



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



NELSON

DESTINATION ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2025
NOVEMBER 2019



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Nelson 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.

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

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Alison Barnes, Kywong Caravan Park

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Barb Walker, Nelson Cemetery Trust

Cr Karen Stephens

Images courtesy of Sue Carrison, Glenelg Shire Council,
Parks Victoria, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism.

INTRODUCTION



This Destination Action Plan for Nelson identifies key priorities and actions which, if implemented over the next three to five years, will enhance the competitiveness of Nelson within the Great Ocean Road region. 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 Nelson 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 are aimed to make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Nelson visitor economy and visitor experience.

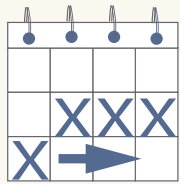
THE VISITOR ECONOMY



Nelson has a vibrant visitor economy particularly over the peak summer season. A strong fishing, camping and family destination, Nelson enjoys good repeat visitation from the 'regular' core market visiting from the broader south west of Victoria and east of South Australia in addition Nelson also attracts visitors from across both states including Melbourne and Adelaide. Nelson does not enjoy strong brand recognition and is often not recognised as a destination of choice but stumbled upon by visitors taking the coastal routes from Mt Gambier to Portland or Warrnambool.

The industry and community would like to increase the 'season' and grow shoulder and off peak visitation. The industry and community recognise that part of this challenge is increasing the range of products, services and experiences available within the town, as well as increasing marketing and promotion, visitor information, access and amenity. Critical to growing the visitor economy of Nelson is retaining its authentic, small town appeal.

OBJECTIVES



Increase visitor length of stay



Increase visitor expenditure



Increase dispersal
— geographical,
seasonal and mid-
week visitation



Increase visitor satisfaction



Increase Industry
& community
engagement

Visitor economy Objectives for the Great Ocean Road Region are:

1. To increase visitor length of stay
2. To increase visitor expenditure
3. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
4. To increase visitor satisfaction plus
5. To increase industry and community engagement, participation and support.

Destination Objectives for Nelson

1. Grow visitation to Nelson – get visitors to think Nelson and give them a reason to stop and stay
2. Extend length of stay in Nelson – encourage overnight stays versus traffic passing through
3. Grow the visitor 'season' beyond Peak – key focus winter (May to September)
4. Increase visitor satisfaction – create a community of Ambassadors.



OUR VISION

Nelson is a well known yet unspoilt place where outdoor adventure enthusiasts and those who appreciate nature come to enjoy the river, walks, beaches, and the enduring charm of the Nelson way of life and the people who live there.

It is an especially popular destination for families who can choose from an array of accommodation and the range of things to do with additional food and dining options, events and activities available in summer to service the visitors in the peak season.

There are many options for tours and activities around Nelson and the Lower Glenelg National Park, however many come just to relax and reconnect with nature in the pretty and peaceful surrounds. Nelson is a leading destination for fishing, canoeing, water-skiing, and bushwalking and although laid back, visitors' needs are met with a range of dining experiences and events delivered by passionate locals.

Nelson is a nature lovers playground. Unspoilt beaches and the Glenelg River provide a haven for soaking up the riches of a coastal town nestled amidst the Lower Glenelg National Park. Visitors are drawn to Nelson for the opportunity to reconnect with nature. Renowned for birdwatching, fishing, canoeing and bush walking. It is a perfect base to explore the bordering areas of both Victoria and South Australia. A thriving and sustainable community welcome visitors and celebrate the chance to share with them.

THINGS WE VALUE





STRENGTHS



Key businesses are doing a great job of visitor servicing and offering great product

Unspoilt iconic natural assets:

- The Glenelg River (Ramsar recognised)
- The Southern Ocean
- Lower Glenelg National Park

Skills of individuals within the community

Active product:

- Great South West Walk
- Glenelg River Canoe Trail
- Fishing

Perfect hub for exploring the surrounding attractions and towns

Attractions:

- Piccaninnie Ponds
- Kilsby Sinkhole
- Princess Margaret Rose Caves
- Coonawarra Wine region
- Ewen's Ponds
- Budj Bim

Towns:

- Portland
- Mount Gambier, Coonawarra, Penola
- Casterton and Hinterland

Nelson's unique natural experiences

- Ramsar classified: wetlands of international importance
- Caving
- Snorkelling
- Riverboat cruises
- High speed waterskiing zones (Taylors Straight, Sandy Waterhole).



CHALLENGES

The key challenges facing the region were discussed. The key challenges to be addressed in this plan include:

1. Lack of infrastructure and visitor amenity to support development of new products and experiences and to deliver a quality visitor experience.
2. Lack of clear signage and river/boating infrastructure.
3. Limited profile (brand) of Nelson as a visitor destination – includes lack of recognition of Nelson's key products and experiences to encourage visitors to stop and stay.
4. Limited digital footprint.
5. High seasonality of the visitor economy and the weather dependency of natural attractions.
6. The need to foster a connected and supportive community including building a stronger relationship and more effective communication with public land managers ie: Department of Land Water and Planning & Nelson Public Reserves Committee of Management, Parks Victoria, Country Fire Authority and Glenelg Shire Council.
7. Limited signal for phone or internet service.
8. Increased cohesion with surrounding towns and destinations especially cross border.
9. Potential for the visual impact of wind farms on the natural landscape to deter visitors.



