

Industry Project Update #2

- **Destination Management Plan Progress Update**
- **Research and Stakeholder Consultation**
- **Local Area Plans (LAPs) and Workforce Plan (WFP)**



Major Project Update #2

Destination Management Plan

Significant progress has been made on the Destination Management Plan (DMP)/Local Area Plan (LAP)/Workforce Plan (WFP) Project for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges since commencing in October.

The purpose of the project is to develop a 10-year tourism strategic masterplan for the region. The DMP/LAP/WFP will lay the foundations for sustainable destination growth, prosperity and development for the region. It will balance economic priorities with the region's social, environmental and cultural fabric to strengthen the visitor economy, its recovery and long-term sustainability as a key tourism destination. As a region most suffering from the impacts of the pandemic and Melbourne lockdowns, the timing is ideal for such an important project.

One of the first tasks for the project was establishing a group to oversee the governance and direction of the project, known as the DMP Project Steering Committee (PSC). Two meetings have been held to date with representation from Yarra Ranges Tourism, Shire of Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik Shire Council, Manningham City Council, the Transport sector, Wine Yarra Valley, Tourism Network Yarra Valley, Nillumbik Tourism Association, Dandenong Ranges Tourism and Warburton Valley CEDA

Research and Stakeholder Engagement

The consultant team engaged to undertake the DMP is ODIN360, a consortium with a wide variety of experience in the tourism industry and related areas. The team includes specialists with backgrounds in tourism & events, food & wine, communities, indigenous, economic sustainability and workforce planning and research, to address the range of important issues needed to be considered in future planning for the region.

Work by the consultants on the DMP/LAP/WFP project commenced with a number of research and stakeholder engagement activities to seek insights from residents, industry, government, visitors and prospective visitors. Tasks included:

- Economic, planning and accommodation analyses
- Online surveys distributed locally, regionally and south-east Australia
- 1:1 discussions with individuals
- Industry and local government workshops

Workshops for the industry were also held during November, with particular focus on different tourism products and services:

- Food & Drink
- Attractions & Events
- Accommodation
- Industry Groups

The purpose of these workshops was to identify perspectives on the future vision and explore the various strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities for the region.

With this significant amount of work undertaken, themes and commonalities are emerging. The most positive insight is the alignment of a desired future vision for the region between residents and industry - ideally clean, green and natural, as well as a quality offering of food, drink and outdoor products/events/experiences.

Research and engagement identified that visitors are seeking immersive experiences, and what people seek in a holiday can be largely met by the strengths of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region, particularly the scenery and natural environment. Research also suggests a strong desire to regenerate the local economy, reconnect communities and develop tourism sustainably.

Preliminary insights to date also found key challenges regarding skills and labour shortages, accommodation, transport and planning. As most visitation to the region is currently weekend day trips, consideration will also be given to what is required to grow overnight and midweek visits. These and other important matters will be further explored in the project's next phase.

Local Area Plans (LAPs) and Workforce Plan (WFP)

Due to the variation in visitor behaviours across the region, it was determined to break up the region into four key sub-regions: Nillumbik Area, Yarra Valley Area, Warburton Valley Area and Dandenong Ranges Area. This allows for more accurate analysis and specific planning to be conducted within each sub-region. Preparation of the Local Area Plans will commence in 2023.

In addition, a Workforce Plan will be developed as part of the project to identify the labour and skills required to support the growth and development of tourism in the region. Research on workforce matters has commenced and will continue into the new year.

Feedback

The consultants are on-track and progressing the project to schedule. The project's next phase involves compiling all research, outlining future vision and concepts, and gaining further feedback from industry and communities across the region.

If you have any questions regarding the DMP, please get in touch with Stacey Daniel, Project Manager on stacey@yarraranges tourism.com.au