



Australian Government

BUILDING OUR FUTURE



CASTERTON

DESTINATION ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2025

JANUARY 2021



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED

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INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Casterton Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd. The Plan was originally developed in 2018 and this review facilitated in 2020.

The process brought together representatives from all stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy; Glenelg Shire councillors and staff, the Casterton Business and District Association, local business and community representatives. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing Casterton and to establish achievable, affordable priorities that if delivered would increase the competitiveness of Casterton as a visitor destination.

The Plan focuses on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities identified by the group, plus agreed priorities and actions that will enhance the sustainability, growth and vibrancy of Casterton as a visitor destination. Specifically we would like to thank the following individuals that participated in the 2020 destination action plan development process:

DESTINATION ACTION PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP

Facilitator

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- Michelle Mitchell
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- Greg Burgoyne
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- Mick Leehane
- John Sarrinen
- Jan Sarrinen
- Owen Stephens
- Isobel Esmore
- Cr Chrissy Hawker
- Cr Anita Rank

During its development, several other members of the Casterton community took part in providing input into reviewing this Plan.

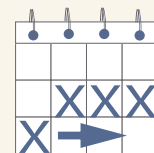
Images courtesy of Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism





VISITOR ECONOMY

The visitor economy describes the contribution of all visitors to the local economy including leisure travellers (domestic and international), visiting friends and relatives, holiday/part-time residents, business travellers, students, day trippers and travellers in transit on a larger journey. Their expenditure is new money contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value, provision of services, facilities and activities in the community. A vibrant visitor economy leads to population attraction and a vibrant community.



Increase visitor length of stay



Increase visitor satisfaction



Increase visitor expenditure



Increase dispersal — geographical, seasonal and mid-week visitation



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.

Additional Destination Objectives for Casterton

1. Business Development – new tourism product including retail and dining
2. Population attraction and diversity
3. Local collaboration and cohesion fostering partnerships and alliances.



VISION

Casterton is a town where visitors are embraced and encouraged by the vibrant community to share in and celebrate the living culture, natural assets and rich heritage.

VALUES



Wannon River
 connection
 Peaceful
 Artists
 History
 connection
 Birthplace of the Kelpie
 History
 Friendly
 Kelpie Walking Trail
 Rural
 Relaxing
 Heritage
 touring
 Artists
 Events
 Peaceful
 Iconic
 Events
 Country Charm
 Families
 Heritage
 Vibrant
 touring
 Friendly
 Unique Geography
 Family friendly
 Attractions
 Kelpie
 History
 Community



CHALLENGES

1. Sense of arrival

- Main Street – tired infrastructure and vacant shops, lack of signage

2. Product

- Lack of diverse product catering to the needs of visitors – including range of accommodation, retail and food offering, and limited opening hours

3. Community connectedness and engagement

- No adequately resourced single inclusive body to represent tourism, coordinate activity and facilitate cross organisation coordination of communication, activity and networking