OPPORTUNITIES

1. To grow the digital literacy of the industry and community – especially social media training and development.
2. Increase opportunities to profile the quality of our natural attractions – Southern Ocean, Glenelg River, Lower Glenelg National Park, Wildlife & Birdlife, Ramsar classified Wetlands.
3. To actively promote the breadth of our water based activities – fishing, boating, kayaking, river-based sightseeing.
4. To activate under-utilised spaces especially during peak periods to increase the product and service offering.
5. To utilise events to support marketing and promotion of the town and our natural assets e.g. Road to River.
6. Maximise existing infrastructure and develop new infrastructure – signage, notice boards to showcase Nelson's offerings.
7. Foster relationships with government agencies and land managers to leverage funding and advocacy.
8. Implementation of the Glenelg Shire Tracks and Trails Strategy.

SUCCESS FACTORS – Diagnostic Rating

Industry research has established that the following characteristics are present in successful destinations that are achieving these visitor economy objectives. The workshop participants considered these characteristics relative to Nelson 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 Nelson.

CHARACTERISTICS	RATING*	COMMENTS
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	5	Individual businesses have focus, but no representative group
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	1	Unfamiliar with Regional Tourism Board (GORRT)
3. Local Government support	5.5	Feeling that focus is on other destinations
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	5	Some stand out leaders in the community. Not consistent and not strongly focussed on tourism leadership
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	1	Not yet – what is in place is not communicated
6. Consistent visitor service excellence	8	All businesses do a great job
7. Research driven cooperative marketing	7	Individual businesses marketing themselves well
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	8	Nature based activities and attractions strong
9. Risk management plans in place	3	Not aware
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	3	

*Ratings are on a scale from 0-10



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, an Implementation Group will be formed. The Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and, in many cases joint responsibility, however 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 key performance indicator priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

HIGH within the first two years

MEDIUM within two to three years

LOW within three to five years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by 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.



PRIORITY 1 MARKETING

Develop a marketing and promotional strategy to position Nelson as a key destination.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.1 Develop Brand positioning for Nelson.	Implementation Group	High
1.2 Develop brand tools and assets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Toolkit ▪ Professional imagery ▪ Video content. 	Implementation Group	High
1.3 Evolve Nelson's digital footprint including – redevelopment of www.nelsonvictoria.com.au website – growing operator website integration and content.	Implementation Group Nelson Tourism Association	High
1.4 Develop Industry and community training to support growing digital literacy and marketing skills.	Implementation Group	High
1.5 Develop a program to support cross operator promotion of Nelson businesses.	Implementation Group	Medium
1.6 Develop itineraries and location guides for promotion and distribution to visitors.	Implementation Group	Medium



PRIORITY 2
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Creating a connected and supportive community.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
2.1 Formalise Implementation Group comprising of community and industry stakeholders including representatives from Nelson Tourism Association, Glenelg Shire Council, GORRT, Parks Victoria and Nelson Public Reserves Committee of Management.	Implementation Group GORRT/Glenelg Shire Council	High
2.2 Hold regular community networking events to build relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop an open day/s or product showcase to support building community knowledge of key businessesLaunch/success story workshop or eventTraining such as first aid or de-fib.	Implementation Group	High
2.3 Establish a 'Nelson News' as a vehicle to share what's happening to industry and community <ul style="list-style-type: none">Publish brochureDigital forum.	Implementation Group	High
2.4 Create an information board and/or network of information boards around town to build industry & community awareness of what's on etc.	Implementation Group	High



PRIORITY 3

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Develop the product and visitor services of Nelson to grow length of stay and repeat visitation.

