisations focussed on their core role of regional marketing and development
3. Local government support
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals and/or organisations
5. Strategic planning for the economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans
6. Consistent visitor service excellence
7. Research driven cooperative marketing
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, products and events matched to market demand
9. Risk management plans
10. Supportive communities which understand and value tourism.

Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction.

Yield, dispersal and visitor satisfaction are all important objectives for Warrnambool.

The challenges of attracting visitors to the Port Campbell National Park (12 Apostles) to travel on to Warrnambool as well as seasonal visitation are of particular importance.

As a 'hub' destination it is critically important that visitor satisfaction is maximised as a core marketing strategy to increase return visitation and positive visitor endorsement.

Therefore positioning and consistency of promotional communication must be supported by positive visitor experience satisfaction.

The challenge of the 'distance barrier' in the current competitive market will require a more considered and focussed approach from Warrnambool to maintain its competitiveness as a preferred destination. Its success is also pivotal to dispersal and yield growth for the region.



Vision

Key descriptors

- Vibrant City by the sea
- Hub for visitor day tripping
- Agriculture centre of Australia
- Environmental, natural, cultural, clean, green city.

Positioning

Hub

- Base for accessible day trips/exploring: north + east + west

Family market

Visitor benefits

- A coastal city and attributes
- Multiple activities
- Facilities: adults + kids
- Day & night time activities
- Entertainment (movies etc.)
- Dining options
- Major events
- All weather/Winter options.

Our collective strengths – *what we do well*

1. Winter events – Fun4Kids
2. Family activities – Lake Pertobe provides exceptional family experience
3. By the sea + affordable experiences (plenty of options especially Foreshore + Lake Pertobe – free)
4. Sporting events
5. Accessible + Central hub (especially for visiting friends and relatives)
6. Warrnambool City Council investment in tourism.



Our challenges

Priorities - Identified and voted on

1. Agreed shared positioning/brand
2. Community & industry awareness of the value of tourism & getting buy in
3. Establishing Warrnambool as a hub – diversity + region + food
4. Improve customer service excellence for visitors
5. Leadership.



Images: Warrnambool City Council

Other

- Low awareness of destination
- Perception of distance
- 12 Apostles end of road for many travellers
- Community & business apathy (shops not open on weekend or events)
- Weather (windy Warrnambool) perception and wet weather activities
- Infrastructure tired
- Reluctance to change
- Unreliable whales – maximise experience year round i.e. gallery exhibition, landmark
- Flagstaff Hill (and foreshore) ongoing revitalisation
- Embrace social media
- Maintain local government support & contributions
- Lack of intrastate & interstate promotion – especially TV
- Improve internal communication
- Visitor Information Centres as commercial selling centres – all Great Ocean Road region
- Price vs Quality
- Funding for infrastructure
- Development for historical precinct & info
- Fragmented Warrnambool City Council investment
- Narrow our aspirations
- Competition – offshore including cheaper flights e.g. Bali & SE Asia
- Visitor attractions & service
- Opening hours.



Opportunities

Priorities - Identified and voted on

1. Location by the sea & Great Ocean Road – positioning
2. Flagstaff Hill – revitalise/upgrade + night show especially
3. Coast to crater – capitalise
4. Food & wine product
5. Great Ocean Road partnerships – mutual support, sales & referrals.



Other - Leveraging Warrnambool City

- Large accessible regional city – capacity advantages
- Hub – coastal, diversity & scale and surrounded by attractions
- Accessible
- International students (and their families)
- Use 'Oddball' movie = capital of Great Ocean Road
- Golf course redevelopment
- West of Melbourne growth corridor
- Location at end of rail line
- Logan's Beach to Thunder Point experiences + link to CBD renewal
- Bike & walking trails – family recreation
- Range of accommodation – promote
- Development of new tourism attractions, experiences & events – especially in Winter + more options for things to do in bad weather
- Cultural program – major exhibitions every 18 months – i.e. 'Giants of the deep' & 'Mary Rose' – learn from Bendigo
- Improve the boat harbour to cater for the larger boats heading to Portland to Tuna Fish
- Tower Hill – undervalued asset – product development opportunities – photography tours etc.
- Revitalise Lake Pertobe, promenade/foreshore – upgrade & development.
- Relationship with Portland/cruise shipping
- Educational tourism opportunities
- New festivals and events to appeal to broader audiences
- Partnership with Port Fairy.



