

YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES

LOCAL AREA PLAN

DECEMBER 2023 VI.0

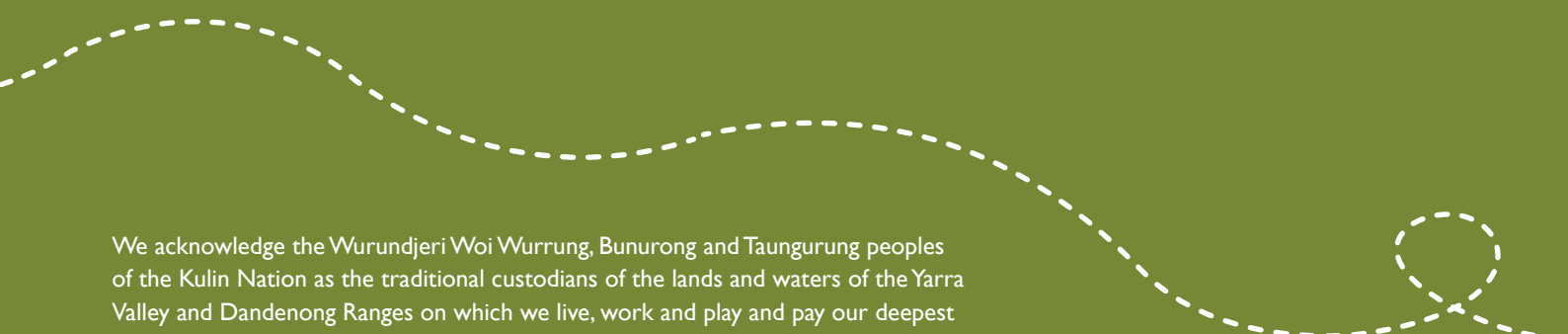
YARRA VALLEY



YARRA RANGES TOURISM

Contents

1.	Welcome	3
2.	The Yarra Valley - Naturally impressive - today and tomorrow	4
3.	What is a Local Area Plan?	6
4.	Adopting world's best practice for a sustainable tourism destination	7
5.	Overview of the Region	9
6.	Importance and Role of Tourism in Yarra Valley	10
7.	What we heard through consultation	12
8.	SWOT	18
9.	Key objectives	19
10.	Strategic Priorities and Additional Regional Initiatives	21
	10a Yarra Valley Priorities and Initiatives	22
	10b. Regional Priorities and Initiatives	34
	Glossary	46



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.

I. Welcome

The Yarra Valley is a place that locals cherish and visitors love to explore.

And for good reason.

The region's captivating natural attributes – winding trails, rolling vineyards, mountain views, sparkling rivers and streams and abundant wildlife – offer beauty at every turn.

Local wineries top Australia's "best of" lists and independent brewers and distillers offer unique experiences. Fine dining or farm produce around quaint towns provide the perfect outing.

Famous attractions – Healesville Sanctuary and the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie along with the many wineries – build happy memories for every generation.

For all these reasons, visitor enthusiasm for the Yarra Valley is strong.

This is especially true when it comes to day trip visitors, with visitation by this dominant form of visitation set to double in the next decade. This poses a core challenge for the region to manage.

Local people and businesses support growing tourism. They recognise the positive impact tourism has on the regional economy, to create new jobs and offer more attractions for locals to enjoy.

But this support is dependent on tourism development and growth being sustainable and regenerative.

In essence, this means being able to accommodate more visitors and offer more experiences, but without reducing the region's liveability and ensuring the region's natural attributes remain preserved and protected.

Doing nothing is not an option. Without a change in tourism strategy, visitor growth will increase congestion on local roads and in towns, put pressure on existing amenities and negatively impact the natural environment.

This Local Area Plan for the Yarra Valley, is accompanied by a broader Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. While the DMP sets a strategy across the entire YVDR region, sub-regional action plans have also been developed for each of the Local Areas – Western Yarra Valley, Yarra Valley, Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. These local area plans align to the DMP.

These plans set out a high level 10-year plan which identifies the core strategic directions to deliver sustainable tourism for the region.

The local area plans and the DMP outline initiatives and investment for areas – such as transport, accommodation, planning, food & drink, events and attractions, essential services and local amenities. Each initiative helps meet four key objectives – all aligned to creating and ensuring sustainable tourism including

1. Grow economic benefits of tourism by changing visitor travel behaviour
 - a. increase visitor yield and length of stay
 - b. shift day trip to overnight visitation
 - c. shift weekend to mid-week visitation
2. Improve the visitor experience
3. Improve liveability
4. Improve support for tourism in Yarra Valley

Importantly, the plans adopt a world's best practice sustainability framework. It ensures that Traditional Owner guiding principles and cultural values are also embedded in the delivery of these plans.

To give it the best chance of success, this local area plan and DMP will be implemented and guided by engagement with state and local governments, industry and tourism businesses, workers, Traditional Owners, educational institutions, community organisations, local residents and visitors.

There are challenges to address, however these are outweighed by a unique and exciting opportunity – to harness a collective goodwill to prepare the region for the predicted future tourism demand whilst maintaining the "Naturally Impressive" appeal to visitors and locals.



2. The Yarra Valley – Naturally Impressive – Today and tomorrow

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges destination vision

“Naturally *Impressive*”

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges (YVDR) is a diverse region that has a range of attributes that appeal to and are embraced by visitors and residents. However, the stand-out value across all the research and analysis is the region’s connection to nature.

Showcasing and preserving the Green Wedge and natural attributes

The large areas of natural environment across the YVDR (known as the Green Wedge area) and the region’s other natural attributes, are a key strength that should be protected to ensure future visitation and the ongoing liveability of the region.

Commonly referred to as the “Lungs of Melbourne”, or “Melbourne’s Playground”, the YVDR region offers a plethora of opportunities for people to undertake both active and passive natural experiences. This connection to nature is

represented in more than just the natural landscape and scenery.

From the Traditional Owner’s culture and stories and thriving arts scene, to local provenance of food and drink and farm gate experiences, many of the region’s popular key attractions have a strong connection to nature.

While the research has certainly identified that this Green Wedge aspect appeals to residents, businesses and visitors, it’s important to understand what the future holds and how changes to the Green Wedge could impact the region.

The key market trends also indicate a growing attraction to wellness and the

“NATURALLY IMPRESSIVE”

The Naturally Impressive vision was inspired by the YVDR’s strong connection to nature. It reflects a desire to impress visitors with the region’s natural beauty and outstanding experiences and services that residents can also embrace and enjoy. It aspires to create a memorable destination that family and friends excitedly talk about as their next holiday destination.

restorative sense of nature, with nature-based tourism and sustainability key factors for some leisure segments. The children of today (future visitors and residents) talk about “touching grass” after being immersed in the digital world.

It’s believed this desire to be close to nature will only grow stronger.

As a key local area within the wider YVDR, the Yarra Valley will deliver a Naturally Impressive experience.



Our aspiration for the Yarra Valley in 2033

In line with the regional destination vision of “Naturally Impressive” for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges as described in the Destination Management Plan, the Yarra Valley will aspire to be described in this way in the future:

The region has effectively transitioned to a mid-week and night time visitor economy that has shaken the tag as a day trip destination which has been key to the area’s success and sustainability in managing the destination

Being known as a world-class wine region with natural beauty to match would be accolade enough for some tourist destinations. But not the Yarra Valley.

It’s embraced the same gold standard mindset applied to its winemaking and how it showcases natural assets to elevate its food, dining and visitor attractions to the same remarkable standards.

Didn’t think it could get any better? Come and see for yourself.

Getting there is easy. Take a train to Lilydale, then jump on a well-connected bus network to explore all the attractions.

Your first stop should be the Regional Food and Wine Centre. Here, learn about the food and drink excellence on offer at your fingertips. Get a sample of the Yarra Valley’s wine and

culinary delights before settling on a winery, restaurant, cellar door or local farm to start your experience.

For the gin and beer lovers, you’re in for a treat. Anchored by world-leading gin producer Four Pillars, local gin distillers are building a strong following and making a name for themselves.

And if you prefer a drink with froth on top, there’s the old favourite Coldstream Breweries, as well as microbreweries experimenting with unique methods to craft the perfect ale. Jump on the Yarra Valley Explorer; our hop on hop off bus service, to find your favourite.

You’ll find plenty of food along the way. New restaurants offer exciting fusions and flavours, while long revered food institutions, like Coombe Yarra Valley, continue to innovate and evolve their menus. If you’re after some hearty pub fare, we’ve got that too.

Don’t forget to mark the Yarra Valley Food and Wine Festival on the calendar. An annual four-week event, with an array of night time activities, that you can visit once (or several times) and try locally made and fresh from-the-farm creations.

Of course, a stunning view or photo-worthy vista will punctuate every stop. The Yarra Valley has been a world-leader in how it has protected its cherished natural beauty while leveraging its lush green assets as popular attractions.

Ease into surrounding nature with a walk or cycle on the Yarra Valley Trail. Hugely popular with locals and visitors from all around, this trail provides a stunning valley-wide loop. Pick your distance and enjoy a delicious fresh hamper, packed by local producers, along the way.

Healesville Sanctuary continues to embrace both its natural bush surroundings while allowing visitors to get close to wildlife and reaffirm its standing as a popular outing for all ages. Watch the birds of prey take flight in the spectacular bird show and see how injured birds are being given a second chance at flight at the Raptor Rehabilitation Centre. You can also move next door to immerse yourself in the First Peoples stories of the region at the Nangenala property in Healesville.

Looking for inspiration indoors? The TarraWarra Museum of Art steps it up with engaging art, ideas and unexpected links between contemporary and modern art within Indigenous and global contexts.

What would be a visit without a bit of pampering? Relax and recharge at one of the new wellness attractions or spas, which have become hugely popular. Unwind, check into your BnB, campsite, hotel or farm stay and get ready to choose a new adventure tomorrow – and take a deep breath of fresh air.