4. Lack of consistent, consolidated and coordinated marketing and promotion

5. Geographic isolation

6. Population

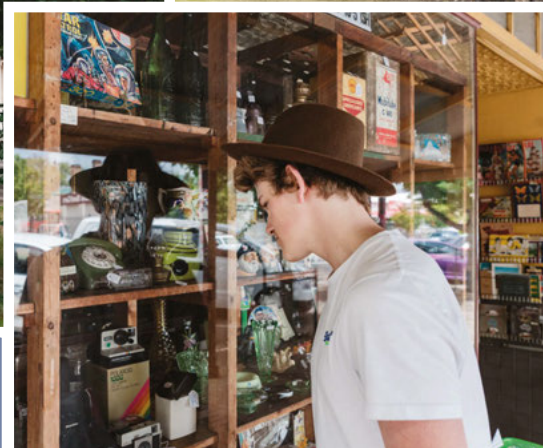
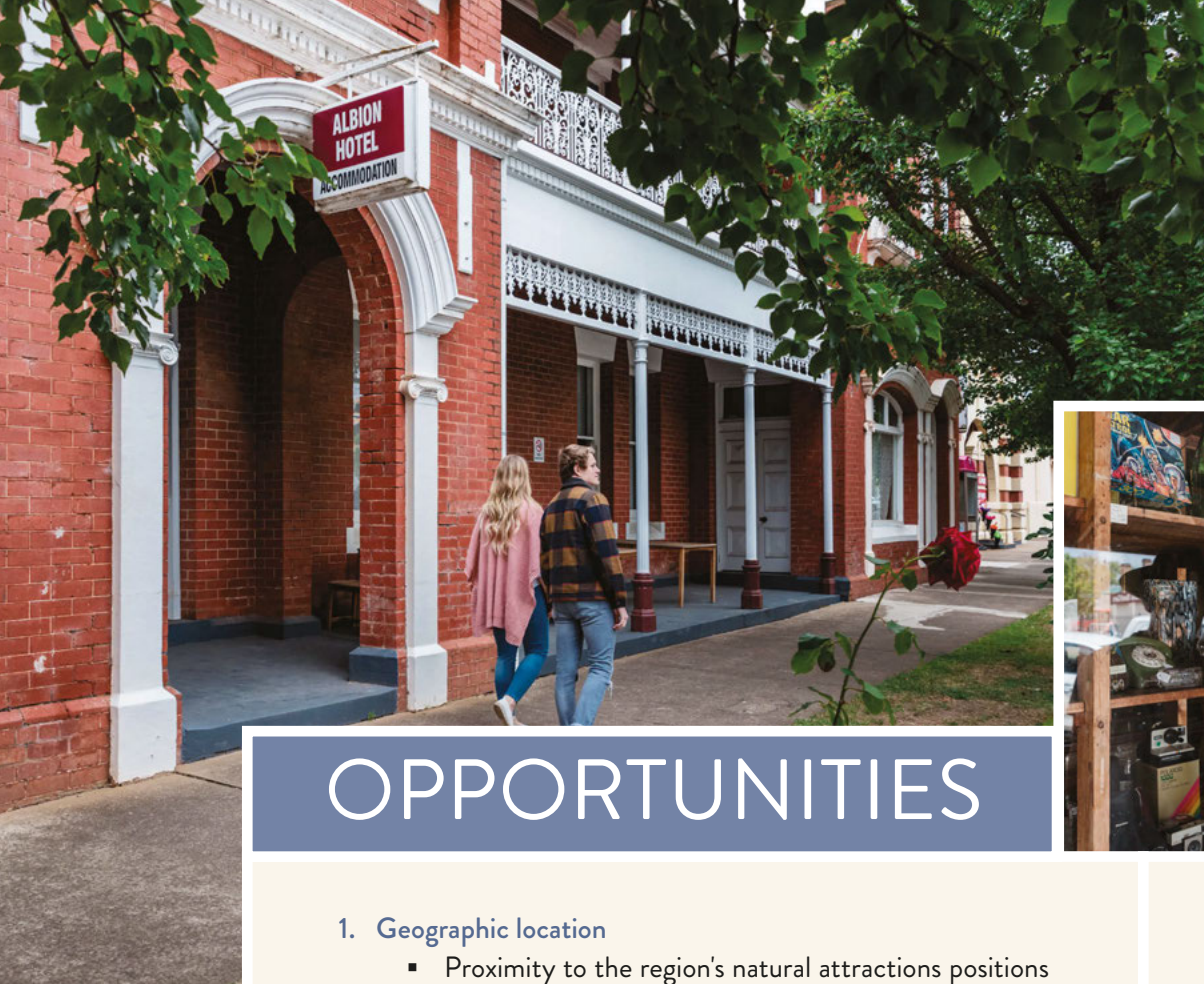
- Limited opportunities for employment, engagement in community activities and succession planning to engage younger people

7. Event sustainability

- Funding and resourcing to grow event program and sustain existing events

8. Collaboration and alliances

- Including Cross Border.



OPPORTUNITIES

1. Geographic location

- Proximity to the region's natural attractions positions Casterton as the HUB or stopover to visit: Great Ocean Road, Coonawarra, Grampians, Budj Bim, Naracoorte Caves

2. Coordinated marketing

- Engagement of a resource to coordinate promotional activity, collaboration and community connection and assist active marketing by individual businesses.