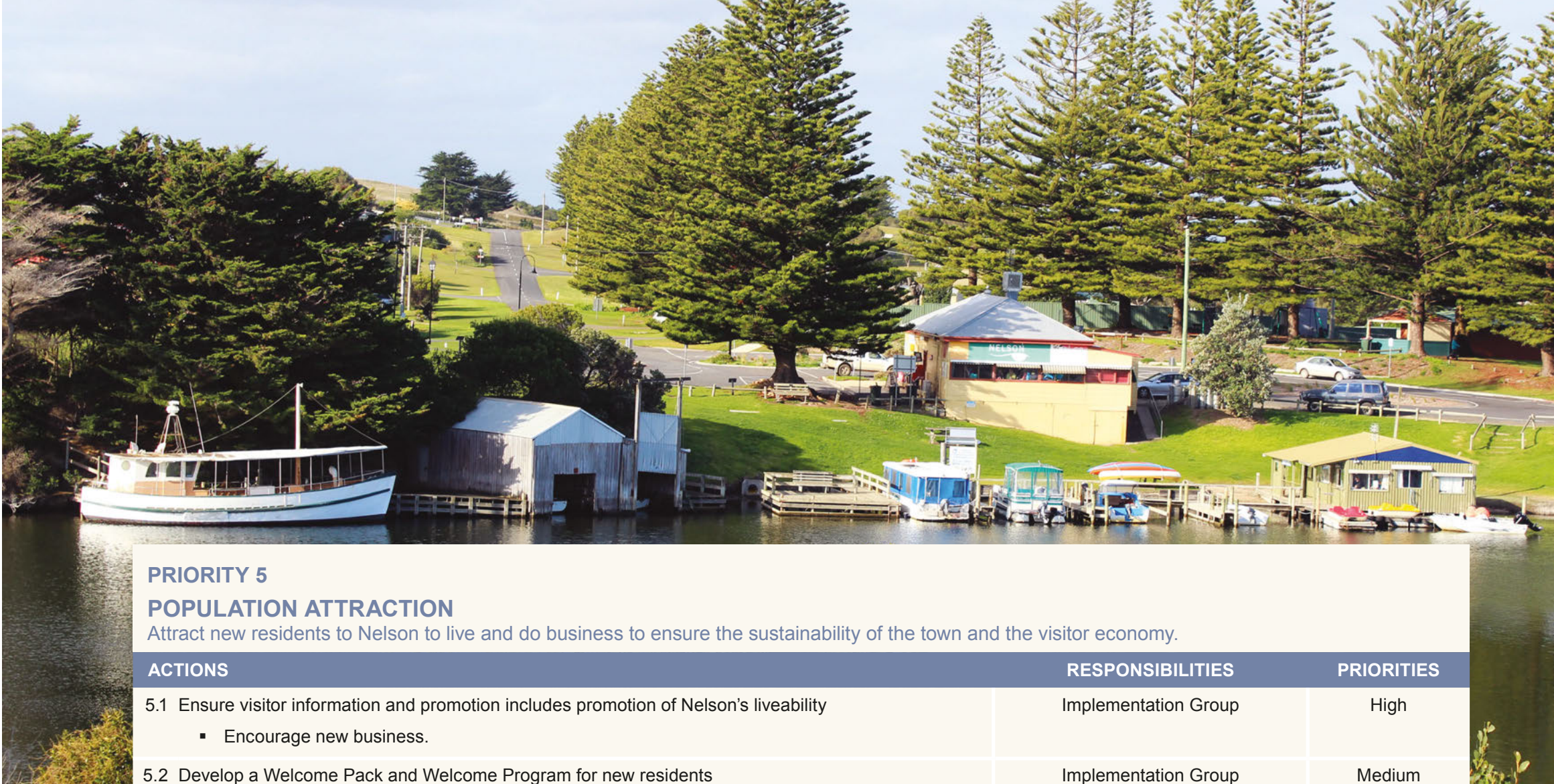
ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
3.1 Explore the development of events. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Markets and night cinema Open fishing comp. 	Glenelg Shire Council	Low
3.2 Build Family activities to cultivate this key market. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Spot it' treasure hunt Learn to fish. 	Implementation Group and individual operators	Medium
3.3 Develop packages or deals to encourage longer stays, visitation in off peak/shoulder periods.	Implementation Group and individual operators	Medium
3.4 Develop a loyalty program to encourage repeat visitation.	Implementation Group and individual operators	High
3.5 Explore opportunities to reduce planning barriers that may allow visitation in Summer (including evenings). For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food/ice creams Retail stalls. 	Pop up products to support peak visitation in Summer (including evenings). For example: Implementation Group and Glenelg Shire Council	Low
3.6 Explore opportunities to grow access to the history of Nelson. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VIC display Digitalising photo collection Open day/s or event Engage Casterton District Historical Society for Resources. 	Implementation Group and Glenelg Shire Council	Medium



PRIORITY 4 INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop support infrastructure to maximise access to Nelson's natural attraction and amenity to support product development.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
<p>4.1 Advocate for improvements to town signage and identification of key attractions and places of interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of existing signs Creation of a dedicated Visitor Information Bay Participate in regional signage project. 	Implementation Group	High
<p>4.2 Advocate and support the upgrade of existing amenities – develop a prioritisation plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotunda Public toilets Picnic spots – shelter Livingstone walk and boardwalk Consider public art/murals. 	Implementation Group	High
<p>4.3 Advocate and explore funding programs to develop new public amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Footpaths Cycling and mountain biking trails Implementation of Glenelg Shire Tracks and Trails Strategy. 	Implementation Group	Medium-Low



PRIORITY 5

POPULATION ATTRACTION

Attract new residents to Nelson to live and do business to ensure the sustainability of the town and the visitor economy.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
5.1 Ensure visitor information and promotion includes promotion of Nelson's liveability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage new business. 	Implementation Group	High
5.2 Develop a Welcome Pack and Welcome Program for new residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote community networking etc. 	Implementation Group	Medium
5.3 Advocate for greater Transport opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of new Tour business. 	Implementation Group	Medium-Ongoing
5.4 Support Glenelg Shire Council's plans around community connectivity and livability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council Plan 2017-21 (Shaping our future booklet) Key theme (1 of 5); Growing Glenelg; Promote the shire to attract new residents/ immigration & refugee relocation Market the shire as attractive and appealing place to live. 	Implementation Group	Medium