

# VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2017-2021

TOURISM GREATER  
**GEELONG & THE**   
**BELLARINE**



## **TOURISM GREATER GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE INC**

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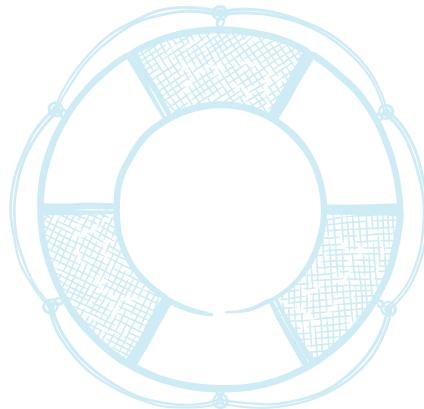
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# CONTENTS

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FOREWORD	4
BACKGROUND	6
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE	7
VISITOR ECONOMY	8
PARTNERSHIPS	10
ABOUT US	12
MISSION	14
OUR PRIORITIES	16
WHAT IS SUCCESS	19
FACTS AND FIGURES	20
STRATEGY AT A GLANCE	22
OVERVIEW	24

# FOREWORD



**With a broader focus on the visitor economy we understand and recognise that experiences are now our superstars, with digital content, storytelling and engagement our mantra.**

Likewise we recognise the most important tourism asset we have is the people who live here. Visitors want to live like a local as they seek moments that matter and genuine experiences.

With this new strategy we recognise the need to change, to understand and to adapt, to ensure that our region and our industry doesn't simply compete in a cluttered marketplace but actually leads.

Our core brand stories and images must be stronger than ever and worthy of sharing. Our planning and lobbying and industry development must deliver new reason to visit and to stay longer. Our industry must be better trained and to have the skills to exceed visitor expectations.

We will measure success not just in guest arrivals but also in visitor satisfaction and in the desire to return and recommend us to others.

At the heart of this strategy and into the future we have

the insights to understand what motivates visitation and to identify the roadblocks and barriers to visitation.

We also understand that we do not strive in isolation and we will continue to forge partnerships and alliances to better engage and better deliver a seamless visitor experience.

As we embark on a new future we are confident in our status as a Regional Tourism Board and strong in our membership support. We embrace new partnerships and new ways of doing things and bid farewell to an era when glossy print advertising was our reason for existence.

With the launch of this Strategic Plan taking us further than 2020, we detail a path forward that goes beyond what we once called tourism. We seek to engage with more people from new sectors who'll become destination ambassadors and brand advocates.

We want people from near and far to enter the conversation, connect with unique local experiences and share their stories.

A healthy and dynamic visitor economy is critical to our region. We welcome your involvement and seek your support as we embark on this journey that will take us beyond 2020.



**John Stevens**  
Chairman



**Roger Grant**  
Executive Director



# BACKGROUND

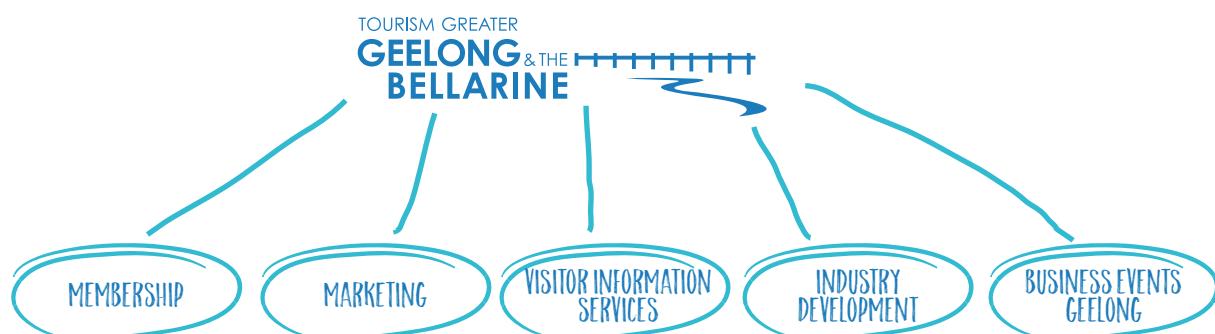
Founded in January 2014, Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine Inc. (TGGB) is the regional tourism organisation for the region from Werribee to Armstrong Creek including Geelong, the Bellarine Peninsula, Queenscliff and the Moorabool Valley.