3. What is a Local Area Plan?

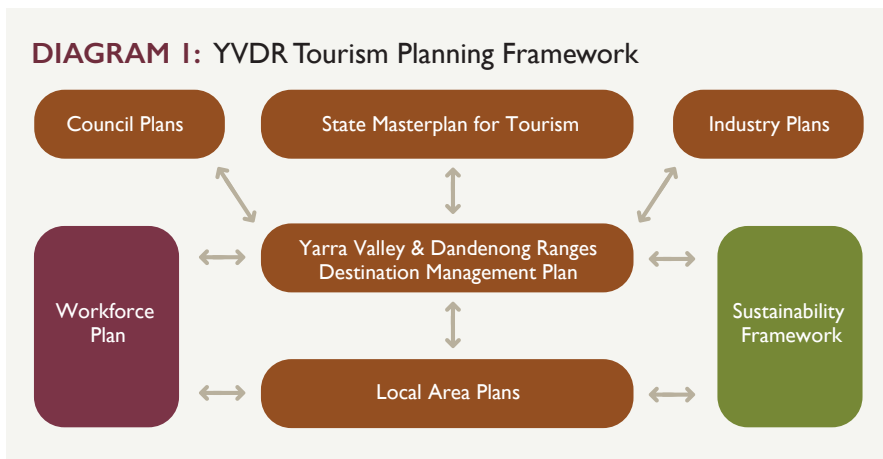
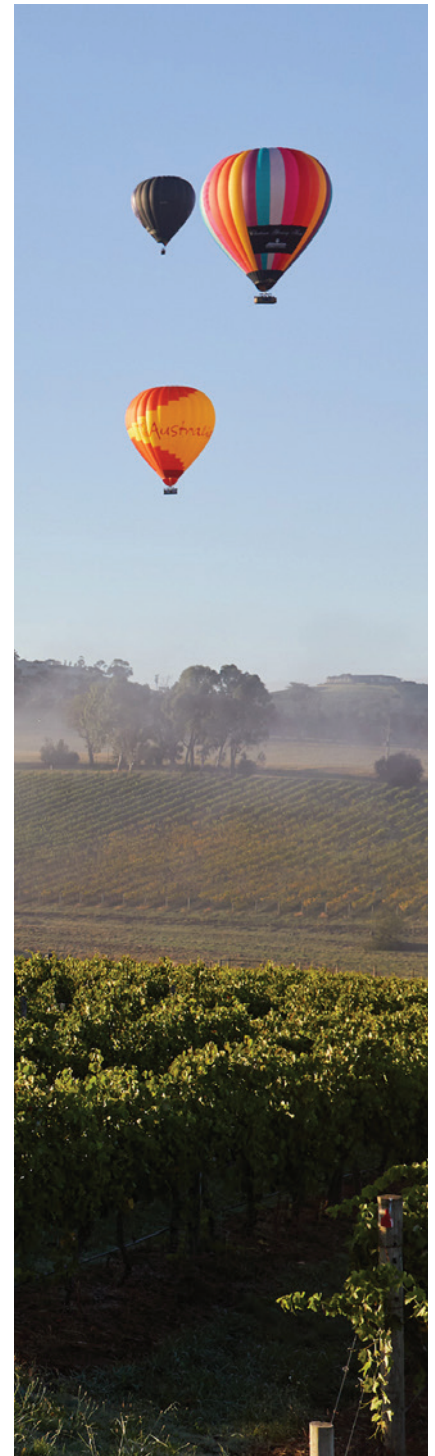
Yarra Ranges Tourism (YRT) is developing a comprehensive 10-year Destination Management Plan (DMP) for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges (YVDR) region. The DMP will be underpinned by four Local Area Plans (LAP) – Western Yarra Valley, Yarra Valley, Upper Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

Creating a DMP and LAP are key elements of the development of a best practice tourism planning framework that will help to ensure that the benefits of

tourism are maximised and any negative impacts minimised.

Ultimately, the DMP aims to enhance the quality of life for YVDR residents, support industry and create a positive and sustainable experience for visitors.

Key stakeholders in the framework include State Government, Local Council, YRT, First Peoples, Tourism Industry, visitors to the YVDR and, most importantly, the local community.



What is a Destination Management Plan?

A DMP is a shared strategic plan that outlines the management and development initiatives for tourism across a region, such as the YVDR. It is a catalyst for a more connected and collaborative approach and includes a range of sustainable objectives and actions to enhance the benefits of tourism while minimising potential negative impacts.

What is a Local Area Plan?

A Local Area Plan (LAP) summaries the key actions and priorities in the DMP that are relevant to that area. It provides a snapshot for the community of those

actions and priorities and highlights other relevant local community based issues that have been identified through the consultation and research stages.

The implementation of both the DMP and LAP will be critical to meet the DMP's four key objectives being to:

- Drive regional economic benefit by changing visitor travel behaviour (more mid-week and more overnight)
- Improve the visitor experience
- Improve liveability of YVDR for the local community
- Improve support for tourism amongst the local Yarra Valley community

4. Adopting world’s best practice for a sustainable tourism destination

During the development of this DMP and LAP, one message was overwhelmingly clear; the region’s natural attributes are inextricably linked to why locals love living there, and what compels visitors to explore the region and creates a positive experience for them.

Combined with locals and visitors cherishing the region’s connection with nature, there is a strong collective commitment to respecting and preserving the environment and, in doing so, maintaining its beauty for the region’s future generations.

As such, this DMP and LAP adopts a world’s best practice sustainability framework developed by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC). This approach will ensure the YVDR will be developed as a sustainable tourism destination.

The GSTC framework includes:

The GSTC Sustainable Destination Criteria are underpinned by four key areas with 10 modules and 176 individual indicators.

The key areas and modules are:

		
AREA		MODULE
	<p>1. Sustainable Management</p> <p>Ensuring the region has a clear direction and is well managed</p>	<p>Management Structure and Framework</p> <p>Stakeholder Engagement</p> <p>Managing Pressure and Change</p>
	<p>2. Socio-Economic Sustainability</p> <p>Ensuring the benefits of tourism remain in the region for the benefit of locals and not just the visitors</p>	<p>Delivering Local Economic Benefits</p> <p>Social Wellbeing and Impacts</p>
	<p>3. Cultural Sustainability</p> <p>Ensuring the rich history of the First Peoples are told and embedded across the region and that their cultural sites are not only protected from damage but also enhanced</p>	<p>Protecting Cultural Heritage</p> <p>Visiting Cultural Sites</p>
	<p>4. Environmentally Sustainability</p> <p>Protecting the land upon which we live and visitors enjoy. Carefully manage visitors and protect the important Green Wedge areas.</p>	<p>Conservation of Natural Heritage</p> <p>Resource Management</p> <p>Management of Waste and Emissions</p>

4. ADOPTING WORLD'S BEST PRACTICE FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION

The GSTC criteria also support the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Through the preliminary analysis undertaken, it is expected that outcomes related to the following SDGs will be achieved:



All actions under the DMP will be linked back to this sustainability framework.

Applying these criteria to this LAP will support 14 of the 17 SDG.

5. Overview of the region

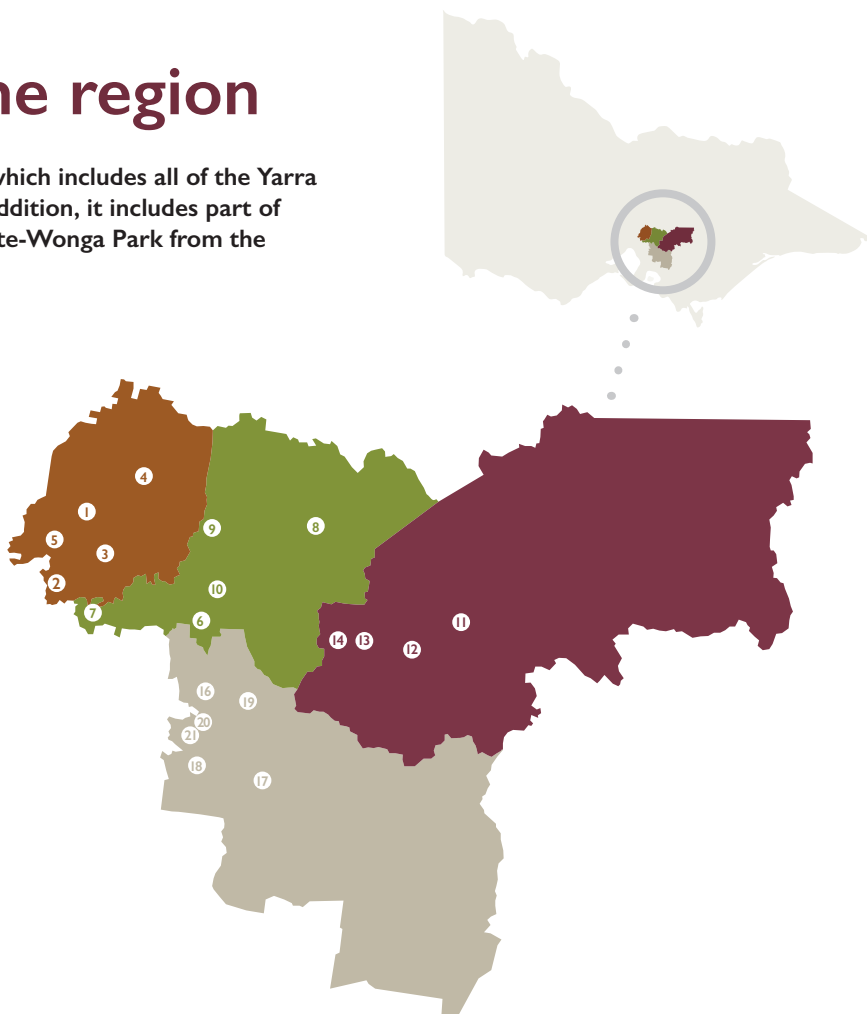
This LAP is part of the broader YVDR region which includes all of the Yarra Ranges and Nillumbik Shire Council areas. In addition, it includes part of the Cardinia Shire Council area plus Warrandyte-Wonga Park from the Manningham City Council area.

The four LAP areas are:

- Western Yarra Valley
- Yarra Valley
- Upper Yarra Valley; and
- Dandenong Ranges

This Local Area Plan focuses on the Yarra Valley region.

Note: The towns listed provide an overview of the geography of the regions and are placed on the map to help the reader understand the area in reference to the towns listed. This list is not intended to be indicative of the strategic importance of tourism in the region.



Regional Visitor Profiles

YRT commissioned Customer Frame in September 2022 to undertake an extensive project to create a common set of customer profiles/visitor personas for the YVDR region. This would enable industry to:

- develop a collective and harmonised view of the customer
- enable a clear, consistent and common understanding of the region’s tourism customers, beyond demographics alone, and
- help drive deeper customer empathy, find new opportunities and help the region become more resilient from disruption.

Those personas are currently available for YRT partners to use as a partnership benefit. Personas assist those with and without marketing skills in their business to be more consistently targeted with their promotional efforts. In conjunction with YRT’s personas it is important to note that Visit Victoria also has personas which underpins Visit Victoria’s drive and fly marketing and work will need to be undertaken to identify how this could be used to inform industry in building their products and services for the region.



