8 TRANSITIONING THE CASEY CARDINIA TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO A REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the model and process for transitioning the Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) to an independent Regional Tourism Board (RTB)

Attachments
1 Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020   81 Pages
2 Recommendations and final report from Influence consultants   6 Pages
3 Casey Cardinia Regional Tourism Borad Skills Matrix   1 Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, the Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) continues its transition to an independent board. This is a direct outcome of the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020 (Attachment 1) and Recommendation 19.

The Recommendation's objective is to "establish a governance structure for tourism in the Casey Cardinia region that is viable, resilient and 'fit for purpose" (Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020).

Following legal advice, it is recommended that the new Casey Cardinia Regional Tourism Board RTB (name to be confirmed) will be structured as an Incorporated Association, registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria and operating under the standard or modified Model Rules. Work is underway to establish the constitution and governance of the Board. An external consultant (Michelle Carson from Influence) has been engaged to inform and advise the TAC and Council. Refer to Attachment 2 for Influence's final report and recommendations.

Once Council has endorsed the incorporated association model and transition process, the new entity will be established, with nominations invited for Directors of the RTB.

It is envisioned that the new Board will be in place by the beginning of the next financial year, 1 July 2018.

BACKGROUND

Research undertaken in the development of the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020 indicated that the terms of reference of the TAC were too limited to allow it to effectively lead the implementation of the Strategy. To address this the TAC is keen to transition to a regional tourism organisation. This evolution would move the body from an advisory capacity to a 'doing' capacity, critical in implementing the strategy and building visitation and jobs in the region.

Moreover, the original Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy recognised that a key success factor for regional tourism was leadership and a tourist industry led by strong and visionary organisations and individuals.

The current TAC comprises nine industry representatives and two Councillor Representatives; one Councillor from Cardinia (Councillor Leticia Wilmot) and one Councillor from Casey (Councillor Amanda Stapleton). Administrative support is provided by Council Officers.

The proposed transition is to an Incorporated Association.

The new entity will comprise a skills-based board of up to nine directors, including industry experts, tourism operators, industry service providers and two Council representatives, one Councillor from the Cardinia Shire and one Councillor from the City of Casey. All directors will have equal voting rights. Council Officers from the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council will offer administrative support to the Board.

The inaugural board will be appointed by a Selection Panel convened by the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. Future directors will be elected by members at the AGM. Initially each Director will be appointed for a term of approximately 12 months to establish the board. The inaugural board will then determine the future tenure of directors.

The RTB will be a skills-based Board. The TAC was consulted in the development of a Board Skills Matrix (Attachment 3) to ensure a range of appropriate skills and core capabilities are present in the make-up of the board. A Director's Position Description will identify the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the RTB Directors and a call for nominations process, for directors of the RTB will be conducted.

To ensure the retention of knowledge encapsulated in the TAC, current members of the TAC will be invited directly to nominate.

Applicants will be asked to identify their suitability against the Board Skills Matrix and The Director's Position Description.

A selection panel comprising a representative from Cardinia Shire Council, a representative from the City of Casey and Chris Buckingham, the current Interim Chair of the TAC will assess applications against the Board Skills Matrix and the Director's Position Description.

The Selection Panel will submit a summary and profile of their preferred candidates to the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council for approval before appointing the Directors of the new board.

On approval by Council of the Directors and Chair, the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council will hold a recognition ceremony to acknowledge the work of the TAC and welcome the RTB.

The RTB will then undertake a series of workshops to:

- ensure governance best practice and accountability is understood and implemented
- create a whole of organisation strategic action plan that aligns with the marketing strategy outlined in the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 – 2020
and
- to clarify the organisation's purpose, membership structure and amendments to its Model Rules of Incorporation.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This project aligns with Council's Liveability Health Plan domain "Employment. Cardinia Shire residents are skilled to access local jobs in a resilient, innovative and thriving local economy. Workplaces are inclusive and promote the health, wellbeing and safety of workers".

The project is also aligned to:

- Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 - 2020
- Cardinia Shire Tourism Policy 2015
- Casey Cardinia Economic Development Strategy
- Casey Cardinia Investment Attraction Strategy

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

Our Economy.
We will create and support local employment and business opportunities for our community and the wider region.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Council Officers and the external consultant (Influence) worked extensively with the TAC to develop the proposed model and process.