TGGB is managed by a board of eleven people. Representatives include municipal stakeholders, tourism industry professionals and skills-based appointees. The board is led by an independent chairperson and administered by our staff.



# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

An Executive Director oversees the team of 17 staff (14.5 EFT) in the areas of marketing, industry development, business events, visitor information and administration. 120 volunteers welcome travellers to Visitor Information Centres across the region through the provision of industry funded visitor information guides, maps and referrals.



Since the release of our last strategy TGGB has been formally recognised by Visit Victoria as a Regional Tourism Board. This provides us an annual funding allocation as well as access to the suite of research, industry development, cooperative marketing, grant programs and other initiatives delivered at state level.

The City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe and Golden Plains Shire are

municipal partners and support the delivery of our strategic plan through the provision of financial and human resources. The City of Greater Geelong provides the major financial support to employ staff and administer TGGB. All three of our municipal partners have recognized the importance of working in partnership with the tourism business community and state government to deliver greater industry coordination, cooperation and leadership.

The dividend expected from the local and state government investment with the tourism industry is a more robust local economy with increased employment, investment and clear economic and social outcomes. The relationship between TGGB and our municipal partners is formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding.

# TOURISM IS NOW BEST DEFINED AS VISITOR ECONOMY

Traditional definitions of tourism tend to focus on the consumption activities of leisure tourist people travelling for holidays, site-seeing and recreation.

More contemporary definitions have expanded to include people travelling for other reasons - visiting friends and relatives, business, work, education or medical services.

The term 'visitor economy' is a more accurate definition of the broader impact of our industry. It brings together the sectors offering direct visitor services like accommodation, transport, tour companies and attractions with intermediaries and indirect sectors like retail and food production. This recognises that visitor activity does not occur in isolation and contributes to investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors.

The strength and potential future growth of the visitor economy is recognised in local, regional, state and national economic development strategies. The visitor economy is of critical importance to the economic and social well being of Greater Geelong and The Bellarine region. Its potential for growth is a strength of the region and our ability to facilitate and help capitalize on that potential is through the delivery of our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan.





# PARTNERSHIPS

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS

**G21 and Geelong Chamber of Commerce and Committee for Geelong**

THEY GIVE US: Coordination, leadership and a united voice for the region.

WE GIVE THEM: Tourism expertise and sector specific leadership.

**Regional Development Victoria and Regional Development Australia**

THEY GIVE US: Opportunities for government investment to grow the visitor economy.

WE GIVE THEM: A strategic framework to invest in infrastructure and job growth.

**Invest Victoria**

THEY GIVE US: Support to facilitate private investment in tourism infrastructure.

WE GIVE THEM: Leadership, advocacy and research-based priorities.

## MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

**City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliffe and Golden Plains Shire**

THEY GIVE US: Financial and human resources.