WESTERN YARRA VALLEY

Local towns include:

- 1 Hurstbridge
- 2 Eltham
- 3 Kangaroo Ground
- 4 St Andrews
- 5 Diamond Creek



YARRA VALLEY

Local towns include:

- 6 Lilydale
- 7 Warrandyte
- 8 Healesville
- 9 Yarra Glen
- 10 Coldstream



UPPER YARRA VALLEY

Local towns include:

- 11 Warburton
- 12 Yarra Junction
- 13 Seville
- 14 Wandin North



DANDENONG RANGES

Local towns include:

- 16 Mount Dandenong
- 17 Emerald
- 18 Belgrave
- 19 Silvan
- 20 Olinda
- 21 Sassafra



These local areas were developed based on detailed economic analysis of the visitor economy in each region. This included:

- size of the visitor economy
- international / national visitor profile
- length of stay
- activities and attractions in each area; and
- day trip versus overnight visitation.

For example, Yarra Valley has a much higher percentage of international visitors than Upper Yarra Valley. Whilst Upper Yarra Valley has the highest percentage of day trips.

6. Importance and Role of Tourism in Yarra Valley

Tourism and the related visitor economy is an extremely important part of the Yarra Valley local area economy.

- The Yarra Valley area accounts for just under 20% of the total population of the YVDR region.
- 10.5% of all jobs in the Yarra Valley are created directly through visitor

spending in the Yarra Valley. This is the second largest share of jobs behind the Upper Yarra Valley.

- Across the YVDR, the Yarra Valley accounts for 34% of all total visitor spending, slightly lower than in the Dandenong Ranges
- Domestic day trips contribute 44%

of total visitor spend whilst overnight stays by Victorians contribute to 36%.

- Over 220,000 holiday domestic visitor nights are spent in the Yarra Valley. The Yarra Valley accounts for 45% of the total domestic holiday visitor nights across the YVDR region, the highest of all areas.

The five key activities undertaken by visitors to the Yarra Valley were:

- Eat out/ Dine in a café
- Sightseeing
- Visit Wineries
- Bushwalking
- Visit national parks.

Share of domestic holiday visitor nights with selected activities in the trip to the region over the 8 years ending September 2022	Visit national parks/state parks	Visit botanical or other public gardens	Bush-walking/ rainforest walks	Cycling	Visit wildlife parks/ zoos/ aquariums	Tourist trains	Visit wineries	Eat out/ dine at a restaurant and/or cafe	Sightseeing/ looking around
Yarra Valley	21%	7%	22%	3%	13%	3%	37%	68%	38%
Western Yarra Valley	40%	24%	26%	3%	0%	0%	35%	75%	51%
Upper Yarra Valley	31%	3%	44%	15%	2%	0%	19%	61%	34%
Dandenong Ranges	32%	9%	49%	2%	1%	5%	6%	54%	31%

Source: Tourism Research Australia Domestic Visitor Surveys

6. IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF TOURISM IN YARRA VALLEY

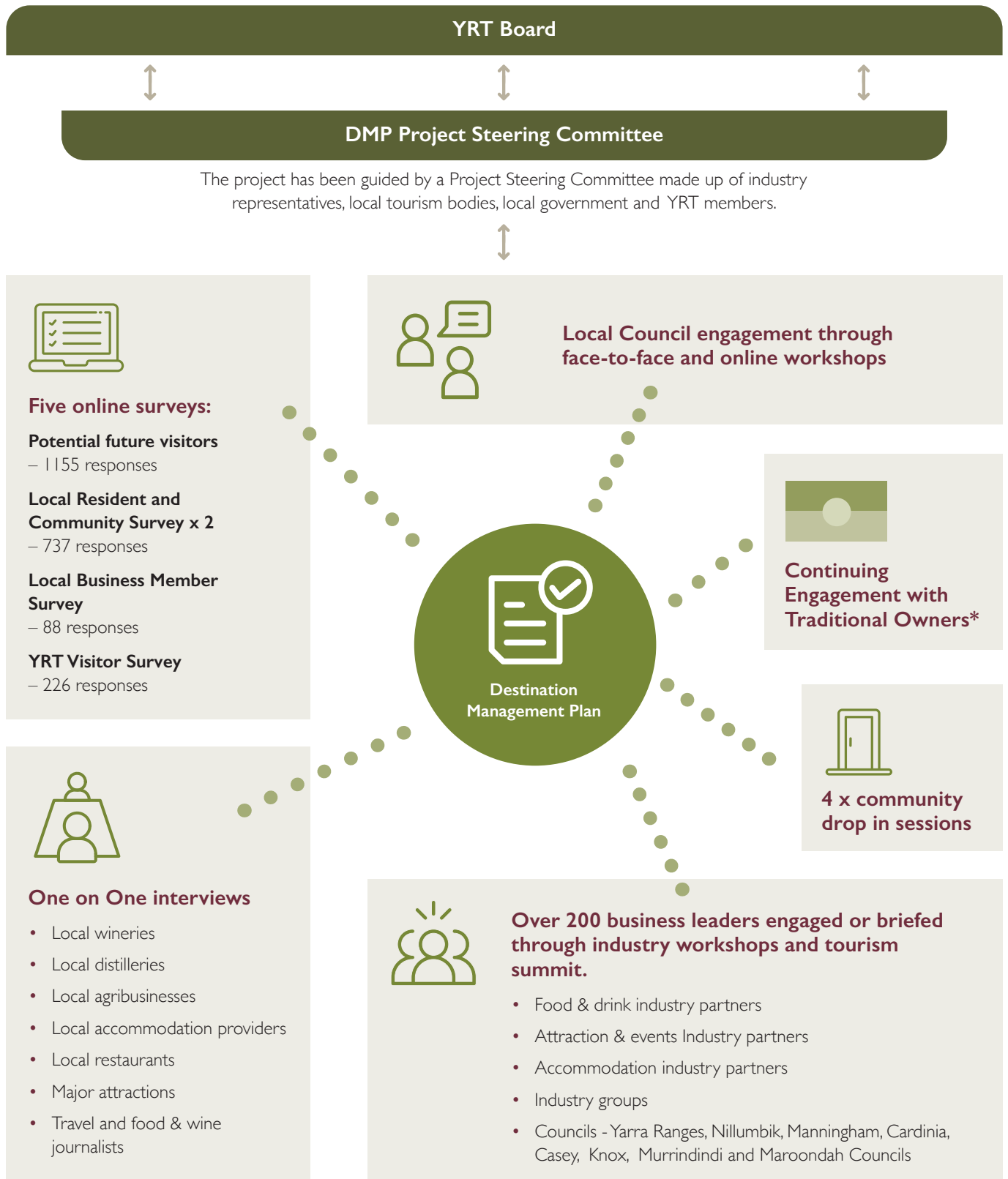
Item	Western Yarra Valley	Yarra Valley	Upper Yarra Valley	Dandenong Ranges	Balance
Population (source ABS 2021)	62,895 18%	63,457 18%	16,799 5%	160,161 46%	43,291 12%
Visitor Economy jobs due to direct impact of visitor spending (source ODIN360 visitor economy industry estimates pre covid 2018-19 against ABS 2021)	4.5% Construction - 13% Education and Training - 15% Health Care and social assistance - 14%	10.5% Construction -12% Education and Training -9% Health Care and Social Assistance -12%	30% Construction -13% Education and Training -16% Health Care and Social Assistance -13%	8.7% Construction 13% Education and Training - 16% Health Care and Social Assistance - 11%	1.2% Construction 17% Education and Training - 8% Health Care and Social Assistance - 11%
Share of Visitor spending per annum (source ODIN360 estimate and TRA Data 2019)	8%	34%	16%	39%	2%
Primary contributors to total spend in the region (source ODIN360 estimate and TRA Data 2019)	Domestic Daytrip = 39% Intrastate Visitor Nights = 30%	Domestic Daytrip = 44% Intrastate Visitor Nights = 36%	Domestic Daytrip = 47% Intrastate Visitor Nights = 42%	Domestic Daytrip = 40% Intrastate Visitor Nights = 28% International Visitor Nights = 24%	Intrastate Visitor Nights = 51% Domestic Day trip = 27%
Holiday Domestic Visitor Nights (source TRA Data 5 year average to March 2020)	32k Share of YVDR region = 7%	222k Share of YVDR region = 45%	54k Share of YVDR region = 31%	79k Share of YVDR region = 16%	
International Visitor Nights (source TRA Data 2019)	129,340	147,839	52,216	637,529	47,128
Holiday Domestic Day trips (source TRA Data 5 year average to March 2020)	83k Share of YVDR region = 3%	890k Share of YVDR region = 37%	528k Share of YVDR region = 22%	716k Share of YVDR region = 30%	

7. What we heard through consultation

An extensive engagement program was undertaken across the YVDR to ensure that as many interested stakeholders and local community could have input

through direct consultation or via community surveys. Over 700 local residents have provided feedback and suggestions throughout the process.

Detailed below is an overview of the engagement model.



*Consultation was conducted with Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Land and Waters Council

7. WHAT WE HEARD THROUGH CONSULTATION

About tourism

As detailed below, residents in the Yarra Valley had a very strong and positive view on the importance and benefits of tourism compared to the average of the combined regions.

Additionally, whilst there is genuine concern that tourism can create overcrowding and have negative environmental impact, these concerns rated lower in the Yarra Valley and against the YVDR as a whole.

QUESTION	Yarra Valley Area	YVDR region
Tourism creates jobs and local employment in the YVDR	82.7	74.2
Tourism helps put the YVDR region on the map and encourages more people to visit and explore our wonderful region	80.5	74.1
Tourism boosts the local economy and is great for local businesses in the YVDR	80.3	73.5
I am proud that visitors wish to visit and explore what the YVDR region has to offer	77.4	71.3
Tourism has a negative impact on the environment (ie, over-tourism, litter etc.)	55.5	64.7
Tourism creates overcrowding, congestion and detracts from the local's way of life	54.1	63.7
Tourism increases the vibrancy of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region	71.7	62.2
Tourism leads to over-development and increased land use	52.8	60.2
Tourism helps to make the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region a better place to live, work and play for local residents	67.5	56.4
Tourism is important to my liveability	52.6	44.6

Liveability

Overall liveability within the YVDR was surveyed by asking the community to rate the statement that "I love the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region and it is the best place I have ever lived".

52% of the Yarra Valley based responses gave this a rating of 9 or 10, similar to the overall regional average.



Photo: Visit Victoria

7. WHAT WE HEARD THROUGH CONSULTATION

Local issues

The survey also tested a range of potential local issues across the YVDR.