A call for nominations for directors of the RTB will be advertised through Council's normal channels as well as through relevant tourism bodies and regional tourism and business associations. Councillors and Council representatives may also identify suitable individuals within their communities, notify them of the formation of the board and invite them to nominate.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

$50,000 has been allocated for Tourism in the 2017/2018 Economic Development Business Unit budget.

CONCLUSION

In 2018, the Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) continues its transition to an independent board. This is in line with Council's policy and approach to tourism; industry leading with Council supporting their endeavours.

Itis likely the new Casey Cardinia Tourism Board (name to be confirmed) will be structured as an Incorporated Association. Work is underway to establish the constitution and governance of the incorporated board. In the spirit of Council's approach to growing visitation, this work is being done in close consultation with industry.

Council is now being asked to endorse the formal incorporation of the new group.

It is envisioned that the new Board will be in place by the beginning of the next financial year, 1 July 2018.

The Victorian Visitor Economy (tourism) is contributes $20 billion to Victoria's Gross State Product each year and generates employment for 206,000 people (source: Victorian Visitors Economy Strategy). This represents 7 per cent of the State's employment. Casey Cardinia employs 2,948 people in tourism (.ID Consulting 2015/2016). This project aims to strengthen the region as a visitor destination and increase employment opportunities.

Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020

February 2017

Prepared by Sarah Lebski & Associates
for Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey

Casey Cardinia Region
The place to grow in Melbourne's South East

CONTENTS

CONTEXT

The original Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy was commissioned by the Cardinia Shire Council and formally adopted in May 2013. (See Appendix 1: Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy).

In the past two years, Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey Economic Development teams have collaborated on an informal basis towards developing the Casey Cardinia region as a visitor destination. As a result, the two Councils have determined that the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy (CSTS) should be reviewed and updated to reflect the Casey Cardinia regional approach.

> The inclusion of the City of Casey will strengthen the role of local government in leading and nurturing the region's fledging tourism industry. Ultimately however, Councils are limited in their ability to affect industry success and a strong partnership with private enterprise is necessary to maximise the benefits of tourism for local communities.

From a tourism perspective, the inclusion of the City of Casey is very important, as it contains a large number of the region's significant activities and attractions. The City's attributes both complement and enrich the traditionally more rural-based Cardinia Shire. Their combined products and experiences offer particular appeal to families and considerable potential for a strong visitor market.

The Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy (CCVS) is not intended as a whole new tourism strategy. It builds on the information in the previous document, much of which is still highly relevant, and most importantly, updates it to include the City of Casey. The CCVS includes Recommendations to 2020, and a Marketing Plan for the next 12 months, as well as a staged succession plan for the Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee to evolve into a regional tourism organisation.

The development of the Casey Cardinia Strategy is particularly timely. Recently, it was announced that Gumbaya Park has been purchased by a consortium, that will build a large-scale family adventure park on the site. This provides an extraordinary tourism opportunity for the region, and will strengthen its growing reputation as 'Melbourne's playground'.

Additionally, two of the region's most significant visitor experiences, Puffing Billy and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's, Cranbourne Gardens are currently completing Master Plans for their respective businesses and the Federal Government has pledged a $6.5m upgrade to Puffing Billy including a new Discovery Centre. It has also promised a $1m extension of the Emerald-Cockatoo bike and pedestrian trail to Gembrook.

The Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey's combined focus on building a regional tourism industry suggests an optimistic future. Aside from this Visitation Strategy, both Councils are advocating for significant public infrastructure, including an airport in Melbourne's south east, improvements in public transport, for example, an express lane from Pakenham to Melbourne's CBD and additional railway stations to accommodate the growth corridors at Clyde, and those beyond Pakenham.

The City of Casey has commenced construction of the Casey Cultural Precinct, which will be officially known as Bunjil Place. At a cost of $125m, Bunjil Place is the Council's largest ever infrastructure project, and will complement existing, established assets and strengthen the region's tourism offering.

1. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth identified the Casey Cardinia region as one of five growth corridors in metropolitan Melbourne. These areas are driven by the need for affordable housing, proximity to Melbourne and other regional locations, their capacity for residential development (greenfield sites) as well as adequate land for industrial use, and other lifestyle and amenity choices, particularly for young couples and families.