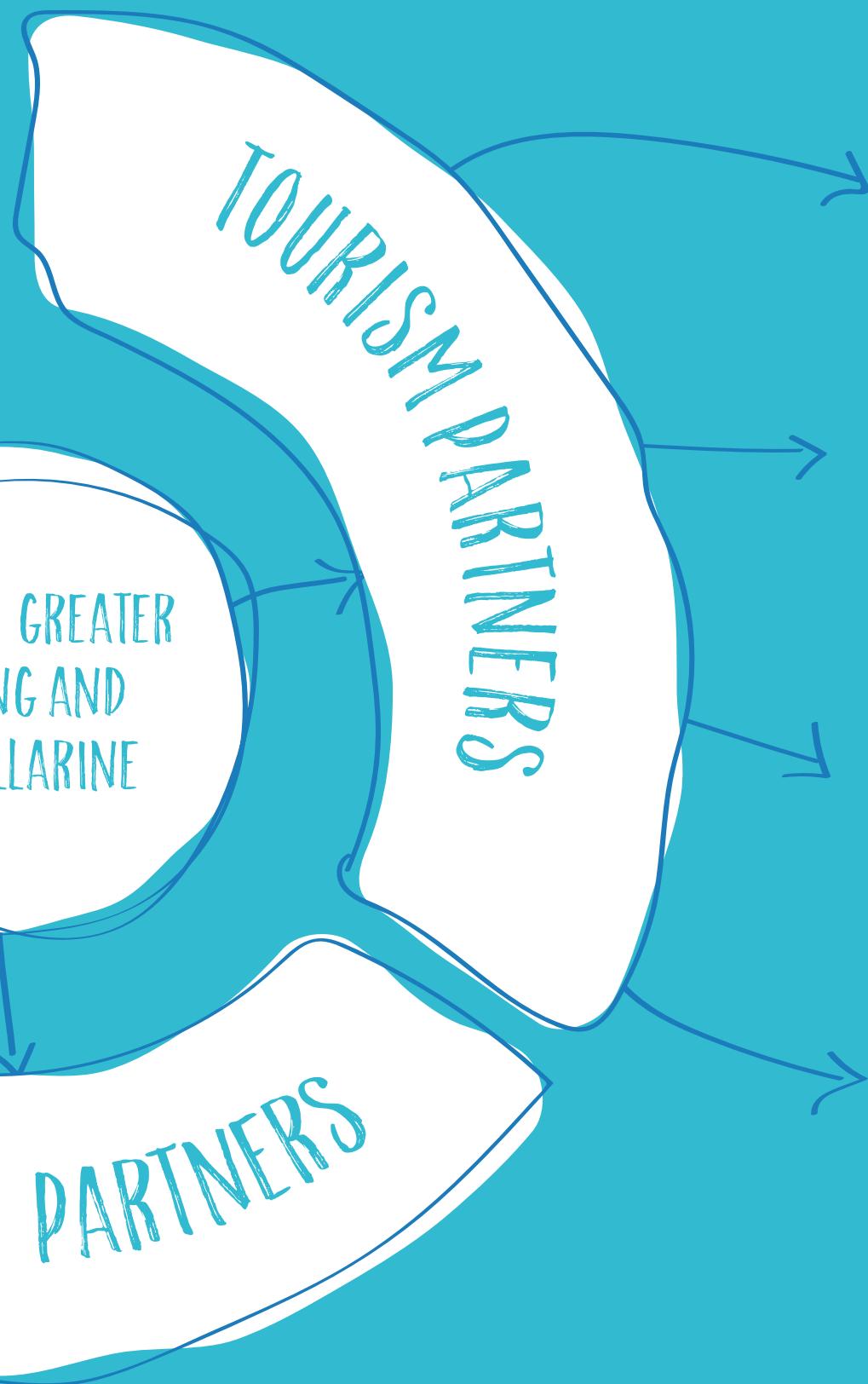
WE GIVE THEM: Positive outcomes in their local visitor economies.

STRATEGIC PARTNERS

TOURISM  
GEELONG  
THE BELLARINE

MUNICIPAL

Partnerships enhance performance by collaborating with member businesses tourism and community organisations and at all levels of government for mutually beneficial outcomes.



#### TOURISM PARTNERS

##### Visit Victoria and Tourism Australia

THEY GIVE US: Opportunities to leverage broader campaigns and insights into wider tourism trends.

WE GIVE THEM: Connections with regional experiences and content.

##### Destination Melbourne

THEY GIVE US: Connection to interstate and international travellers to position Geelong and The Bellarine as an easy and worthwhile extension of visiting Melbourne.

WE GIVE THEM: Resources, content and unique stories to tell.

##### Victoria Tourism Industry Council

THEY GIVE US: Statewide leadership, coordination and advocacy for tourism and the visitor economy.

WE GIVE THEM: Membership, support and active participation.

##### Great Southern Touring Route, Go Beyond Melbourne and other cooperatives.

THEY GIVE US: Global travel trade distribution and sales networks to increase international visitation.

WE GIVE THEM: Experiences and operators that are ready and willing to work with the international travel trade.

# VISION

Greater Geelong and The Bellarine is a globally recognised destination that delivers world standard visitor experiences.

# MISSION

Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine exists to grow and support the visitor economy through **leadership, promotion and development**.

# WE SERVE

**Existing visitors** who already have an affinity with the region.

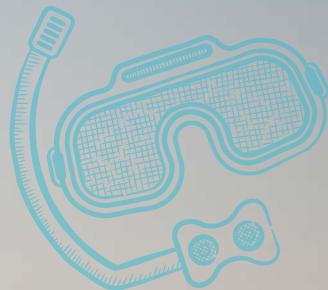
**Potential visitors** who aren't familiar with the region – we'll build a desire to visit.