In the Yarra Valley, the four key issues that arose were:

- Lack of key services and amenities
- The area is too busy
- Conditions of roads
- Lack of public transport

ISSUE	Yarra Valley Area	YVDR region
Condition of roads	33	73
Lack of key services and amenities	44	59
Too busy	44	49
Lack of affordable transport options	22	41
Public transport	44	39
Limited activities to do at night	22	37
It is unsafe (i.e. bushfires, storms, more isolated)	22	37
Unfriendliness of locals generally	22	24
Too remote	0	24
Nothing much to do	0	22
Cost of living	33	20
It is too expensive	22	20
Too many tourists	11	10
It is not a great place to live for people like me	0	12
Weather	0	10
Not family friendly	22	5

The key issues raised in direct feedback, in order of number of comments, were:

- Maintenance and supply of public amenities/toilets
- Overcrowding during weekends and holidays
- Traffic management and safety concerns
- Impact of tourism on the area, including overcrowding, strain on resources, and damage to natural attractions
- Need for better signage
- Need for bike/walking paths and tracks
- Environmental management, including bushfire management and protecting areas of high conservation value
- Increased entertainment and dining options
- Supporting local residents and maintaining the area's character
- Impact of Airbnb on long-term rental opportunities
- Need for eco-friendly tourism practices
- Abandoned/unused commercial properties
- Quality employment opportunities beyond low skilled work
- Lack of easily accessible information about local events and activities

A sample of the direct comments included:



7. WHAT WE HEARD THROUGH CONSULTATION

“

Upkeep of public toilets in many parts of the Valley is sadly lacking. Public toilets at local parks - Yarra Glen, Queens Park etc need updating (more of them, regularly cleaned, nicer looking) Better signage for toilets.

”

“

Healesville traffic management and easier access for cars to park in Healesville.

”

“

Pedestrian crossings in the Main Street, Lilydale needed.

”

“

Tidying up of roadside verges, both rubbish and long grass – don't just leave it to VicRoads or the locals to clean up!

”

“

Lack of rubbish bins in public spaces, reserves and parks.

”

“

Improve viability for shop owners midweek on and off-season. Currently we see shops unable to survive throughout the waves/influx of tourists which mainly occurs on weekends and during Spring/Summer. There needs to be a plan to incorporate all FOUR seasons.

”

“

Every decision that councils make need to increase the beauty, amenity, liveability, of our beautiful towns. We know we are a tourist destination, and many of us make a living from that, so it is important not to ruin our beautiful rural towns.

”

“

The public transport past Lilydale is poor

”

“

LILYDALE BYPASS - This is the main route to the Yarra Valley and must be made an urgent priority immediately. Maroondah Highway through Lilydale is already a congested mess. Even a small increase in tourism growth will bring this town to a standstill.

”

“

Better RV-friendly amenities e.g. public dump point, parking bays in Healesville.

”

7. WHAT WE HEARD THROUGH CONSULTATION

Some respondents repeated the concerns around the number of tourists and potential over development.

In respect of ways to improve tourism in the region the following were proposed

- More parking
- Better transport with improved bus services
- More night-time and mid-week activities
- High profile visitor centre and better public information

- Improved maintenance, wayfinding, signage and streetscapes
- More accommodation
- More diversity of events

A sample of the direct comments included:

“ Improve presentation of Lilydale. It’s the gateway, so make it so. Make it an attraction in itself. ”

“ Public transport and ride sharing. Hop on/off shuttle bus between towns. Like, a loop connecting towns of interest. ”

“ Take away food and Restaurants to stay open later on weekends ”

“ Open Studios in Healesville that run every weekend. 4 or 5 studios open on every given weekend, with a rotating schedule that is updated automatically on a website. ”

“ Upgrade Maroondah Reservoir Park; parkland, waste disposal & carpark. ”

“ Better signage to smaller wineries. ”

“ Improve Footpaths in Healesville. ”

“ Rectification of road traffic issues at Lilydale station following level crossing removal. ”

“ An information centre in Lilydale, it is the gateway to the Valley and there is little information for visitors. ”

“ More buses meeting the trains and travelling to Healesville Sanctuary and around the wineries. ”

“ More public parking in Lilydale. ”

“ Stagger events as much as possible over the year. Gives more options to attend. ”

“ An app of ‘what’s near me’ - like an interactive Google maps for points of interest in the Yarra Valley, that indicates where you are and what’s around (search by category- trails/wineries/cafes/family activities etc) and how to get there. ”

“ Training of hospitality staff and train owners of facilities. ”

Yarra Ranges Council - Economic Development Strategy 2022-2023

During the development of the DMP, the Yarra Ranges Council released its new Economic Development Strategy 2022-2023 (EDS)

There is significant alignment between the EDS, the DMP and this LAP.

A key objective of the EDS is to increase economic contribution to meet the Council's ambitious stretch targets for Gross Regional Product (GRP). This aligns with one of the DMP's core objectives.

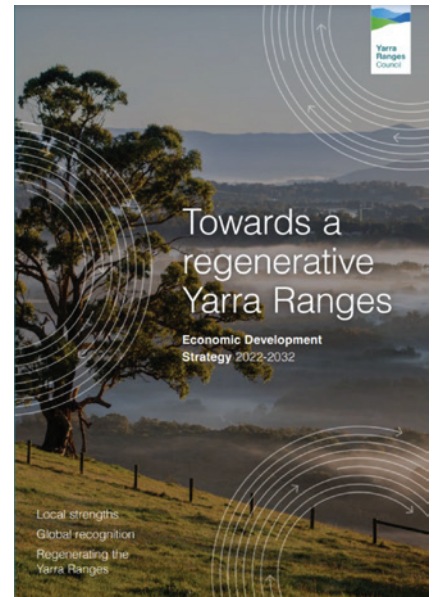
The EDS specifies four key priority areas being:

- Industry leadership and collaboration

- Trade commerce and workforce capability
- Investment attraction
- Innovation and entrepreneurship

with underlying supporting actions across five industry sectors, of which four are relevant to the tourism and visitor economy:

- Food, beverage and tourism
- Health and wellness
- Agribusiness
- Knowledge innovation and entrepreneurship.



This DMP and LAP address each of these priority areas and the four industry sectors relevant to tourism. The strategic direction and actions underpinning each of these are specified in the Eight Strategic Priorities and Additional Regional Initiatives in the DMP and as further detailed in in Section A and B.

The key actions and recommendations under the DMP are generally consistent with the actions listed in the EDS.

As Yarra Ranges Council is one of several councils that are within the YVDR, it is recommended that there is cross council collaboration on key actions rather than being undertaken in isolation. After all, from a tourist's perspective, they do not know where one council's boundary starts and ends; they are just looking for a consistent and



streamlined experience, even if it covers multiple council areas.

The Yarra Valley area takes in the town of Warrandyte and the Manningham Council area provides much needed accommodation options for people visiting the Yarra Valley region as well as other key attractions such as Heide Museum of Modern Art and the Yarra

River and associated nature reserves, bushland and farmland. Currently the Manningham Council is yet to finalise their latest Economic Development strategy, however representatives from Manningham Council have reviewed this LAP and have identified alignment with the plan and the future direction for Council.

8. SWOT

A detailed assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the YVDR as a whole was undertaken for the entire region and is in the DMP.

In respect of the Yarra Valley some of the more relevant high level issues are:



STRENGTHS

- Close to Melbourne
- Natural Beauty
- World class wine, gin and local produce
- Hero attractions like Healesville Sanctuary, TarraWarra, Yarra Valley Chocolaterie
- Strong support for tourism from the local community



WEAKNESSES

- Over indexed day visitation
- Lack of public transport systems to move visitors around region
- Ageing public amenities such as public toilets
- Complex planning scheme preventing sustainable tourism opportunities being developed



OPPORTUNITIES

- Grow the mid-week and night-time activities and experiences
- More accomodation in suitable locations around the YV
- Improved public transport to distribute visitors around the region without the need for private cars
- Leverage the new nature based infrastructure being constructed and develop First Nations cultural experiences that show thier history across the region



THREATS

- Congestion on roads and in towns such as Lilydale and Healesville on a weekend
- Potential overtourism creating issues for local community and environment
- Workforce issues with lack of local staff and rental accommodation
- Climate change with bushfire and storms risk and related insurance issues

9. Key objectives

The purpose of this LAP and the broader YVDR DMP is to create a more sustainable tourism industry and visitor economy that not only improves the visitor experience, but also the liveability of the region for the local community.

The biggest challenge facing the entire YVDR region, and the Yarra Valley itself, is the fact that the current number of day visits across the region is forecast to double, with day visits expected to exceed 9 million in 2032. It already has the highest share of day visitors compared to overnight stays in Victoria.

As the name implies, the DMP is a Destination Management Plan. It is not just a tourism attraction plan. The management of a sustainable tourism model in YVDR (and Yarra Valley) is the

key focus of the DMP and this LAP.

It is for this reason that many of the recommendations are focused on how to best manage the tourism numbers and make the industry and region more sustainable by seeking to spread visitation more evenly across the week and at night, rather than just simply seeking to grow the overall tourism market. This will benefit the local community in economic terms as well as seeking to ease some of the potential impact of too many visitors on weekends.

This means that the DMP and this LAP is not about just bringing more tourists to the region, it is about creating a more sustainable model by shifting visitor behaviour. For example, creating a higher

share of mid-week visits and overnight stays.

As a consequence, the overall DMP and this LAP have four key objectives:

- Drive regional economic benefit for Yarra Valley by changing visitor travel behaviour (shift to more mid-week visits and more overnight stays)
- Improve the visitor experience in the Yarra Valley
- Improve liveability of the Yarra Valley local community
- Improve support for tourism amongst the local Yarra Valley community

To ensure the impact of the DMP can be measured over the next 10 years YRT will use the following data sources.



9. KEY OBJECTIVES

The DMP objectives are to:

1

Drive regional economic benefit by changed visitor travel behaviour



(a) – Increase regional economic benefit

Total YVDR region real visitor spending is forecast by ODIN360 to grow from \$1.21 billion in 2022 to \$2.33 billion in 2032 (2022 \$s) (in the absence of DMP initiatives). The stretch target with full DMP implementation is to increase this figure to \$2.75 billion or an increase of \$421 million or 18% compared to the business-as-usual forecast.

Sources: TRA National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey, TRA regional tourism satellite account

(b) – Shift day trip to overnight visitation

- i. The ratio of day trip visitors to total overnight visitors is forecast to grow from 5.8 in 2022 to 6.4 in 2032 (in the absence of DMP initiatives). The DMP aims to reduce this ratio with the stretch target of 4.1 in 2032.
- ii. The share of total tourism spending in 2032 without DMP initiatives is forecast to be 53% day trip and 47% overnight – the DMP initiatives aim to shift this ratio in 2032 to a stretch target of 41% day trip and 59% overnight.