As the second fastest growing region in Australia, Casey Cardinia represents a new frontier for business growth; its population is expected to reach more than 650,000 by 2036, making it greater than Hobart, Darwin and Geelong combined. The Casey Cardinia region will in fact, become larger than some other major cities in Australia.

Such exponential growth however, presents considerable challenges for the Casey Cardinia region.

> The region has fewer jobs than residents. This has resulted in a high proportion of local resident workers (70%) leaving the region every day to work. Continued job creation is required to improve employment self-containment in the region...Areas with low self-containment have a tendency to become dormitory suburbs. The Casey Cardinia region is no exception. Targeted economic development is required to support economic expansion and resultant job creation. **Source**: Casey Cardinia Economic Development Strategy, 2016

While planning requirements ensure that the region's hill towns will remain small, urban areas will continue to expand; tourism offers a significant opportunity for job creation and broader economic development including local workforce participation. In recognition of the industry's potential, Cardinia Shire Council adopted a Tourism Policy in April 2015 'to encourage the sustainable growth of tourism in the Shire'. **Source**: Cardina Shire Council, Tourism Policy, April 2015

Neither the City of Casey nor Cardinia Shire however, is currently perceived as a tourist destination. According to Tourism Research Australia (2014), *Visits per Capita Victorian Municipalities 2009–2014*:

Visits per capita average 2011/2012 – 2013/2014

> Casey   7.6 visits
> Cardinia   11.4 visits

However the region's strategic location to Melbourne's south east, (e.g. Melbourne is no more than an hour away by car), and its close proximity to established tourism regions like the Yarra Valley, Gippsland and the Mornington Peninsula, brings a distinct advantage. When these factors are combined with a rapid growth in population, they provide a strong basis for future visitation – particularly the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market.

The following Strategy will build on the intent of the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy (CSTS) (2012):

> To provide a framework through which the [Casey Cardinia region] and its tourism industry may focus on the best opportunities to align this growth with the development of complementary tourism product and experiences to establish the [Casey Cardinia] region as a competitive and sustainable tourism destination. **Source**: CSTS p.1

2. METHODOLOGY

The development of the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy has been guided by a best practice destination management planning framework, which was also utilised in the development of the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy. It includes the following:

- Desktop research and review of strategies, policies, plans and data related to tourism in the Casey Cardinia region

- Consultation and engagement with key industry stakeholders including representatives from the respective Councils, tourism and business groups and individual tourism operators

- A 'familiarisation' tour of the region, including accommodation properties and attractions and activities.

Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy Objectives

- Increase visitor numbers, visitor dispersal, length of stay and visitor expenditure

- Provide a credible, evidence-based case for more funding for the region's tourism industry

- Identify a sustainable governance model with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, to ensure effective collaboration between the region's Councils and its tourism industry stakeholders

- Increase industry ownership and leadership within the key tourism precincts

- Provide a 12-month Marketing Plan that will attract the Visiting Friends and Relatives market to the Casey Cardinia region

- Provide a practical way forward for tourism in the region that is also aspirational for the future of the Casey Cardinia visitor economy.

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3. A REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

The Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy reiterates a range of competitive advantages, most significantly the Shire's close proximity and access to Melbourne, and its 'booming residential growth' (p.8). The City of Casey shares the same advantages, as well as the greater level of services and facilities that are typically available in a more urbanised environment.

Stakeholder workshops and individual interviews to inform the current Visitation Strategy, largely endorsed the challenges/weaknesses that were articulated in the CSTS (p.7) including:

- The absence of cohesive and accessible visitor information
- An unreliable mobile network, a poor tourism profile and identity
- Strong competition from well-known neighbouring destinations
- The lack of a regional tourism organisation and the continuous need to improve the service culture.

Regional opportunities included the continuous growth in new residents and their capacity to attract visitors to a destination with cross-generational appeal, the need for a major new event to 'sell' to Visit Victoria, given that events are their key focus, and the Puffing Billy Discovery Centre. For the 'hills villages'; the Cockatoo – Gembrook walking trail, the upgrade of the trail between Emerald Lake Park and Cockatoo, and the further development of Gembrook as the new events hub for Puffing Billy railway. Stakeholders also underscored the importance of leveraging key assets – e.g. the City of Casey's 'Fountain Gate' Shopping Centre which is one of the largest retail complexes in Australia, and the area's considerable range of leisure facilities.