**Members** of the tourism industry who are delivering visitor experiences in the region.

**Business events sector**, supporting and connecting organisers with regional products.

**Industry sector partners** we work with to deliver positive outcomes for the visitor economy.

# VALUES



## TEAMWORK

Everyone contributes individual strengths and effort to achieve shared goals.

## CREATIVITY

A dynamic environment that embraces innovation and encourages bravery.

## LEADERSHIP

Having the passion, knowledge and conviction to set a clear path forward with positivity and energy.

## ZEST

Approaching our work and our future with infectious optimism, eager energy and unbridled enjoyment.

## JUDGEMENT

Challenging ourselves to consider all resources so we're responsible for good decisions.

# OUR OPPORTUNITIES ARE GREATER THAN OUR CHALLENGES



Achieving our ambitious mission will be a challenge. There are also some existing challenges we need to be mindful of as we work towards our vision and implement the activities outlined in this strategy.

## MAKE THEM STAY

Our proximity to Melbourne is a blessing and a curse. Ease of access makes the region attractive, but perhaps also makes it too easy to go home at the end of the day. Our work needs to focus on providing more experiences that encourage longer stays.

## DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DESTRUCTION

To reach our full potential, there has to be development. Investment in new infrastructure will open new experiences and better meet visitor expectation. But that development shouldn't compromise the rural amenity and natural environment at the heart of our regional strengths.

## BUILDING THE BRAND

Whilst the Geelong brand had taken a hit in recent years, we've undertaken significant work to build it.

We now have the opportunity to take that work throughout the region to identify, refine and communicate destination brands including the subtle, complementary differences between our townships and locales.

## GAME CHANGERS.

Our Tourism Development Plan has identified the key game changing projects that should be investment priorities. We'll drill further down and work to advocate for government commitments and facilitate private investment in those areas we expect the greatest impact.

## REDEFINING WHO WE ARE

The expansion beyond tourism into the visitor economy has opened up potential new sectors and opportunities for new partnerships. Tourism has a seat at new tables and we're planning to make the most of it.

## DIGITAL EVOLUTION

Tech keeps changing, improving and beginning again. It presents vast opportunities while also challenging us to stay relevant. It impacts on the distribution of travel, on booking patterns and on visitor behaviour. We need to monitor, understand and respond when it's appropriate

## ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

With the National Disability Insurance Scheme headquarters soon to open in Geelong alongside agencies like the TAC, Worksafe and the associated service industries, we see potential for the region to leverage the profile created by these organisations and position the region as a leader in the provision of accessible tourism product and experiences.



# OUR PRIORITIES: PROMOTION

Destination marketing and promotion including communications focusing on key themes and competitive advantages, relevant tactical initiatives, working cooperatively with state and national bodies and leveraging broader opportunities.

## WE WILL

Build the brand of Geelong and The Bellarine as a visitor destination to increase awareness, foster positive sentiment and grow demand.

## BY

- Implementing an active schedule of content marketing that leads with the experiences we know drive visitation.
- Working cooperatively with state, national and industry marketing bodies to leverage broader opportunities.

## WE WILL

Provide inspiration and information to connect visitors with the experiences they desire.

## BY

- Conducting tactical marketing initiatives and offering appropriate leverage opportunities for industry product.



# OUR PRIORITIES: DEVELOPMENT

Destination development will focus on industry development programs, identifying and championing infrastructure development opportunities (including potential public / private partnerships) as well as facilitating industry partnerships and the growth and development of events.

## WE WILL

Enrich the visitor experience by supporting and sustaining a high performing tourism industry that exceeds visitor expectations.

## BY

- Implementing an inspired program of industry development that engages, informs and grows industry capacity with relevant education and training delivered by respected experts.

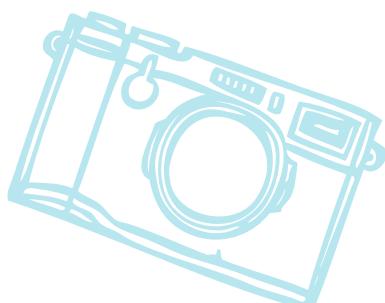
- Providing relevant insights and research to understand performance trends, consumer sentiment and support good decision making.
- Facilitating industry partnerships with a positive approach to cooperative projects.
- Working to grow, develop and maximise the positive impact of events.