Image: Tourism Victoria

Diagnostic rating

Characteristics		Rating	Comments
1.	Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	5.4	
2.	Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5	WIP
3.	Local government support	7	Staff excellent
4.	Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	5.5	
5.	Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	5	WIP
6.	Consistent visitor service excellence	4.7	
7.	Research driven cooperative marketing	5	WIP
8.	A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	8	
9.	Risk management plans in place	4	
10.	Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	4.3	



Image: Rob Blackburn



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Warrnambool Tourism Association, Commerce Warrnambool, and the Warrnambool City Council to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Implementation Leadership 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 year
- MEDIUM within one to two years
- LOW within three years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd in consultation with the Implementation Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in three years.

The Destination Action Plan will provide input to the preparation of a Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region.

PRIORITY 1

Develop and consistently promote a unique market positioning and brand for Warrnambool based on:

- Warrnambool as a Great Ocean Road regional hub offering diversity of city, rural and coastal experiences in easy reach Warrnambool as the Great Ocean Road 'City by the Sea.'

Actions

- Develop a marketing plan in collaboration with key stakeholder organisations:
 - Undertake research to determine market
 - Undertake destination positioning process
 - Develop a style guide and encourage all Warrnambool organisations and business to apply
 - Develop/review promotional collateral to reflect the agreed positioning
 - Digital & print
 - Tell the 'Warrnambool Story' (historical and contemporary) via a dedicated website as part of the Great Ocean Road digital strategy.

Responsibilities

Great Ocean Road
Regional Tourism Ltd to
provide a template

Priorities

High

Comments

- Agreement that Warrnambool is primarily a family market
- It is also a regional hub for visitor dispersal
- Events – timing and build on the strength of Fun4Kids brand (and high yielding market)
- Activities – beach, Lake Pertobe
- How do we reach and communicate to our markets?

Note: Concerns raised that neither Warrnambool Tourism Association nor Commerce Warrnambool are strong organisations and that there is an opportunity for Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd to add credibility by taking the lead role to coordinate a joint approach to marketing and promotions. Discussed the challenges of volunteers and use of outsourced resources.

PRIORITY 2

Develop product and experiences to match visitor demand, improve seasonal dispersal and to complement the city's positioning.

Comments

- No 'wow' factor at present – how can we address?
- One pager re events in Warrnambool to indicate to visitors, business and community re what's on
- Use events to address low/shoulder periods. Chunk up existing events to enhance appeal
- Industry to get behind Fun4Kids and support economic importance to region and Brand
- Melbourne Cup Weekend – Warrnambool Music Festival
- Key events include Fun4Kids, May Racing Carnival, Sprint cars, whale arrival
- Hub – Tower Hill, 12 Apostles, inland villages, etc.

Are we missing on an opportunity to not focus on the strength of 'Agriculture' – can we capture in business events market – showcase the talent and strength of the region?

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	▪ Develop and promote the Liebig Street restaurant precinct and encourage a café culture	Warrnambool City Council	High
2.	▪ Revitalise the retail precincts with Warrnambool branding	Warrnambool City Council	High
3.	▪ Develop themed walking routes/tours ▪ Develop laneways with historical interpretation and artworks (part of broader CBD revitalisation program)	Branding GORRT	High
4.	▪ Golf course redevelopment – not realistic in the timeframe – looking for iconic redevelopment	Warrnambool City Council	Medium, ongoing
5.	▪ Review entry and directional signage	Warrnambool City Council	High
6.	▪ Develop and sign touring routes around and out of town	Warrnambool City Council	Medium
7.	▪ Develop and link visitor precinct such as – Logan's beach to Thunder Point, Lake Pertobe, restaurants, retail, arts	Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool Tourism Association	Medium
8.	▪ Integrate the marketing of the 'Fun4Kids' event year round with the above	Warrnambool City Council	High
9.	▪ Review and develop the Warrnambool events program as a year round attractor, including the proposed Australian Music festival	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Warrnambool Tourism Association, Warrnambool City Council	High
10.	▪ Assess opportunities for business events.	Industry/private operator led	Medium