> The Casey Cardinia region has a significant and timely opportunity to embed its fledgling tourism industry in the respective Councils' strategic planning processes. As the industry develops, it will require a holistic and collaborative approach that is underpinned by clear and agreed policy.

4. REGIONAL PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

Unless a visitor destination is 'product-ready', no amount of marketing and promotion will ensure a sustainable tourism industry.

EXISTING AND EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

The Cardinia Shire and the City of Casey have a diversity of tourism assets that are highly complementary, providing a potentially rich, regional experience for both residents and visitors.

The Cardinia Shire has some well-established tourism assets, most notably Emerald Lake Park (Emerald Lake Park Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018) and Puffing Billy railway, both of which are popular family attractions. Puffing Billy is the Shire's highest profile attraction and has been described by Tourism Victoria as one of the State's 'key visitor economy entities'. Recent Federal Government funding will assist in enhancing the Railway's core product. There are plans for Puffing Billy to grow its capacity along the Cardinia Shire route, which is currently under-utilised.

> Cannibal Creek's new architecturally designed Cellar Door and Restaurant (Tynong) is an excellent example of the type of experience that will attract additional visitors to the region.

The hills villages of Emerald, Cockatoo, Gembrook and Upper Beaconsfield provide scenic, rural landscapes, and lend themselves to specialty experiences, including cafes, shopping, markets and art galleries in an attractive, relaxed environment.

The further development of food and wine offerings as well as on-farm experiences and quality local produce will boost visitor appeal.

The Shire also offers a range of nature-based activities, e.g. walking and cycling trails, camping and outdoor education/adventure in the Bunyip State Park. The Cardinia Shire Council currently has a draft Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy with a view to connecting its townships through a network of off-road/on-road opportunities. This is in keeping with an increasing number of visitor destinations that enable alternative access to areas of interest, without having to rely on a motor vehicle.

The Cardinia Shire has substantial equestrian facilities including 11 publicly accessible centres as well as recreational trail riding opportunities. As noted in the original Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy, 'close proximity to the Melbourne East population creates an opportunity for families to participate in horse-riding activities and events catering for all levels of competencies' (CSTS p.19).

The Pakenham Racing Club hosts more than 50 race meetings a year including popular night races. The course includes hospitality venues for both corporate and private events, and has recently introduced twilight Trackside Cinema nights during the summer.

The City of Casey enhances and strengthens the region's positioning as an appealing, new visitor destination. Its core assets include Cranbourne Gardens and Moonlit Sanctuary, which like Puffing Billy, have a significant international profile.

The Gardens incorporates the award-winning Australian Garden showcasing Australia's remarkable plants and landscapes, as well as the Boon Wurrung Café, Gardens Shop and a range of walking and bicycling tracks and picnic facilities in natural settings, making it a family-friendly destination as well as a horticultural highlight.

Moonlit Sanctuary enables close-up encounters with Australia's most fascinating and popular animals as well as being an award-winning wildlife conservation park. Its lantern-lit evening tours offer visitors a very special experience. The park includes a café, shop and picnic areas. It also offers a strong education program for students of all ages.

The City of Casey has a diversity of leisure facilities, e.g. Casey Fields, which the Council has developed as the premier outdoor sports facility in Melbourne's south east; The Shed Skate Park, which is the largest indoor skate facility in the southern hemisphere and the Casey Recreation and Aquatic Centres located in Narre Warren and Cranbourne East which attracted more than two million visitors combined.

The Cranbourne Racing Precinct provides the largest entertainment facility in the City of Casey. It is a premier night racing venue including combined thoroughbred, harness and greyhound racing, hospitality services and capacity for a range of corporate, public and private events.

The Old Cheese Factory is a popular place to relax and enjoy the landscaped gardens, playground, cafe and heritage displays. Its historic buildings provide an attractive setting for weddings, and it has a number of rooms available for birthday parties and other celebrations. The Council also owns Myuna Farm, which includes hands-on interaction with farm animals for people of all ages and abilities, native wildlife viewing, a café, venues for hire, playground and BBQ facilities and a children's train ride around the property.