## WE WILL

Help the region reach its tourism potential through the delivery of critical infrastructure.

## BY

- Identifying and championing key priority projects that will grow capacity, satisfy visitors and generate positive economic outcomes.
- Facilitating partnerships with government and the private sector to pursue profitable tourism infrastructure that complements and capitalises on regional strengths.



# OUR PRIORITIES: LEADERSHIP

Destination leadership and stewardship, planning and governance including engaging with relevant industry and government stakeholders and organisations as well as providing leadership in strategy, planning, industry advocacy and research.

## WE WILL

Lead a strong and coordinated tourism industry with a united and compelling voice.

## BY

- Continuing an open and communicative relationship with tourism industry members to ensure our policies reflect their reality.
- Maintaining an informed and strategic approach to contemporary issues, maximising those insights to drive a positive tourism agenda.

## WE WILL

Ensure our industry and our destination is best placed to take advantage of the greatest opportunities.

## BY

- Engaging with relevant industry and government stakeholders and organisations.

## WE WILL

Sustain an effective and responsible tourism organisation.

## BY

- Providing accountability and good governance through stakeholder engagement and reporting.

# WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Success in regional tourism is not as straightforward as one number moving ever upward.

We will set targets against the key deliverables for our organisation to measure and report on our own performance. It's also vital to understand the bigger trends of how tourism is tracking in the region. We will monitor industry reporting to gauge the performance of the industry against the benchmarks our work seeks to impact positively.

## MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE

- Financial sustainability.
- Project delivery.
- Engagement levels from consumers and industry.
- Business Events sector performance.

## MEASURING THE REGION

- Visitation data.
- Economic impact.
- Investment trends.
- Industry and consumer sentiment.



# THE VISITOR ECONOMY IN GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE

AS AT 1 JANUARY 2017

Attracts around  
**5m**  
visitors annually

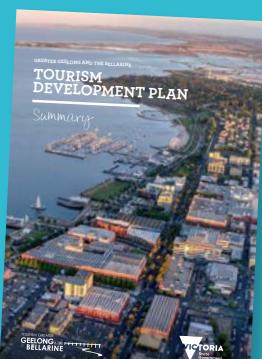
Attracts around  
**2.8m**  
day visitors

**2.2m**  
overnight visitors

They spend  
**\$796m**  
35% on experiences  
30% on accommodation  
10% on retail  
25% other

It's worth  
**4,794**  
jobs

Since Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine was formed in 2014, our visitor economy has grown markedly, and outperformed regional Victorian averages.

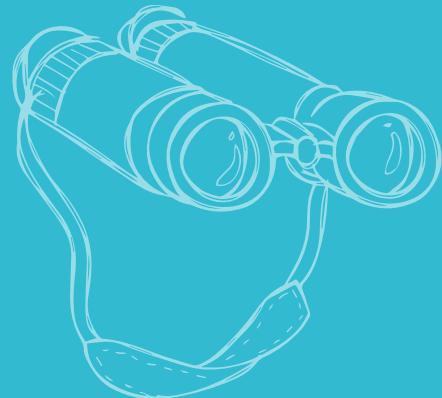
2014-2016 change		
	GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE	REGIONAL VICTORIAN AVERAGE
<strong>Domestic</strong>		
Visitors	↑15.34%	↑5.25%
Visitor nights	↑9.34%	↓0.85%
<strong>International</strong>		
Visitors	↑46.34%	↑34.12%
Visitor Nights	↑7.49%	↑7.46%
<strong>Day trips</strong>		
Visitors	↑9.9%	↑9.9%
<strong>BUSINESS EVENTS GEELONG</strong>		<strong>VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES</strong>
Average event size is <b>50</b> delegates.		In 2016 they assisted <b>200,454</b> visitors with their travel plans, enticing <b>85%</b> of travellers to do more than they had originally planned. <b>48%</b> spent more money, <b>52%</b> stayed an extra day and <b>93%</b> plan to return to the region after talking to a local.
Total business events in 2016 = <b>6,505</b> – an increase of <b>207%</b> vs 2014.		
Total delegates in 2016 = <b>326,638</b> – an increase of <b>140%</b> vs 2014.		
		