3. Product development to stimulate year round visitation including

- Street Art or Mural to create photo opportunity, The Rail Trail, Events and accommodation product

4. Event development

- Opportunity to build on existing events, collaborate and share resources to grow an even richer, more sustainable event calendar

5. Community engagement

- Provide opportunities to engage young people and coordinate community groups

6. Enhance existing and create new infrastructure and visitor amenity/attraction

- Picnic areas, lookouts etc.
- Upgrades to Caravan Park



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 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 two years

MEDIUM within two to three years

LOW within five years

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



PRIORITY 1

DEVELOP LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Build a connected, engaged and collaborative visitor economy for Casterton

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. Establish a Reference Group (RG) to collaboratively focus on implementing this Plan, including community stakeholders, CBDA, Council and GORRT representation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The group will meet quarterly to identify priorities, report on progress and assist to integrate actions within this Plan in those of other community groups, Council and GORRT Utilise governance structure of CBDA and operate as an independent sub committee. 	Council, GORRT, CBDA	High
2. Complete audits for Community Groups, Associations and Event Committees and Casterton Products and Experiences (Appendices to this Plan).	Council, RG	High – Completed (see appendix 1 & 2)
3. Coordinate regular communication and networking events with Casterton’s visitor economy stakeholders AND community, to foster connection, collaboration, resource and information sharing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial focus to be announcement of key priorities for the next 6-12 months Potential to hold quarterly or annual events Increasing the breadth of distribution of existing Newsletters Engage with new businesses and community members. 	RG	High



PRIORITY 1 cont.

DEVELOP LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Build a connected, engaged and collaborative visitor economy for Casterton

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
<p>4. Develop Strategic partnerships with nearby destinations to encourage stop overs and visits on route to those attractions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Ocean Road ▪ Limestone Coast ▪ Grampians ▪ Coonawarra ▪ Major attractions – UNESCO listed Budj Bim and Naracoorte Caves ▪ Major touring route – Two States touring route 	RG/ Council/ GORRT	High (Ongoing)
<p>5. Continue to create and support opportunities for coordination of events to encourage collaboration and event sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharing of resources and infrastructure ▪ Cross-promotion to encourage repeat visitation. 	Council and event organisers	High



PRIORITY 2

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Grow Casterton’s product offering and leverage from existing tourism product

ACTIONS

1. Develop a program to support tourism operators leveraging existing tourism programs:
 - Maintain CBDA local business database and provide electronic Newsletters (see Action 1.2)
 - Add CBDA business database to databases of strategic partners (i.e. GORRT, Limestone Coast, Grampians)
 - Develop key messages to actively promote Casterton through existing channels (see Action 3.2)
 - Identify and support business participation in industry training and workshop opportunities
 - Develop a business resources hub to provide businesses with tools and resources to support them developing their business and product offering.
2. Develop a plan and criteria to identify and prioritise infrastructure needs to provide visitor amenity and attractions. Examples:
 - Main street rejuvenation (incentives to property owners/businesses?)
 - Develop railway precinct for events
 - Wayfinding signage – road and pedestrian
 - Picnic and BBQ areas including the Caravan Park
 - Viewing platforms/lookouts
 - Walking trails, e.g. Kelpie Trail & Wannon Junction Walking Track
 - Public amenity including toilets.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RG, CBDA, Council
and GORRT

Council in consultation
with stakeholders

PRIORITIES

High
(Ongoing)

High



PRIORITY 2 cont.

DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

Grow Casterton's product offering and leverage from existing tourism product

ACTIONS

3. Advocate for funding through state and federal government programs to implement priority infrastructure projects identified in Action 2.2:

- The Rail Trail
- Project to utilise Railway precinct
- A new town street art project (murals, sculpture, music garden or rock garden project)
- Sense of arrival/town entrance project
- Pedestrian wayfinding in the Casterton Township
- Projects to celebrate the town's distinctive historic architecture.