Due for completion in late 2017, the City of Casey's Bunjil Place will provide an exciting and unique facility for arts and culture, and leisure and entertainment. It will include an 800-seat theatre, a regional art gallery and a large function centre, amongst a range of other community and civic facilities.

Bunjil Place will enable an extensive program of national and state touring performances, art exhibitions and both corporate and community events. As one of the largest projects undertaken by local government in Australia, it will significantly strengthen the region's positioning in the visitor market and assist in consolidating and refreshing arts and cultural tourism.

The development of Bunjil Place provides the impetus to investigate the regional opportunities for potential/existing arts and cultural experiences including Emerald's Performance, Arts and Visual Entertainment (PAVE) event. Consideration should also be given to indigenous tourism experiences. This is the traditional land of the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri people where these groups have had a long history of activity, and the name, 'Bunjil' Place draws on Casey's Aboriginal heritage.

Casey Cardinia's critical mass of products and experiences is primarily orientated toward the family market – those making day trips from Melbourne for a change of scenery and an enjoyable day out and those visiting their friends and relatives who live in the region. While Puffing Billy is the iconic intergenerational family activity, the majority are smaller operations. The Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy identified the development of a *major family attraction* as the most important project for the Shire (and now the region). (CSTS p.22)

In August 2016, the first steps were taken toward the realisation of that priority project, with the sale and imminent redevelopment of Gumbuya Park (Tynong) into a state-of-the-art family adventure park; such an exciting and significant attraction will raise Casey Cardinia's profile and change consumer perceptions towards a region that to date, has not been viewed as a 'must see and do' visitor destination.

The redevelopment of Gumbuya Park inevitably provides both challenges and opportunities for tourism in the Casey Cardinia region. While it will have the capacity to propel the region faster and more effectively than has been the case in the past, it will be important for other tourism businesses to leverage off its marketing and publicity campaigns to spread the benefit more widely. A sustainable destination and a viable tourism industry cannot be built on one, single attraction. Collaboration is the key!

Hopefully, such a project will also encourage existing businesses to enhance their offerings, as well as the emergence of new products and experiences.

Beyond a redeveloped Gumbuya Park and several other higher profile attractions, the challenge is to increase visitor dispersal across the region. Many lesser known experiences can enrich a day out or a weekend away, but it is often quite challenging to persuade visitors to get 'off the beaten track'. Ultimately there is a need to make the region's attributes accessible in the broadest sense; if it's in any way difficult to find out what's on offer or how to get there, it is very easy for potential visitors to go somewhere else!

Casey Cardinia can address this through several different strategies, for example:

- **Product 'packaging':** This works well when a higher profile business or event is positioned as the key attractor and other accommodation and activities nearby are included and promoted as part of the 'package' for a day trip or a short break.

- **Touring routes/themed trails**: Second only to the recommendation regarding a major family attraction, the original Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy (CCTS) proposed the development of touring routes throughout the region (p.23). These can be presented on a broader scale where locations of interest are mapped along and around the route, and/or they can be organised thematically; these are often referred to as 'trails' – e.g. a food trail might include fresh asparagus, a farmers' market, bush tucker, Cranbourne Gardens and a café serving local produce; outdoor activities (walking/cycling trails, fishing, visiting farms/animals); family fun and hills villages (CCTS p.23).

The Official Holiday Website of Tourism Ireland (www.ireland.com) includes itineraries with some helpful detail, and Taste Trails – Australia (www.tastetrails.com.au) provides a useful example of trail 'design'.

While there is no suggestion that these are particularly appropriate for Casey Cardinia, they do include some noteworthy elements.

Evening attractions and activities – e.g. star gazing at the Mt Burnett Observatory or a lantern-lit tour at Moonlit Sanctuary should be included where possible, to encourage overnight stays.

