

YARRA VALLEY AND  
DANDENONG RANGES

# DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

7 MINUTE EXPRESS OVERVIEW



YARRA RANGES TOURISM

# Our Destination Vision

## The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges is naturally impressive. Today and tomorrow.

**The region is cherished by locals and loved by visitors for its natural beauty, including lush forests, winding trails, and captivating wildlife.**

**With renowned wineries, fine dining, a thriving arts and cultural scene, wellness retreats and famous attractions like the Puffing Billy Railway and Healesville Sanctuary, visitor enthusiasm for the region is strong.**

### Challenges create opportunity

Residents and local businesses recognise tourism's positive impact on the regional economy, creating new jobs and offering more attractions for locals to enjoy. But this support is dependent on tourism development being regenerative.

By 2033 Melbourne's growing population, coupled with an ever-increasing appetite for nature-based experiences on their doorstep, will see the already over-represented day trips to the region double from the current 4.5million to 9million per annum. This increasing popularity poses challenges for managing visitor growth sustainably.

#### Doing nothing is not an option!

Without a change in tourism strategy and the creation of new capacity, visitor growth will increase congestion on local roads and in towns, put pressure on existing amenities and negatively impact the region's liveability and natural environment.

### A plan for a thriving future

To address these challenges, the first-ever Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges (YVDR) has been developed via extensive community and industry consultation.

The DMP is a road map which delivers a shared vision to create a sustainable, resilient and thriving tourism economy, one that is embraced by residents, visitors and businesses alike.

The DMP aims to promote sustainable tourism by encouraging mid-week, overnight and longer stays. It is a forward-looking plan which will improve and expand the visitor experience while making this an even better place to live, supporting tourism development without compromising the region's natural attributes. The DMP outlines initiatives across various sectors, including transportation, accommodation, and leveraging existing tourism assets (spaces and places) and creating new infrastructure to provide world-class experiences that achieve mutual objectives.

We are creating a catalyst for a more connected and collaborative approach. A unique model that looks toward nature-centric experiences, active lifestyles, wellness, and unique, sustainable local interactions. It seeks to maintain a sense of discovery, prioritise First Peoples' culture, promote premier events, and ensure accessibility for all.

The region's connection to nature, embodied within its Green Wedge zones and natural attributes, is a standout value. Preserving these natural assets is crucial for future visitation and the region's ongoing liveability. The increasing demand for wellness and nature-based tourism underscores the importance of protecting and showcasing the region's natural beauty.

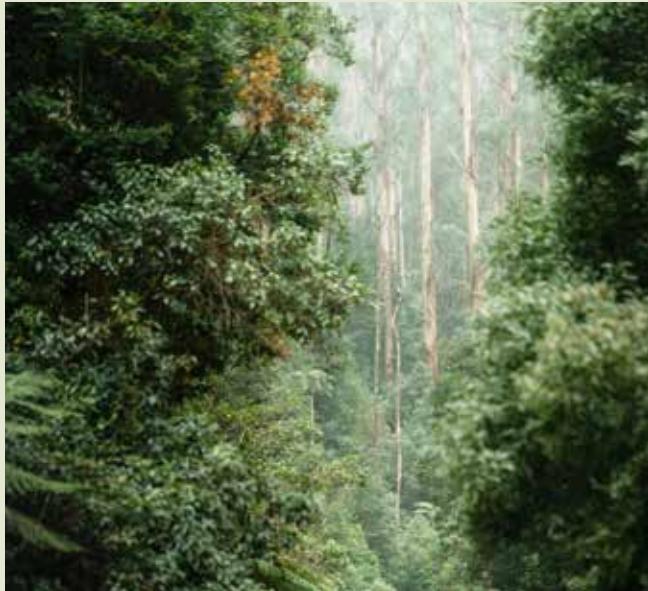
**Our plan develops a shared destination vision, one which embeds Traditional Owner guiding principles and cultural values.**

**Implementation will involve collaboration with State and local governments, industry stakeholders, community organisations, and residents.**

The Destination Management Plan and our shared vision for this distinctive region position the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges as a memorable, eco-friendly and thriving tourism destination, welcoming visitors to experience its natural wonders, diverse attractions, and rich cultural heritage while ensuring the well-being of residents, renewal of public spaces and protection of the environment.



# Where will our region be in 2033?



**I**n 2033 the Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges region thrives as a sustainable tourism experience destination, featured on every travel guide's "must-see" list. Locals embrace the influx of visitors, as they also enjoy the new attractions and increased career opportunities. Cohesive planning ensures sustainable growth, with accommodation for workers and visitors that complements its distinctive environment and upgraded transport links which improve connection throughout the region.

Visitors revel in nature and the sense of discovery, from wellness retreats to bike, hike and cultural trails that are both spectacularly scenic and adventurous. Iconic attractions, from giant Redwoods to Puffing Billy Railway and the Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda enchant visitors of all ages.