Sources: TRA National Visitor Survey and International Visitor Survey

2

Improve the visitor experience



Net promoter score (NPS) and Guest Review Index from online reviews for key attractions in the region (eg ReviewPro) were identified through the situational analysis undertaken for this DMP. This showed an NPS score of 21 from a representative sample of visitors to the region. However, an NPS or central monitoring of ratings and reviews is not currently captured by the region. Decisions will need to be made on how best to monitor the visitor experience throughout this DMP and baseline figures recorded. Reporting against these figures will need to be aligned with available resources or through partnerships with industry that may be capturing these scores currently. YRT and stakeholders will need to determine how best to monitor or survey and report against this metric. This will include defining benchmarks and target scores.

3

Improve liveability



Surveys were conducted during the situational analysis undertaken for this DMP to determine residents' views of liveability of the region. They showed 51% of local residents give a score of 9 or 10 for their level of satisfaction of living in the YVDR region. This was a one off survey and it's noted that central monitoring of liveability is not currently captured. YRT and stakeholders will need to determine how best to monitor or survey and report against this metric. This will include defining benchmarks and target scores.

Source: Annual Council Surveys or Bespoke YRT Surveys

4

Improve support for tourism in YVDR



Surveys were conducted during the situational analysis undertaken for this DMP to determine social license for tourism in the region. They showed 49% of local residents agreed or strongly agreed with the principle that tourism helps to make the YVDR region a better place to live, work and play. However, this was a one off survey and it's noted that central monitoring of liveability is not currently captured. Integration with Council's annual resident surveys or commissioning bespoke surveys may need to be considered as a primary indicator. YRT and stakeholders will need to determine how best to monitor or survey and report against this metric. This will include defining benchmarks and target scores.

Source: Annual Council Surveys or Bespoke YRT Surveys

I 0. Strategic Priorities and Additional Regional Initiatives

The DMP details the strategic priorities and additional regional initiatives for the YVDR with relevant and targeted actions and recommendations. They are prioritised across the entire region and all have application to each of the four LAPs.

Some of the priorities and initiatives require a whole of region response, while others require a more specific local area focus.

Set out below in Section A are the strategic priorities and additional regional initiatives that have more specific local actions to be undertaken in the Yarra Valley. They are:

Section A: Yarra Valley Priorities and Initiatives

- **Developing and leveraging new attractions and experiences**
 - **Nature:** Leveraging world class nature-based experiences
 - **Food & Drink:** Elevating the region's reputation
 - **First Peoples Experiences:** Embedding Traditional Owner's values & experiences across tourism
- **Opportunities for new and emerging experiences and attractions**
 - **Wellness** – Broadening the region's appeal & economy
 - **Tours & Attractions** – Developing new itineraries while supporting industry icons
 - **Arts Culture & Heritage** – A new regional approach
- **Infrastructure** – Investing for a sustainable future

Section B includes those that require a whole of YVDR region approach, including the Yarra Valley. They are:

Section B: Regional Priorities and Initiatives

- **The Catalyst for Success:** Developing a night-time and mid-week visitor economy
- **Statutory Planning & Environment:** Sustainable development for today and tomorrow
- **Accommodation:** For visitors to enjoy and workers to call home
- **Transport & Accessibility:** Easing congestion and creating better access for all
- **Leadership & Advocacy**
 - **Governance & Leadership:** Delivering efficiently
 - **Advocacy:** One voice, one message for sustainable tourism
- **Marketing & Distribution:** Changing visitor travel behaviour
- **Sustainable Workforce:** Growing the region's capabilities for the future
- **Events:** Showcasing the "Naturally Impressive" YVDR
- **Data & Insights:** For an informed future

A more detailed explanation of the strategic priorities and additional regional initiatives can be found in the DMP. The actions required for each of these aspects in the Yarra Valley are shown below.



Section A: Yarra Valley priorities and initiatives

Strategic Priorities and Additional Regional Initiatives that have more specific local actions to be undertaken in the Yarra Valley are outlined below:

Developing and leveraging new attractions and experiences

As detailed in the YVDR DMP, several new pieces of significant infrastructure and products are currently planned or proposed across the YVDR. It is imperative that these be leveraged in a way with clearly defined activation plans that maximise their benefit to the local region and meet the overall objectives of the DMP. For example, targeting overnight visitors is much preferred to day trippers. Investment and maintenance will also need to be constantly applied through the life of any new, and existing infrastructure. Without that investment and maintenance the benefits of the products will diminish over time making them very costly to operate with decreasing benefit to justify it.



Nature: Leveraging world class nature-based experiences

VISION

The vision is to harness the tremendous potential of our region's natural beauty and features. We aspire to protect and preserve our unique sites through sustainable accessibility and infrastructure development. The focus is to raise awareness of these precious assets and their importance to our community. By promoting responsible tourism, we aim to strike a balance between development and preservation to ensure that our region's natural surroundings continue to be enjoyed by future generations. The goal is to create a vibrant, thriving economy that supports our community and visitors alike, while maintaining our region's natural beauty.

Timeframe

S Short term 0-3 years

M Medium term 4-7 years

L Long term 8-10 years

Nature

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Nature – Passive Recreation	1. Collate currently available information and if necessary undertake an audit of current facilities and amenities at nature related sites in the Yarra Valley.			✓	Parks Vic, Local Councils, DEECA, Melbourne Water	M
	2. Contribute to the development of regional pricing policies to encourage mid-week use and preferred pricing for locals which may include parking, discounts at attractions, transport discounts.			✓	Parks Vic, Local Councils	M
	3. Contribute to marketing plans that showcase iconic gardens in the region including those in the Yarra Valley.	✓			Local Councils, Industry,	S
	4. Develop product for guided walks, wildlife and bird watching with potential alignment to Traditional Owner experiences.		✓		Industry, Parks Victoria, Traditional owners	S
	5. Invest in mid-week night-time activities, including nature walks/ garden-based experiences at sunrise/sunset linked with accommodation offerings. Working with PV to adjust their operating model for opening hours of key sites like Maroondah Reservoir Park		✓		Industry	S
	6. Advocate for investment in Healesville Sanctuary as Victoria's premier native flora and fauna park with a heightened focus on visitor experience.		✓		Industry, YR Council	M
	7. Support the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation in their plans for the development of the Nangenala property in Healesville including the potential development of a cultural centre and nature based visitor experience.			✓	Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corp. Local Councils YR Council, Industry	M

Nature

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Nature - Active Recreation	1. Collate currently available information and if necessary undertake an audit of current facilities and amenities at nature related sites in the Yarra Valley.			✓	Land Managers, Local Councils	M
	2. Undertake an audit of existing experiences across trails and nature based activity in the Yarra Valley.			✓	Land Managers, Local Councils	M
	3. Identify opportunities specific to the Yarra Valley to include in regional familiarisation activities with journalists and bloggers related to new and revamped nature product opportunities such as Yarra Valley Trail.	✓			Industry	M
	4. Incorporate marketing and promotion for the Yarra Valley trail into YRT's annual marketing program.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	5. Develop activation concepts or packages to promote mid-week use of trails and visitation of regional food and drink venues.			✓	Local Councils, Industry	M
	6. Explore link of Yarra Valley Trail to Diamond Creek Trail in Western Yarra Valley.			✓	Local Councils, Industry	M

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section C: Cultural sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Food and Drink: Elevating the region’s reputation

VISION

Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges will strengthen its reputation as a premier food and drink destination that celebrates the region’s unique offerings. By showcasing the full breadth of the products and expanding accessibility beyond weekends and lunch times, the day trip issues facing the region will be addressed. The focus will be on promoting local provenance, protecting product integrity and quality, and fostering collaboration to build a sustainable and resilient food and drink ecosystem that supports the community and delights visitors.

Food and Drink

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Food and Drink	1. Continue to encourage and facilitate improved cellar door experiences in the region - make cellar doors & tasting rooms more experiential.			✓	Wine Yarra Valley, Industry	S
	2. Continue to raise the profile of visitor experiences for food and drink across the region through annual marketing activities as priority.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	M
	3. Identify potential areas to pilot night-time economy activities with interested businesses linking bespoke drink experiences with accommodation in dedicated regions.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	4. Contribute to the development of a business case for a regional retail food and wine centre showcasing local food & drink (potentially including a centre of excellence) as well overall regional experiences.		✓		Wine Yarra Valley Visit Victoria, Local Councils, Industry, Government	M
	5. Contribute to the development of an annual Food and Drink festival across the entire YVDR region with a focus on bespoke mid-week, dawn and dusk experiences potentially around key vintage/ harvests releases.		✓		Wine Yarra Valley, Visit Victoria, Industry	S
	6. Create a Visitor Ambassador Program to raise awareness of experiences across the region to increase collaboration opportunities and cross promote activities to drive additional length of stay.		✓		Local Council, Industry	S
	7. Determine if the Yarra Valley is the right location to attract an international standard and marketed multi hatted restaurant eg, Brae to put the Yarra Valley on the map interstate and potentially internationally as a leading food destination.		✓		Visit Victoria, Local Councils, Industry	M
	8. Contribute to the development of a marketing strategy to showcase product and provenance of regional product.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	M

Food and Drink

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Food and Drink	9. Consider development of "food foraging" and "forest to plate" opportunities or experiences in the Yarra Valley and expanding and aligning existing farm gate events in the region such as Open Farms and Open Cellars run in Nillumbik.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	M
	10. Determine if the Yarra Valley should be a key location for partnerships with Melbourne Food and Wine Festival and other major Melbourne events to pilot night-time economy activities with interested businesses in dedicated regions supported by YRT and other partners.	✓			Local Councils, Industry, Wine Yarra Valley	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



First Peoples Experiences: Embedding Traditional Owner values & experiences across tourism

VISION

The values of the Traditional Owners across the region will be embedded in the delivery of the plan. Consultation is continuing with the Traditional Owners groups on behalf of their community to support this. The DMP will guide the tourism industry in upholding these values. It also creates an opportunity for Traditional Owners to further develop Indigenous tourism experiences that support their core objectives.