Image: Warrnambool City Council



Image: Warrnambool City Council

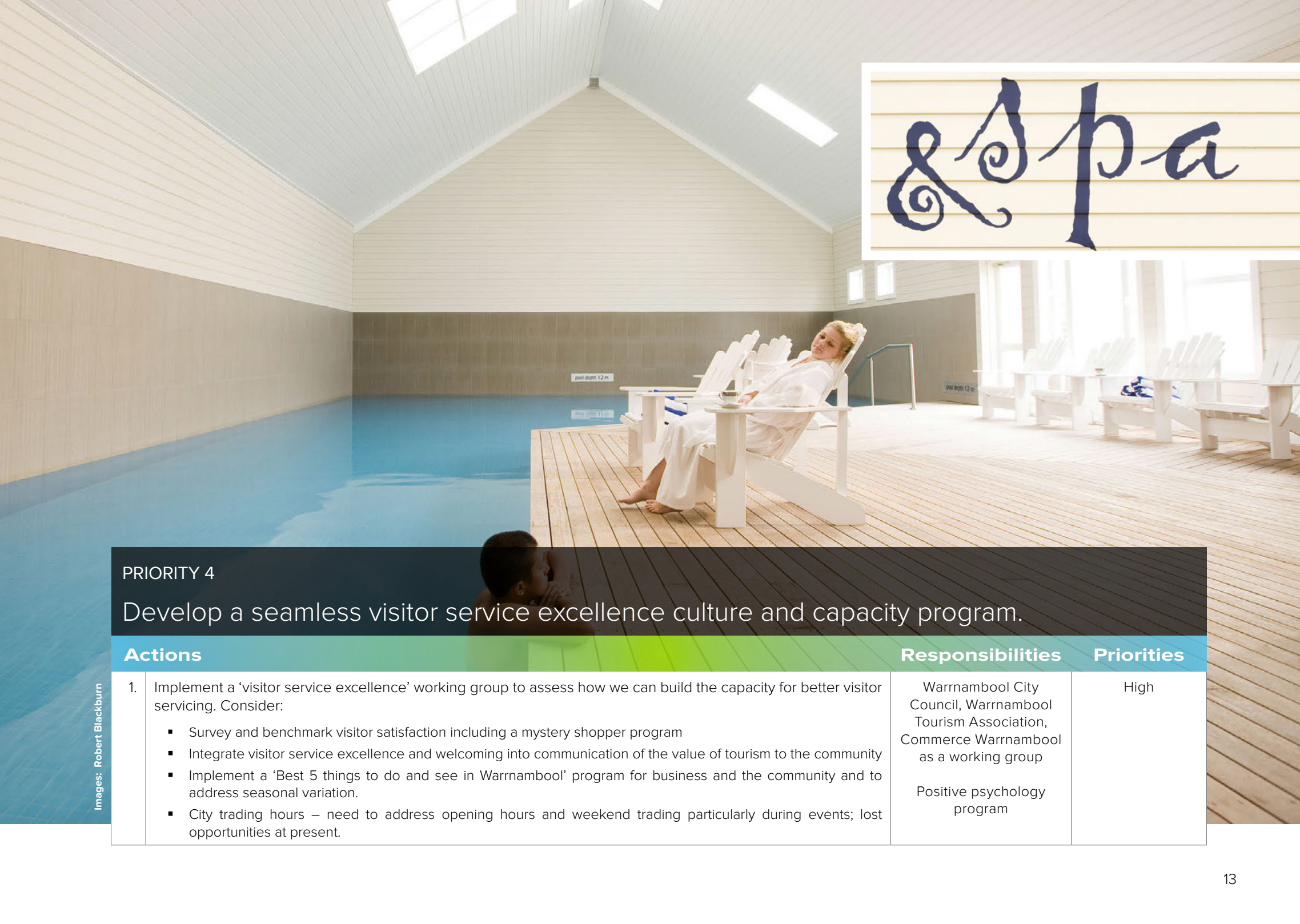


Image: Robert Blackburn

PRIORITY 3

Implement the Flagstaff Hill Master Plan to revitalise the visitor experience.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage and support the Warrnambool City Council to implement the Master Plan including Foreshore Determine long term future of Flagstaff Hill 	Warrnambool City Council	High
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imbed the 'Flagstaff Hill and Great Ocean Road Shipwreck Story' in the proposed gateway Visitor Experience Centres in Torquay, Port Campbell and Colac to encourage visitor dispersal to Warrnambool 	Warrnambool City Council with assistance from Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd	
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feature Flagstaff Hill and the shipwreck story in the Great Ocean Road WIFI hotspots 	Flagstaff Hill	Medium
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate year round Fun4Kids activities with the Flagstaff Hill site. 	Warrnambool City Council	Medium



PRIORITY 4

Develop a seamless visitor service excellence culture and capacity program.