First Peoples values inform the visitor journey, where galleries and cultural sites offer diverse experiences, while evenings sparkle with light shows and culinary delights. Wine and gin tastings at top-rated wineries and distilleries celebrate local produce, while event activities attract niche visitors off-peak.

With accommodation ranging from B&Bs to luxury hotels, the region invites visitors to stay, rest and explore its beauty anew each day.

## So, what's the plan?

Our aim is to develop a vibrant, thriving tourism economy, manage increased visitation from Melbourne, and support community and visitors alike while maintaining the region's natural beauty through a strategic and regenerative approach.

The DMP promotes responsible tourism that strikes a balance between development and preservation to ensure that the region's natural surroundings continue to be enjoyed by future generations.

To achieve the region's ambitions, the DMP has developed four objectives, supported by eight strategic priorities – Our Catalysts for Success!

## Four objectives that deliver

### 01. Transform how visitors experience our region – driving regional economic benefit.

Generate the capability and attractions that shift behaviour from weekend day trips to overnight and mid-week visitation, increasing visitor length of stay and yield.

### 02. Create better visitor experiences.

Ensure excellence across the entire visitor journey, developing and enticing exploration through innovative, integrated attractions which enhance our naturally impressive region.

### 03. Enhance liveability, expand and improve amenity.

Deliver projects which transform the region's accommodation, transport, connections and accessibility for visitors and for community.

### 04. Increase support for tourism throughout the region.

Enabling a sustainable, vibrant visitor economy which advances benefit for all who live, work and play in the region.

# Catalysts for Success

## Our 8 Strategic Priorities to Manage Growth Sustainably.

These are our Destination Enablers. They work across the three dynamic categories of People, Planning and Place. They will help us to drive our Destination Product Priorities.

### 1. Developing a night-time and mid-week visitor economy.

Repositioning the region as an exciting and enjoyable destination to visit during the week and at nighttime. Visitors will love exploring the region away from the weekend crowds, and businesses will embrace the opportunity to tailor their offerings.

### 2. Creating an effective statutory planning context.

Environmentally aware planning overlays which work with the Green Wedge zoning to enhance liveability, while ensuring sustainable and innovative development of the infrastructure required by community and visitors for today and tomorrow. Achieving the right balance between development necessary for growth and the sustainability of the region's natural attributes.

### 3. Accommodation for visitors and workers.

Unlock the economic potential for skilled workers and high-yield visitation, delivering solutions which are high impact for the economy and low impact for the environment. Coordinated advocacy to the state and local government authorities to streamline planning processes and overcome current challenges.

### 4. Improving transport and accessibility.

Transform the region's transport, connections and accessibility for visitors and for community, via a sustainable whole of region integrated strategy that shifts many visitors to alternative tour and shared transport options. Visitors will be able to access and explore the region more easily, while residents and workers will have improved mobility and transportation options.

### 5. Develop and leverage new attractions and experiences.

Delivering world-class nature-based experiences, embedding First Peoples values and experiences across all of tourism, and elevating the region's food and drink reputation. Lead the development of a resilient food and drink ecosystem which comes to personify the region, linking the restaurant table, cellar door, distillery, on-farm and farm gate experiences.

### 6. Leadership, advocacy and governance.

Creating One Voice and One Message to deliver sustainable tourism efficiently and effectively.

### 7. Marketing and distributing the message.

Targeting transformative visitor behaviour changes through collective marketing and visitor resources.

### 8. Support and enable a sustainable workforce.

Growing the region's future visitor economy capabilities through skill development and expanded resources, from alternative recruitment to providing support and amenities.

#### Focused regional initiatives that differentiate

In addition to the eight strategic priorities there are a number of additional local area initiatives which will maximise the benefit of the DMP for the region.

These initiatives create a range of targeted opportunities across the region's Local Area Precincts to develop and deliver new and emerging experiences. These include Wellness, Tours & Attractions; a new region-wide and integrated approach to Arts and Culture; Events that showcase the Naturally Impressive Region; developing new Infrastructure which invests in a sustainable future; and enabling shared Data and Insights across the sector, creating an Informed Future.

## Like to know more?

Visit [www.visityarravalley.com.au/yarrarangestourism/about-1/destination-management-plan](http://www.visityarravalley.com.au/yarrarangestourism/about-1/destination-management-plan)

Here you will find:

- Fast Facts.
- An Introductory Video.
- Overview & Actions Document – 36 pages providing a summary of key areas including Destination Product Priorities.
- The Destination Management Plan – extensive documentation of full plan in detail.
- Local Area Plans and Workforce Plan.

Yarra Ranges Tourism is grateful to the State Government through the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), Yarra Ranges Council (YRC) and Nillumbik Shire Council (NSC) for their funding contributions to producing this Destination Management Plan for the benefit of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, Bunurong and Taungurung peoples of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges on which we live, work and play and pay our deepest respect to Elders past and present.

**[yarrarangestourism.com.au](http://yarrarangestourism.com.au)**