First Peoples

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Traditional Owners - Cultural Awareness and Interpretation	1. Embed Traditional Owner Group values in respect of country and self determination across the visitor economy in the Yarra Valley.			✓	Traditional Owners, Local Councils, Industry	S
	2. Led by Traditional Owner Groups, develop approved interpretation and story telling at key sites in the region to raise awareness of Traditional Owner history and culture in the region.		✓		Traditional Owner, Local Councils, Industry	M
	3. Build closer relationships between the Yarra Valley tourism industry and the Traditional Owner community.			✓	Local Councils, Industry, Traditional Owners	S
	4. Discuss and develop with Traditional Owner Groups opportunities for culture awareness activities with local Yarra Valley businesses and attractions e.g. Ngurrak narring (RidgeWalk).		✓		Traditional Owners, Local Councils, Industry	M
	5. Ensure welcome to country ceremonies are conducted at key tourism industry functions and experiences throughout Yarra Valley.			✓	Traditional Owners, Industry	S
	6. Establish cultural awareness training and workshops for local Yarra Valley tourism businesses.	✓			Traditional Owners, Local Councils, Industry	S

First Peoples

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Traditional Owners - Experiences	1. Assist in the vision, ambition, implementation and development plans of Wurundjeri for the Nangenala property in Healesville.			✓	Traditional Owners	M
	2. Assist Traditional Owner Groups in the development of a range of Traditional Owner owned, led or endorsed visitor experiences in the Yarra Valley, including night-time, that complement existing and new product to support the principles of economic self determination.		✓		Traditional Owner	M
	3. Increase employment of Traditional Owner groups in the visitor economy in the Yarra Valley and identify training needs as appropriate.		✓		Local Councils, Traditional Owners	S
	4. Undertake an audit of indigenous tourism product in the Yarra Valley and develop comprehensive list of indigenous experiences across the region including opportunities to provide connection to country for Traditional Owner groups such as ngurrak barring (Ridgewalk)		✓		Local Councils, Traditional Owners	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section C: Cultural sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Developing and leveraging new attractions and experiences

These opportunities not only seek to develop new emerging areas such as wellness tourism but also to ensure the development and continued improvement of current attractions (including some of the hero experiences).

Wellness: Broadening the region’s appeal & economy

VISION

The vision is to capitalise on the emerging trend of wellness travel in the region by leveraging the area’s natural attributes and complementing them with existing products. With a world-leading wellness operator coming to the region, the region is well positioned to offer multi-dimensional wellness activities, including Sleep, Eat, Spa, Move, Mindfulness, and Grow. By doing so, we will attract higher-yield visitors and establish the region as a premier destination for wellness travel, providing opportunities for growth and economic development.

Wellness

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Wellness	1. Continue to identify Wellness product in the Yarra Valley to be included in regional promotions that is related to the multi-dimensional wellness activities of Sleep, Eat, Spa, Move, Mindfulness and Grow.	✓			Industry	S
	2. Package existing products to create a wellness itinerary for the Yarra Valley that will be built into a regional itinerary.	✓			Industry	S
	3. Explore opportunities for product development in the Yarra Valley to enhance the Wellness credentials of the region.			✓	Industry	M
	4. Identify Yarra Valley sites that can contribute to an investment prospectus focused on wellness related opportunities supported with LGA planning guidance.		✓		Local Councils	M

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Tours & Attractions: Developing new itineraries while supporting industry icons

VISION

The vision is to promote multi-stop, multi-day, mid-week and night tours to encourage longer stays and shift visitation away from weekends. Supporting continued investment in the iconic industry attractions to develop more mid week and night time activities will fast track this initiative.

Tours and Attractions

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Tours and Attractions	1. Encourage tour operators and industry to create multi stop / multi-day / mid-week / night regional tours with dynamic pricing models at key sites in the Yarra Valley.		✓		Industry	S
	2. Encourage activities that bring people mid-week or night to help the night-time economy grow in the Yarra Valley		✓		Industry	S
	3. Investigate alignment of resources across the region to establish and build upon familiarisation tours with journalists, bloggers and other influencers.	✓			Wine Yarra Valley, Industry	S
	4. Facilitate partnerships with local accommodation providers to offer package deals that include tours and activities in the Yarra Valley.	✓			Industry	M
	5. Promote existing hero attractions in the Yarra Valley with a focus on development of night (also dawn and dusk) and mid-week product to draw new visitors to the region.	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S
	6. Advocate with industry in the Yarra Valley for dynamic pricing models to shift peak demand and encourage mid-week or night-time visitation.			✓	Industry, LTAs	M
	7. Foster the ongoing development of new and existing night-time experiences that encourage overnight stay.	✓			Industry, Local Councils,	M
	8. Work with Yarra Ranges Council to ensure bus and car parking is appropriate at key sites across the Yarra Valley.		✓		Local Councils, LTAs, Dept Transport & Planning	S

• Continued over page

Tours and Attractions

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Tours and Attractions	9. Collaborate with Yarra Valley attractions to develop evening/ mid week themed activities and unique product opportunities to draw new visitors into the region. E.g. Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary.	✓			Industry	M
	10. Support the continued investment by government in the proposed masterplans of state infrastructure at Healesville Sanctuary to ensure their facilities continue to meet customer needs and can grow the visitor economy.			✓	Land owners, Councils, Industry	M

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Arts Culture & Heritage: A new regional approach

VISION

The vision is to collaborate across the whole region to increase awareness about the arts, culture and heritage experiences that currently exist and work together to identify opportunities for growing future visitation through collaboration with other similar arts and culture across the region and the State.

Arts Culture & Heritage

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Arts, Culture & Heritage - Arts & Culture	1. Collaborate with Yarra Ranges Council and industry to develop arts and culture events, galleries and exhibitions for potential cross region promotions opportunities e.g. Festivals, Open Studios.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	2. Create opportunities to package arts and culture attractions with other visitor economy opportunities (eat, drink, stay, do...)		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	3. Use privately and publicly owned assets or experiences (galleries, public art installations, gardens, parks...) as part of marketing collateral to promote the region.	✓			Local Councils	S
	4. Explore opportunities for for creative arts installations and activities at Maroondah Reservoir Dam.	✓			Industry, Wine Yarra Valley	S
	5. Determine viability for expansion of Nillumbik's Digital agora (or other events) into the Yarra Valley and across the region as part of a regional event activity or the development of other events such as unique, sustainable and iconic art installations.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	6. Further develop and enhance key heritage trails for the region, eg Gulf Station.	✓			Industry	S
	7. Support heritage land managers (Eg, Gulf Station, Monsalvat, Puffing Billy Railway, Mont De Lancy) to undertake long term strategic planning to preserve their heritage and create relevant visitor experiences.			✓	Land Managers, Local Councils	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Infrastructure: Investing for a sustainable future

VISION

The vision is to overcome the various infrastructure challenges faced by the region by developing a clear plan and advocating for significant investment as a collective voice. We will work closely with multiple local governments to make a compelling case for investment in areas such as internet access, waste management, roads, and visitor servicing. We will prioritise the provision of essential services such as public toilets in high traffic areas, parking, and wayfinding to enhance the visitor experience and promote the sustainable growth of the region.

Infrastructure

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Infrastructure	1. Conduct a regional audit of key infrastructure to identify priorities for investment that can be built into joint advocacy plans between industry and Council at a regional and Local Area level. For the Western Yarra Valley, this will include internet access upgrades, roads, parking, waste management services, public toilet supply, street scape beautification, EV charging, electricity supply, signage and wayfinding.		✓		Local Councils, Land Managers	S
	2. Identify priority investment areas based on audit to advocate to key partners for funding. Priority to be given to infrastructure that increases the economic contribution of our identified Product priorities.		✓		Local Councils, Land Managers	M
	3. Utilising the audits of key nature based infrastructure, work with Parks Victoria and other providers of assets in the region (DEECA, Yarra Valley Water) to identify and detail maintenance and investment required.			✓	Land Managers, Local Councils	M
	4. Contribute to the development of a Investment Prospectus highlighting for potential investors the needs and opportunity for the infrastructure together with the planning concierge support that will be provided by Yarra Ranges Council (including potential site selection).			✓	Local Councils, Land Managers	M
	5. Support Wurundjeri to secure investment for Galena Beek to realise vision for the sites			✓	Traditional Owners, Local Council	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Section B:

Regional Priorities and Initiatives

Strategic Priorities and Additional Regional Initiatives that require a whole of YVDR region approach are outlined below:

The catalyst for success:

Developing a night-time and mid-week visitor economy

VISION

The long-term aim is to raise the region's profile as an exciting and enjoyable destination to visit during the week and at night-time. Visitors will love exploring the region away from the weekend crowds, and businesses will embrace the opportunity to tailor their offerings. New attractions – including bespoke food and wine experiences, mid-week events and night-time sound and light shows – will delight visitors and be relished by locals. This new tourism dynamic will make the region more attractive to investors, open up more work opportunities for local people and improve liveability.

A key focus of this local area plan is to develop the visitor economy to attract more people to visit mid-week and stay overnight. This is to reduce impacts on the community whilst also generating local support for tourism.

Enhancing the night-time and mid-week visitor economy will assist in shifting visitation away from the busy weekends and encourage more people to stay overnight, thereby increasing the value of the visitor spend. It could reasonably be expected that this would lead to more investment in the region with increased visitor spend, more demand for overnight accommodation and increased visitation over the week. It will be a key catalyst to meet the objective of addressing the issue of very high – and rising – amounts of day trips and enhance the community's interest and support for tourism in the region.

Current status

YVDR has the highest ratio of day trips compared to overnight visitors in the state. The majority of day trips also occur on the weekend. A supply and demand cycle is perpetuating this issue.

For example, there are fewer visitors to the region at night because most visitor

attractions are focussed on day-time activities. Most night-time attractions are usually on a Friday or Saturday night with many attractions, wineries and restaurants closed on a Monday and Tuesday. This dictates that people visit these places later in the week and on weekends.

The same issue applies to venues that only open at lunchtime. Visitors mainly visit YVDR during the day because there are limited options in the evening.

What the region needs

For this model to change, significant mind shifts are needed from both visitors and the local tourism industry. Night-time focussed tourism activities will need to be created across the whole week and marketing of these mid-week and night-time attractions will be needed to support these opportunities.

The benefits of this are:

1. Visitation will be across the entire week, helping to reduce congestion on weekends.
2. People attending night-time activities are more likely to stay overnight – generating higher visitor spend and a higher return on investment

for accommodation providers. This will help support future business cases for additional investment in accommodation.

3. More night-time and mid-week activities will generate additional demand for restaurants providing more stable and extra employment for tourism and hospitality workers. This is also likely to encourage more workers to join the industry and help fill the current gaps detailed in the workforce plan. (This also requires a shift in the way the State Tourism Organisation, Visit Victoria markets regional Victoria, to target different demographics and promotes behaviour change to visit mid-week)
4. The liveability of the region will be improved for residents.

