

# **INTRODUCING TOURISM EAST EVOLVING FOR A STRONGER VISITOR ECONOMY**

**4 June 2025**





# Why the Change? The State Government's Vision

## **Adapting to Victoria's Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan**

- Victorian Government replacing Regional Tourism Boards with Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs).
- VEPs require minimum of three financially contributing Councils to be eligible for ongoing State Government funding.
- For our region, the partner Councils are Yarra Ranges Council, Nillumbik Shire Council and Cardinia Shire Council.

# What is a Visitor Economy Partnership?

## **Empowering regional tourism through collaboration**

- VEPs are independent bodies, representing their region as the official voice for their region's visitor economy to the government.
- They foster collaboration between industry, Councils and State Government.
- Core functions include:
  - Coordinating tourism marketing
  - Promoting visitor dispersal for sustainable growth
  - Providing industry support based on local needs (including crisis response)
  - Informing State Government policy with local knowledge.
- Currently eight VEPS established across Victoria.

# What does this mean for Yarra Ranges Tourism?

## **Evolving into Tourism East Limited**

- Effective from 1 July 2025, Yarra Ranges Tourism Limited (YRT) will be renamed Tourism East Limited.
- New name reflects expanded geographical partnership with Yarra Ranges Council, Nillumbik Shire Council, Cardinia Shire Council and State Government.
- Tourism East will be industry's peak regional tourism body.
- Board structure will be similar to YRT, with 4 industry representatives, 3 Council representatives, 3 skills-based board members, an independent Chair, and a State Government observer.
- Current YRT staff will transition across to the new entity, with dedicated resources from local government to support delivery of destination management.

# What will Tourism East Limited do?

## Core functions: driving our Visitor Economy forward

Tourism East Limited will serve as the peak regional tourism body, focusing on:



**Visitor attraction** – marketing and promotion of the region



**Industry support** – providing learning and networking opportunities



**Product development** – collaborating with existing and new tourism businesses, sharing local knowledge, and liaising with Council Economic Development teams.



**Advocacy** – representing the regional tourism sector on relevant matters.



**DMP implementation** – working in partnership with industry, Council, and State Government to implement the Destination Management Plan.

# The regional brand: what's next?

## **Exploring our evolving regional brand identity**

- Too early to determine exactly how regional brand will change with expanded geographical area.
- This will be a key discussion point for future board meetings.
- The Destination Management Plan will be updated to include areas within Cardinia Shire.

# How can industry engage with Tourism East?

## **Your voice matters – engaging with the new VEP**

- Tourism East will have a dedicated tourism industry advisory committee to engage with local industry for input into key activities, strategies and materials representative of the new region.
- Details of Expressions of Interest process to be confirmed in due course by the new Board.
- Existing marketing activities will continue.

# What About My Partnership Benefits?

## **Seamless transition for existing partners, new opportunities for all**

- For businesses in Yarra Ranges and Nillumbik Shire, partnership benefits will essentially remain unchanged. Only difference is that invoices will now be from Tourism East Limited.
- Cardinia-based businesses can also participate in partnership packages.
- All businesses within expanded tourism region will now be eligible to apply for tourism-related State Government grants.



# Benefits of this change

## **Unlocking New Opportunities and Stronger Representation**

- Region will officially be represented at a State Government level through Visit Victoria marketing campaigns, advocacy, and policy development.
- Tourism East Limited, tourism businesses, and Local Government partners will all be eligible to apply for State Government tourism-related grant funding.
- Operational funding will be received from the State Government and the three partner Councils, enabling Tourism East Limited to undertake its crucial activities.



# Questions?



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