# THE STRATEGY

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## AT A GLANCE

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### VISION

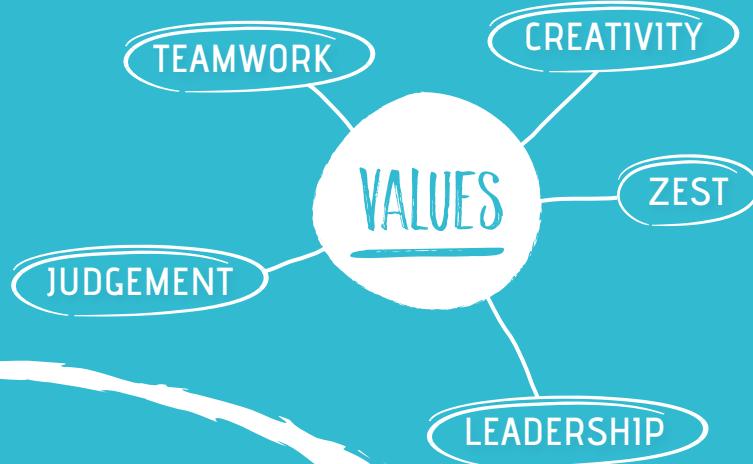
Greater Geelong and The Bellarine is a globally recognised destination that delivers world standard visitor experiences.

### WE SERVE

- Existing visitors
- Potential visitors
- Members of the Tourism Industry
- Business Events Sector
- Industry sector partners

### MISSION

Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine exists to grow and support the visitor economy through **leadership, promotion and development**.



## WHAT IS SUCCESS?

### MEASURING OUR PERFORMANCE:

- Financial sustainability
- Project delivery
- Engagement levels from consumers and industry
- Business events sector performance.

### MEASURING THE REGION:

- Visitation data
- Economic impact
- Investment trends
- Industry and consumer sentiment.

# OUR OPPORTUNITIES ARE GREATER THAN OUR CHALLENGES

## MAKE THEM STAY

Convert day trip to overnight visitation.

## DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DESTRUCTION

Build infrastructure to allow the region to grow without damaging the visitor experiences.

## BUILDING THE BRAND

Work to foster positive recognition of the region and destinations.

## GAME CHANGERS

Facilitate investment in the projects that will have the greatest impact.

## REDEFINING WHO WE ARE

Tourism evolving into the visitor economy has broadened our horizons and opened new opportunities.

## DIGITAL EVOLUTION

Monitor, understand and respond positively.

## ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Leverage the national profile created by local organisations to be a leader in accessible tourism.

# OUR PRIORITIES

## PROMOTION

### WE WILL:

- Build the brand of Geelong and The Bellarine as a visit destination to increase awareness, foster positive sentiment and grow demand.
- Provide inspiration and information to connect visitors with the experiences they desire.

## DEVELOPMENT

### WE WILL:

- Enrich the visitor experience by supporting and sustaining a high performing tourism industry that exceeds visitor expectations.
- Help the region reach its tourism potential through the delivery of critical infrastructure.

## LEADERSHIP

### WE WILL:

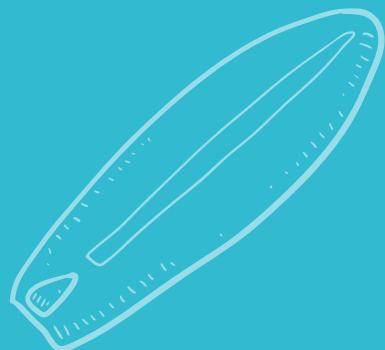
- Lead a strong and coordinated tourism industry with a strong and compelling voice.
- Ensure our industry and our destination is best places to take advantage of the greatest opportunities.
- Sustain an effective and responsible tourism organisation.

# OUR STRATEGIES LEAD TO ACTIONS



# OUR ACTIONS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES

Our Visitor Economy Strategy sets an ambitious vision and positive mission, with focus on the priorities where our resources will deliver the biggest impact. We've identified our key partners and significant opportunities to capitalise on as we drive towards achieving our definition of success.



Our Annual Action Plan details the specific projects we'll undertake and the budgets allocated to various marketing, development and leadership activities



Our Member Opportunity Guide describes the projects we'll implement throughout each year to achieve our collective goal of more visitors doing extra, staying longer and spending more. It's an important tool for our industry partners to plan their involvement in regional activities.









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