How this will be achieved

This local area plan and the YVDR DMP provide the detailed actions that are key to shift the visitor and tourism industry's mindset and provide meaningful attractions and experiences that spread visitor demand across the entire week and at night. The aim is to create an invigorated and vibrant visitor economy throughout the entire week.

Statutory Planning & Environment: Sustainable development for today and tomorrow

VISION

By recognising the importance of the Green Wedges to Melbourne in enhancing the liveability of the area and the visitor economy, a balance will be achieved between development growth and the sustainability of the region’s natural attributes. The development of tourism infrastructure will be carried out in a way that maintains the core attributes of the Green Wedge and ensures its long-term protection

Statutory Planning and Environment

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Statutory Planning and Environment	1. Councils to jointly work together across the whole region to determine the best way of attracting the required investment in new accommodation for both visitors and industry workers. Eg, An investment prospectus that highlights locations with fewer encumbrances that can address the best outcomes for scale, suitability, expansion.			✓	Local Councils	S
	2. Continue the support of statutory planning concierge services for possible future tourism developments.			✓	Local Councils	S
	3. Review appropriateness of size caps on new rooms and seats for hotels and restaurants in the region.			✓	State Government, Local Councils	S
	4. Work with applicants to encourage a regenerative economic approach to their operations that supports viable tourism businesses to accommodate visitation growth.			✓	Local Councils	M
	5. Work with property owners and investors through each Council’s Planning and Business Concierge Service outlining planning pathway options, supporting where relevant property owners to develop master plans for larger developments.		✓		Local Councils	M
	6. Work with interested farms and/or wineries through the Planning and Business Concierge Service to support the planning permit application process for authentic host farm experiences where visitors can stay and experience the daily operations of the winery/farm.			✓	Local Councils	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section C: Cultural sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Accommodation: For visitors to enjoy and workers to call home

VISION

Increasing accommodation options in the region will encourage longer stays and attract visitors who will contribute to the region’s economic growth and development. This includes identifying suitable sites for expanded visitor and worker accommodation options – small and large – and a potential accommodation investment prospectus. Coordinated advocacy to the State and local government authorities to streamline planning processes to overcome the challenge of limited accommodation options that have led to a preference for day trips over overnight stays.

Accommodation

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Accommodation	1. Partner with Council to deliver a joint promotional campaign using Major Activity Centre profiles and providing information to land owners on the State Government’s planning process for priority application sectors and investment dollar thresholds.			✓	Joint advocacy	M
	2. Promote new tourism accommodation development in conjunction with the provision of worker accommodation (on-site or elsewhere in town).			✓	Local Council	M
	3. Develop investment prospectus for accommodation based on identified sites by Council for visitors and for workers in the visitor economy. Include at least one 300 room international branded hotel which will help with profile and marketing to international tourists.		✓		Local Councils	M
	4. Build partnerships with accommodation operators adjacent to the region and create bespoke tours and offers to encourage mid-week visitation or multi-stop itineraries.	✓			Industry	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Transport & Accessibility: Easing congestion and better access for all

VISION

A sustainable transport strategy and system will enhance the distribution of visitors and address the limited network of transport within the region. Visitors will be able to more easily access and explore the region, while residents and workers will have improved mobility and transportation options. By addressing these mobility issues, a more accessible and enjoyable experience will be created for all who visit and live in the region.

Transport & Accessibility

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Transport & Accessibility	1. Build on the findings of the Integrated Transport Strategy developed by YRC to incorporate the principles and service needs for the whole tourism region to inform future advocacy, business cases, pilot schemes and/or changes to service by State Government and private sector.			✓	Local Councils	S
	2. Investigate opportunities for destination pass to include mid-week and night-time discounted transport and parking options.			✓	Local Councils, Transport Providers	S
	3. Assess the viability of updated parking regulations to favour locals.			✓	Local Councils	S
	4. Encourage the use of existing and encourage the development of new cycle/walk routes between attractions on public and private land.		✓		Local Councils	S
	5. Provide and advocate for the installation of sufficient charging stations for expected growth of use of electric vehicles.			✓	Local Councils, Vic Roads	L
	6. Undertake campaign to encourage ride share and taxi services to the region.			✓	Local Councils	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Governance & Leadership: Delivering efficiently

VISION

All organisation's involved in the visitor economy will effectively collaborate and streamline coordination, as well as outline clear roles and responsibilities to drive the best outcomes over the next 10 years. Sufficient funding for the peak tourism agency and a commitment to work together towards common goals will help achieve this. This cohesive and efficient approach to the development of the region's visitor economy will lead to increased economic growth and a better visitor experience.

Leadership and Advocacy

One of the key findings through the consultation stage with industry was a perceived lack of clarity of the purpose and functions of the numerous organisations that play a role in leading, shaping and advocating for the YVDR visitor economy. This led to confusion and perceived inefficiencies. Industry highlighted the need for more clarification of roles and objectives with potential consolidation.

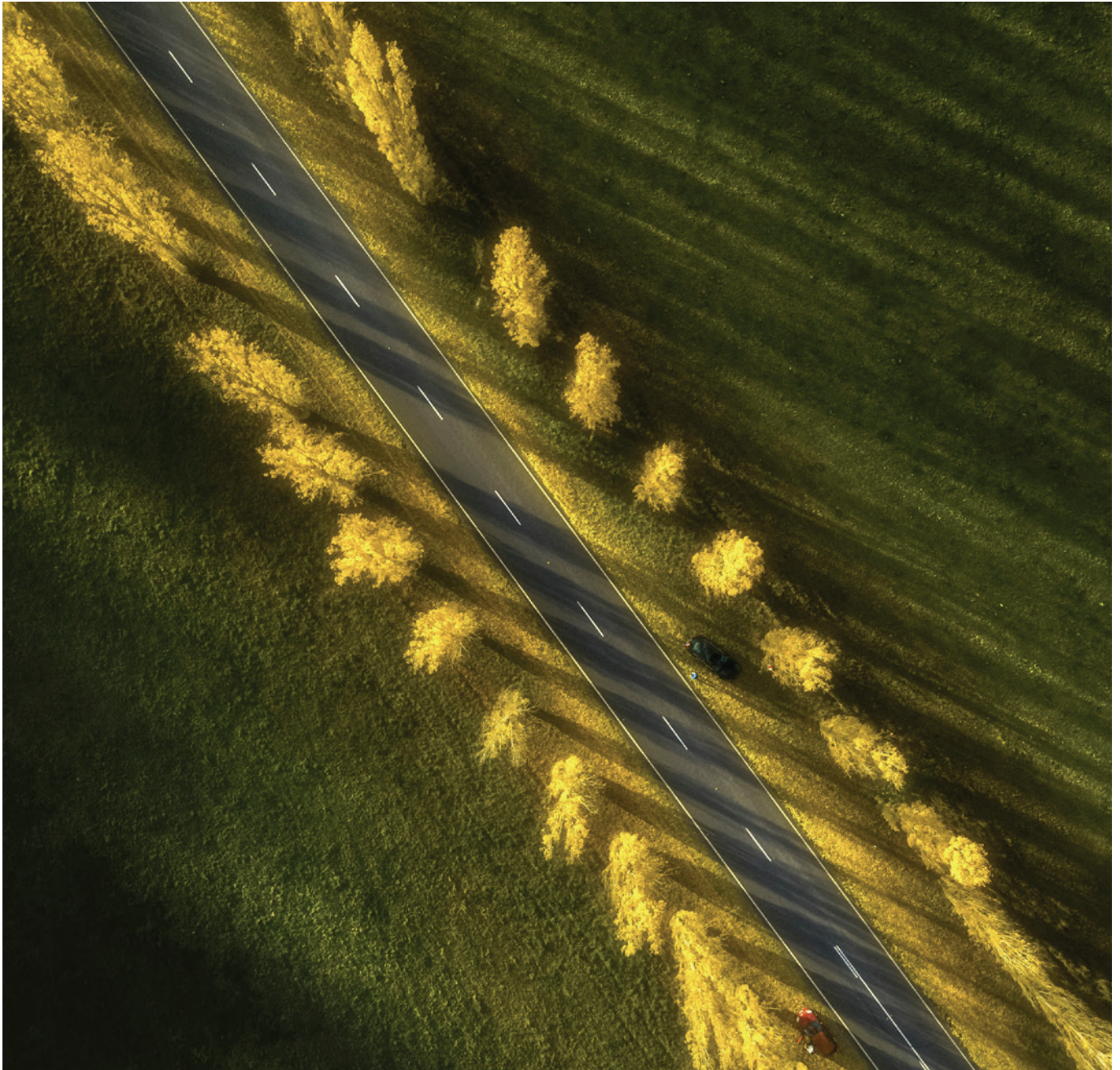


Photo: Visit Victoria

Governance & Leadership

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Governance & Leadership	1. Ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities for local government, local tourism associations, chambers of commerce and industry stakeholders in relation to delivery of the DMP actions.		✓		Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S
	2. Facilitate industry and partner workshops and collaboration opportunities to assist in delivery of the DMP.	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S
	3. Identify funding opportunities to support growth of tourism in the region.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S
	4. Work with State government, particularly Visit Victoria and DJSIR to identify joint opportunities to deliver visitation opportunities for the region including multiculturalism, overseas students and VFR.		✓		Local Councils, Visit Victoria, DJSIR	S
	5. Facilitate the creation and implementation of a specific tourism business mentoring program that identifies best practice and common business issues for the industry.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	6. Facilitate networking, collaboration and partnerships between businesses and government	✓			Local Councils, DJSIR, Land Managers	S
	7. Monitor development pipeline and advocate for investment in gaps within DMP priority areas.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	8. Consider seeking Eco Destination certification from Ecotourism Australia as it sets criteria for a sustainable region.			✓	Local Councils, Industry	M
	9. Encourage and support local products and experiences to seek Eco Product/ Accommodation accreditation through EcoTourism Australia or at least utilisation of the Strive for Sustainability toolkit.	✓			Industry	M

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Advocacy: One voice, one message for sustainable tourism

VISION

The region's various communities will come together to advocate for government investment and policy development that will benefit both residents and visitors. By prioritising emerging issues and reaching agreement among stakeholders, the region will be well-equipped to meet the needs of all who call it home or come to visit.