'Packaged' products, touring routes and themed trails should be promoted via a new regional website and printed collateral. To maximise both visitor and business opportunities, a database of tourism products and experiences will be required across the region. Such a database should extend beyond the region's higher profile tourism products and include lesser known, quality offerings. Criteria for inclusion should be established in consultation with the TAC. This process can bring additional benefits - e.g. raise the Committee's profile, as it engages more broadly with those who may currently see themselves as unconnected to the industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Regional Products and Experiences

- Continue supporting the region's major attractions, particularly in relation to their business development programs - e.g. Puffing Billy railway and the Emerald Discovery Centre and the extension of its business to Gembrook, and the Cranbourne Gardens

- Investigate how Casey Cardinia tourism can capitalize on the new facilities at Bunjil Place and other arts and cultural experiences in the region, including indigenous tourism

- Provide broadly-based support to the Gumbuya Park redevelopment as a highly significant, new regional tourism experience

- Develop a touring route/s, themed trails and product packages which will appeal to the region's 'Visiting Friends and Relatives' and other identified markets

- Encourage additional cafes, retail, attractions and activities in the 'hills villages' that retain their intrinsic character, encourage longer stays an increased spend

- Foster brand-related products and other existing and potential experiences that build on the region's assets, align with key markets and create a point of difference for Casey Cardinia in the tourism market place

- Build a regional database of tourism products and experiences to maximize visitor and business opportunities.

SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Successful destination development requires a holistic approach, and the independent audit of 19 towns across the region in 2015, provides some crucial insights. While some aspects scored quite well, a substantial lack of visitor information, and 52.9% of toilets that were not clean or appropriately serviced, is cause for concern.

There is no second chance to create a first impression! As the region attracts stronger interest, the chances of repeat visitation will quickly diminish if basic services and amenities do not meet visitor expectations.

A town is often measured by the standard of its public toilets; particularly those that wish to attract the family market.

Research shows that in almost every focus group, especially those with seniors and families, toilets come up as a reason for travellers stop at a destination. They don't just visit the toilet; they have lunch, fill up on petrol, buy supplies and may even spend a night or two in the place.
Source: http://www.mytravelresearch.com/toilet-tourism-make-a-marketing-splash/

There is a high risk that visitor disappointment will be quickly reflected via social media and shared with the world at large! (The Belfast City Council approach sets a benchmark and interestingly, includes its public toilets under 'tourism venues'.)
http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/tourism-venues/publictoilets/publictoilets.aspx

◎◎ tripadvisor®

'A must visit'
Reviewed 5 February 2014 via mobile

Kawakawa is an off-the-main road, 'one horse' town in Northland, New Zealand. Its great claim to fame are the Hundertwasser toilets. Hundreds of tourists visit (and use them) daily. If visiting, take time to look at the shops, especially the gift, Tshirt, Hundertwasser art shop near the Trainspotter Café… **Visited February 2014**

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com.au/ShowUserReviews-g2093681-d2078409-r193120845-Kawakawa_Public_Toilets_by_Hundertwasser-Kawakawa_Northland_Region_North_Island.html#

The lack of variety in accommodation styles was also perceived as an issue with a 73.3% negative score – i.e. the percentage of 'mystery shoppers' who believed this to be the case.

RECOMMENDATION

Services and Amenities

- Continue addressing issues arising from the Mystery Visits program and work towards enhanced customer service throughout the region

EVENTS

Events can be a major visitor attraction for an emerging destination like Casey Cardinia, and provide a significant opportunity to showcase the region. Initially, there is considerable scope to further develop existing events, which can provide an immediate benefit to the visitor economy. Some key examples include:

- Puffing Billy's Great Train Race: attracting more than 2700 participants in 2016, a new, additional run from Belgrave to Gembrook is under consideration for 2018, with a plan to conduct it on the same day as the popular Belgrave to Lakeside race.

- The Cranbourne GP Run attracts approximately 10,000 spectators annually in October. The City of Casey should continue to work with the local community to activate further opportunities around this popular event.

> The City of Casey is proud to host one of the largest and most exciting events in Victoria, as thousands of motorcyclists gathered in Cranbourne to travel en-masse to Phillip Island for the 2016 Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix.
>
> **Source:** http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/arts-leisure/events-activities/cranbourne-gp-run

- The Doveton Show is a very successful community-driven event, which attracts between 20,000 and 30,000 attendees every year. It is viewed as a more affordable alternative to the Royal Melbourne Show and a family draw card. Such an event provides a great opportunity to encourage the VFR market. Building awareness of the region's other exciting activities and attractions will motivate them to extend their stay and/or return at a later date to explore further afield.