RESPONSIBILITIES

RG/ CBDA/ Council and GORRT

PRIORITIES

Medium – High (Ongoing)

4. Investigate and support the development of new products, experiences and services including:

- Open art studios
- Locally led tours
- Collaborations between businesses
- New products, experiences within existing businesses.

Council, RG

Low – Medium

Australian Kelpie Centre



PRIORITY 3 DESTINATION MARKETING

Celebrate Casterton's tourism product offering

ACTIONS

1. Develop promotional initiatives for Casterton, extending on the I AM CASTERTON brand; For instance *Discover your own backyard*, *Selfie with a Kelpie*, *Say Giddy on your Way*.
2. Support and enable consistent promotion of Casterton, evolving the I AM CASTERTON brand:
 - Identify unique brand positioning, signature product and must do experiences through a coordinated process, validated with community and business input (See appendix B)
 - Develop a brand toolkit to assist businesses and event organisers with tools, tips and resources to enable the consistent promotion of Casterton. The toolkit will identify must do experiences and signature events.
 - Evolve existing promotional materials and develop new ones to ensure the brand is reflected across all print and digital platforms and in any destination marketing opportunities
 - Create @iamcasterton for consumer messaging on social media (consolidate community social media accounts)
 - Leverage existing marketing and promotional opportunities with strategic partners.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Council, GORRT, RG

GORRT, Council with
RG support

PRIORITIES

High

High



PRIORITY 3 cont.

DESTINATION MARKETING

Celebrate Casterton's tourism product offering

ACTIONS

3. Support co-operative marketing opportunities for individual businesses to leverage from Council and GOR marketing programs:
- Promote active marketing of individual businesses
 - Support operators to develop a digital presence with strategic links to destination and regional online content.

Council & GORRT with
CBDA, RG support

High
(Ongoing)

4. Continue to develop content and resources to package product and experiences:
- Build inspirational and informational content on www.iamcasterton.com.au microsite (on www.iamportland.com.au) including:
 - Touring routes and itineraries
 - Blogs/stories.

Council & GORRT

Medium – High
(Ongoing)

5. Collaborate with neighbouring regions and destinations to coordinate cross-promotional opportunities.

Council & GORRT

Medium
(Ongoing)



PRIORITY 4

VISITOR SERVICING

Foster a collaborative approach to a visitor servicing culture in Casterton

ACTIONS

1. Encourage everybody to work together so that Casterton's friendly and welcoming culture is felt in the visitor experience and we are all telling the same Casterton 'story', encouraging those who pass through to stay longer in Casterton:
 - Enhance our visitor servicing at all customer touch points from online marketing and social media to signage and face to face interactions
 - Encourage all business to include Casterton information and cross promotion of products, experiences and services on their own marketing channels, with emphasis on collaborations and packaging.
 - Encourage use of Brand Toolkit (See action 3.2) to assist in providing visitor information on individual business websites and social media – this would include a top 5 'Must dos' to encourage all businesses to actively promote Casterton's signature experiences to visitors
 - Encourage businesses to collaborate to ensure options for dining and retail are available to encourage visitors to stop
 - Customer Service Training including development of script for industry and community to use when interacting with visitors e.g. 'Where are you heading? Did you see/are you going to see x, y, z while you were here?
 - Share and promote training and development resources and opportunities
 - Encourage participation in Glenelg Shire Business Awards and other programs (e.g. Victorian Tourism Awards)
 - Information or product showcase nights (could be combined with networking Action 1.2).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Led by Council,
supported by CBDA –
All stakeholder's support
required

PRIORITIES

High



PRIORITY 4 cont.

VISITOR SERVICING

Foster a collaborative approach to a visitor servicing culture in Casterton

ACTIONS

2. Ensure the Visitor Information Centre supports all of the above, is recognised and utilised by all stakeholders as portal for the business community:
 - Providing good quality and up to date information on local visitor experiences and community events.
3. Develop a visitor servicing kit and training program to support businesses delivering a better visitor experience excellence program:
 - Developed in consultation with key stakeholders.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Council

Council, GORRT,
CBDA, RG

PRIORITIES

High
(Ongoing)

Medium – High