Actions

1. Implement a 'visitor service excellence' working group to assess how we can build the capacity for better visitor servicing. Consider:
 - Survey and benchmark visitor satisfaction including a mystery shopper program
 - Integrate visitor service excellence and welcoming into communication of the value of tourism to the community
 - Implement a 'Best 5 things to do and see in Warrnambool' program for business and the community and to address seasonal variation.
 - City trading hours – need to address opening hours and weekend trading particularly during events; lost opportunities at present.

Responsibilities

Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool Tourism Association, Commerce Warrnambool as a working group

Positive psychology program

Priorities

High

Comments

- The need to communicate the value of creating local jobs allowing locals to remain in the area.
- Important for community to appreciate their relevance in assisting visitors (75% of visitors look for local advice/guidance) and opportunity to significantly increase yield.

Opportunity to encourage locals to talk up Warrnambool.

PRIORITY 5

Determine and promote the value of the visitor economy to the community.

Actions

1. Establish a working group to take the lead in development of a regular communications strategy:
 - Determine and regularly communicate, via multiple mediums, the economic, social/community, cultural and environmental benefits of the visitor economy
 - Feature good news stories, people and visitor business excellence
 - Produce and communicate a seasonal report card on the performance of the visitor economy
 - Establish a program to recognise and promote business excellence e.g. Tourism business and personality of the month Award
 - Provide material to educational organisations on the Warrnambool and Great Ocean Road tourism industry
 - Encourage local business and organisations to use Warrnambool branding and merchandise
 - Undertake a research project to establish and benchmark the retail spend of visitors.

Responsibilities

Great Ocean Road
Regional Tourism Ltd,
Warrnambool Tourism
Association, Commerce
Warrnambool as a working
group taking the lead

Priorities

Medium



PRIORITY 6

Establish partnerships with other Great Ocean Road destinations for mutual cooperation to encourage visitor dispersal.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	Collaborate with Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd to facilitate relationships with other Great Ocean Road destination organisations to identify mutually beneficial cooperation and to undertake cooperative projects e.g. Warrnambool – Port Fairy, Warrnambool – Halls Gap, Warrnambool – Port Campbell	All	High
2.	Invest in proposed Great Ocean Road Visitor Experience Centres to imbed the Flagstaff Hill/ shipwreck story and City by the Sea regional hub information	All	High
3.	Invest in Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd cooperative marketing	All	High
4.	Participate in a Great Ocean Road Visitor Information Centre staff & volunteer familiarisation program.	Warrnambool Tourism Association, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd	Medium



Image: Roger Neal

PRIORITY 7

Develop and implement a risk management plan.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	Review the existence and completeness of risk management plans to include the visitor economy	Warrnambool City Council	Medium
2.	Prepare a specific visitor industry risk management plan including risk identification, mitigation, impact minimisation and recovery		
3.	Communicate and regularly review the plan.		



Image: Roger Neal

Issue raised

Is there an opportunity to have one really effective business and tourism association rather than two separate organisations.?

Many models of tourism and traders associations across Australia are now being combined.

A new group could assist in bringing unity and providing a greater opportunity to communicate where everyone benefits from the visitor economy.

PRIORITY 8

Strengthen the role and performance of local tourism organisations.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	Establish three year Destination Partnership Agreements between Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Warrnambool Tourism Association, Commerce Warrnambool and the Warrnambool City Council which: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Clearly define rolesMaximise business participation in Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd business services and cooperative marketing for mutual benefitIdentifies cooperative projects consistent with this Action Plan	All	High
2.	Warrnambool Tourism Association and Commerce Warrnambool to establish and support an annual program of cooperative projects which contribute to increasing visitor expenditure and satisfaction	Warrnambool Tourism Association, Commerce Warrnambool	Medium
3.	Establish a collaborative leadership model between the City, Warrnambool Tourism Association and Commerce Warrnambool as joint spokespersons on local tourism development, issues and promotion of the value of the visitor economy.	Warrnambool City Council, Warrnambool Tourism Association, Commerce Warrnambool	High