Advocacy

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Advocacy	1. Establish a regional advocacy advisory group of influential people to support YRT advocacy of priority investments in priority projects and policy reform.	✓			Local Councils	S
	2. YRT to coordinate and support advocacy for key projects identified in DMP.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S
	3. With support of local government and industry, develop a regional advocacy plan to drive priority investment in the region.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	4. YRT to advocate to the Victorian Government the unique risks and challenges in this region with expected loss of social license without specific policy and funding support to mitigate them.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	5. YRT to work with LGA and industry to create opportunities for ministers and key political influencers to visit region and be briefed on key issues.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S
	6. YRT to advocate to the government for changes to provisions that can enable a more competitive insurance market for tourism operators. Work with other industry associations on strategies to improve insurance market conditions through policy options, affordability and overall sustainability.			✓	State Government, Industry Associations, Local Councils, Industry Operators	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Marketing & Distribution: Changing visitor travel behaviour

VISION

The vision is to provide seamless access to information and resources for visitors to the region, driving awareness and assisting with holiday planning, as well as encouraging the right target visitors to explore and discover all that the region has to offer. Support and training will be provided to businesses to help them better market their products and services to visitors, and increase awareness of our unique experiences among high-value international and interstate visitors. Collaboration on activities and initiatives will make the most of limited budgets and achieve the goal of creating a thriving, sustainable visitor economy in the region.



Marketing and Distribution

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Marketing & Distribution	1. Advocate for investment in marketing for the region to solidify destination branding and key marketing campaigns to be delivered into Melbourne, interstate and possibly international markets. The Future of Tourism Demand produced by Tourism Australia should be utilised to help determine target inbound markets.			✓	Local Councils, Visit Victoria, Industry	S
	2. Audit key visitor sites to identify wayfinding and other marketing assets that can be used to aid dispersal across the region.	✓			Local Councils	M
	3. Enhance existing activities across industry to develop an ongoing series of regional familiarisation tours and press trips for travel writers, bloggers, and influencers to generate positive publicity and reviews and showcase new or improved product in the region.		✓		Wine Yarra Valley, LTAs, Industry	S
	4. Work with Economic Development departments at local Councils to enhance existing workshops for industry to improve marketing capabilities in the tourism industry with a focus on online tools.		✓		Local Councils	S
	5. Further promote YRT's mid-week visitation campaign and broaden the engagement with industry and Local Tourism Associations.	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	M
	6. Develop concierge familiarisation program across accommodation operators (including surrounding area and Melbourne based hotel operators) to ensure awareness of visitation opportunities in the region.	✓			Industry	S
	7. Implement collaboration through major events in the region to promote the possibilities of multi-stop and multi-night activities. This can include ticketing partnerships with attractions and local businesses, parking incentives, dynamic pricing to encourage mid-week and overnight visitation.	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S
	8. Maintain a progressive position in considering new technologies for promoting visitation and virtual experiences.	✓			Industry	S
	9. Maintain a reliable and comprehensive website or platform that enables visitors to easily find information about accessibility, provenance, hours of opening and attraction options with mapping and booking capabilities. This will allow for cross promotion opportunities and building of multi day or multi stop itineraries.	✓			Industry	M
	10. YRT to explore the development of a mid-week Destination pass – providing discounts for visitors who stay in the region mid-week compared to visitors on weekends who pay premium prices	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S

Sustainable workforce: Growing the region’s capabilities for the future

VISION

The vision is to proactively address the challenges of workforce management in response to the changing global and local trends in tourism and workforce participation, including the impact of COVID-19. The region will embrace the unique challenges posed by its location and address the need for a stronger mid-week and night-time economy to cater to the disproportionate level of day trip and weekend visitation. Through collaboration and innovation, the region will create a resilient and adaptable workforce that supports the continued sustainable growth of the visitor economy.

Sustainable Workforce

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Sustainable Workforce	1. YRT to support Councils to champion visitor economy employment of locals, to help protect social license and enrich the visitors experience of the destination.			✓	Local Councils, Industry	S
	2. YRT to work with Councils and property owners/investors to develop specific worker accommodation to support the visitor economy with consideration given to Housing Strategies.			✓	Local Councils	M
	3. Address existing and emerging issues regarding access, career transition, attraction, and retention of a local workforce.			✓	Local Councils	M
	4. Ensure Workforce infrastructure is considered in Council planning which includes transport, housing stock (seasonal and permanent) and digital connectivity.			✓	Local Councils	L
	5. Attract older workers to consider the visitor economy as a viable lifestyle employer.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	6. Create skills opportunities and workshops for the tourism industry that provide training on cultural awareness and engages Traditional Owner groups.	✓			Local Councils, Industry, Traditional owners	M
	7. Create series of workshops with industry to share best practice activities in relation to workforce recruitment, retention and upskilling.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S
	8. Develop a pilot program to pool businesses and share workers currently engaged on part time or limited hours due to the heavy focus on weekend visitation.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	M
	9. Investigate and resolve barriers to facilitate the establishment of a night-time economy for YVDR that encourages attraction and retention of younger workers.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	M
	10. Partner with local Councils to provide training for industry skills, from low-skill jobs, to medium-skill level, to specialist skill levels jobs targeting key workforce markets.		✓		Local Councils	S
	11. Continue to support and contribute to building a training and skills ecosystem that ensures all key skills needed for a thriving tourism industry are provided to employees who need it.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	12. Promote free TAFE courses related to the tourism industry that have recently been opened up.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S
	13. Adopt a leadership position for workforce best practice as well as being an advocate for workplace issues.	✓			Local Councils, Industry	S

Events: Showcasing the Naturally Impressive region

VISION

The vision is to create a new calendar of sustainable events that highlight the core product strengths of the region and encourage overnight visitation and more diverse experiences

Events

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Events	1. Establish a Regional Events Committee for YRT that will work with industry and local government to align event activities and create showcase event products for the region that will drive mid-week and overnight visitation.		✓		Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	S
	2. Develop a regional events strategy that supports the DMP vision and key product drivers of nature, food & drink, First Nations, wellness and attractions. Potential areas of MTB, Food & Drink, Wellness, Arts, Culture and Heritage with a mid/multi week focus.	✓			Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	M
	3. Encourage business events organisers and larger accommodation providers to cross promote the activities and attractions of the region.	✓			Industry	S
	4. Work with Councils to coordinate funding opportunities for events that support the destination vision and positively impact the objectives of the DMP.	✓			Local Councils	M
	5. Create and attract events that showcase the core product strengths of the region and provide event activities that focus on overnight stays/or midweek visitation capable of attracting significant event funding support from the Victorian Government.			✓	Industry, Local Councils, LTAs	M

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability



Section C: Cultural sustainability



Section D: Environmentally sustainability

UNSDG impacted



Data & Insights: For an informed future

VISION

To establish a centralised resource for data and insights that will empower stakeholders to make informed decisions that drive positive outcomes for the region. This resource will bridge the gap in data and provide valuable insights to help the region thrive.

Data and Insights

Product Priority	Action Items	YRT ROLE			Stakeholders	Timing
		Deliver	Partner	Advocate		
Data & Insights	1. Work with Councils to share data and insights with industry using available sources such as Annual Surveys, SpendMap, TRA data and other tourism related information. YRT will need to contextualise the data to the tourism industry where appropriate.		✓		Local Councils	S
	2. Engage industry expert/s to review tourism data on a regular basis throughout the DMP and provide updated insights to the industry.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	3. Closely monitor shifts in the mix of domestic day trip versus overnight visitors as a key performance measure for the DMP.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S
	4. Closely monitor shifts in the mix of weekday versus weekend visitation as a key performance measure for the DMP, YRT and Councils.		✓		Local Councils, Industry	S

Sustainability impacts

GSTC criteria applied



Section A: Sustainable management



Section B: Socio-economic sustainability

UNSDG impacted



GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS

Activation Plans	An activation plan will look at ways to leverage infrastructure with clearly defined actions to maximise their benefit to the local region and meet the DMP's overall objectives. This may include initiatives to encourage visitation and realise business and community benefits. Areas that may be identified in an activation plan could include, accommodation supply in the local area, transport links, business opportunities, capability to deliver night time (including dusk and dawn) and mid-week activities, identification of key partners to work with and marketing and promotion activities.
DJSIR	Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry & Regions (State Government)
DEECA	Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (Federal Government)
DTP	Department of Transport & Planning (Federal Government)
DMP	Destination Management Plan
First Peoples	The groups of people whose ancestors lived in Australia before the arrival of Europeans. This term is used mainly to refer to the Indigenous peoples of the area.
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
Industry	Assorted tourism industry bodies and individual businesses working in the visitor economy
International Visitor Nights	International visitor nights are the number of visitor nights by international visitors who are 15 years or older as estimated by Tourism Research Australia using the International Visitor Survey results.
Land Managers	Parks Victoria, Yarra Valley Water, Power Companies and Govt. Depts, Melbourne Water, Zoos Victoria
LAP	Local Area Plan
LGAs	Local Government Areas
LTA's	Local Tourism Associations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
Traditional Owner Groups	Refer to Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation and Taungurung Land and Waters Council
Social license for tourism	The local community's level of support and acceptance of tourism
TRA	Tourism Research Australia
UNSDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
Visitor Economy Jobs	Visitor economy jobs are the jobs, not full time equivalent jobs, that are due to the direct or first round impact of visitor spending. This data is aggregated across all the industry sectors with the number of jobs attributed to the visitor economy reflecting the share of total sales due to visitor spending. This data is estimated by ABS for Australia and TRA for the States and tourism regions.
Visitor Spending	Visitor spending includes all overnight travel in the area and spending by visitors on domestic day trips who travel more than 25kms from their home and not for regular work or education purposes.
YVDR	Yarra Valley Dandenong Ranges
YRT	Yarra Ranges Tourism
Western Yarra Valley	The designated Local Area Plan geography that represents the Nillumbik LGA

Thanks to the DMP Project Steering Committee Members:

Leigh Harry
Chair Yarra Ranges Tourism Board

Michael Hands
Yarra Ranges Tourism Board

Simon O'Callaghan
CEO Yarra Ranges Tourism

Stacey Daniel
Yarra Ranges Tourism

Helen Ruddell
Yarra Ranges Council

Ben Harnwell
Yarra Ranges Tourism &
Manningham City Council

Christine Gibbins
Manningham City Council

Danielle Phyland
Nillumbik Shire Council

Kasey Lawrence
Nillumbik Shire Council

Tania Treasure
Nillumbik Shire Council

Chanmali Tregambe
Nillumbik Tourism Business

Kine Haugland/Helene Campbell
Dandenong Ranges Tourism

Sam Maddock
Warburton Valley Community
Economic Development Association

Sandra De Pury
Wine Yarra Valley



This Yarra Valley Local Area Plan was developed by ODIN360 for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges on behalf of Yarra Ranges Tourism (YRT).