- The Pakenham Racing Club is one of only two metropolitan clubs in Victoria that hosts a stand-alone Saturday meeting, including the Pakenham Cup on the last Saturday in November; the Cup attracts between 10,000–12,000 race-goers and provides a good opportunity for packaging a 'weekend away'.

The Cardinia Shire Events Strategy is now outdated, and should be replaced by a regional plan that recognises the economic benefits of both existing and potential events, maximises the opportunity to develop and promote key events as significant visitor (and local) attractions, and incorporates the recommendations in the Visitation Strategy.

A coordinated calendar of events is an important first step and should be included on the new regional tourism website as a matter of priority. To raise awareness amongst local residents, Councils could include a printed calendar and/or the web address in other communications with ratepayers. An events calendar will also enable better planning so that events can be spread across the year, particularly during the quieter months. In addition, the calendar will provide a broader view of the range and type of events, reflecting further opportunities for the future. Similarly, there should be a database of events venues including their capacity, indoor/outdoor and other related information. This will assist in better planning, and promotion of the region's facilities.

The current and most significant challenge is the lack of regional event coordination, development and marketing.

The City of Casey already has a Community Life Division, which includes an Events team of five staff; however the Department's roles is to focus on the compliance issues related to community events. The Council also has an Arts and Cultural Development Department including 15 personnel, none of whom are specifically dedicated to activating Bunjil Place. It is recommended that discussion is initiated between the Councils to explore the possibility of the City of Casey providing a more expansive role in relation to regional events, particularly those that have the capacity to increase visitation. The development of a major, signature event for the region, should be included as a priority.

The completion of Bunjil Place will be a catalyst for larger business events, which can also provide an impetus for partner delegates, pre/post conference touring and return visitation. Other niche events, for example those connected to arts and cultural tourism will require separate planning in order to measure their potential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Events

- Initially focus on existing events as an important impetus for new and repeat visitation

- Undertake a new, regional Events Strategy

- Develop a coordinated, regional calendar of events to promote on the regional tourism website and directly to residents

- Build a database of significant events venues including their capacity, indoor/outdoor and other related information for improved planning

- Explore the possibility of the City of Casey providing a more expansive role in relation to regional events, particularly those that have the capacity to increase visitation

- Development of a major, signature event for the region, once resourcing is in place.

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5. MARKETING

Casey Cardinia falls outside the regions included in Victoria's long-running and highly successful Jigsaw campaign. However a Greater Melbourne Marketing Plan to be developed by Destination Melbourne in 2017 will see Casey Cardinia and Dandenong combined as a single entity for marketing purposes.

The City of Casey has previously partnered with Destination Melbourne for the Discover Your Own Backyard (DYOB) campaign. 'The main objective of the program is to assist local councils in increasing residents' awareness of the visitor-related products and experiences in their region and encourage them to act as local ambassadors'. **Source**: Destination Melbourne website.

> The one thing that matters to your destination more than anything else is word of mouth from friends and family; locals, visitors and your tourism industry. Nothing else matters as much as that.
>
> **Source**: Rodney Payne, CEO Destination Think! (A company internationally recognised for thought leadership in destination development, management and marketing.)

To this end, the City of Casey was showcased through the popular television program, 'Postcards' and several professionally produced YouTube videos focusing on the key themes of the Great Outdoors; Sport and Leisure; Food and Dining; and Family Fun. These will be very useful for future promotion as well.

Generally however, there is very limited information for potential visitors to the Casey Cardinia region. The Cardinia Shire website includes a list of 'Places to Visit' and a downloadable map/brochure, which is now several years old. A web search for 'Casey Cardinia Tourism' leads to a series of error messages. Tourism businesses have their own marketing collateral and there are individual brochures for some attractions and activities – e.g. Emerald Lake Park and the Emerald Heritage Walk. 'What to See & Do in Emerald on Foot' is also a useful guide. The Eastern Dandenong Ranges Visitor and Information Centre located at the Emerald Railway Station provides a range of brochures, and is staffed by volunteers.

Tourism is a highly competitive industry and consumers are spoilt for choice. Visitor destinations must provide easy access to information regarding their products and experiences from the planning stage – i.e. prior to potential visitors leaving home. With the exception of the DYOB campaign, visitor information for the Casey Cardinia region is geared exclusively towards those who have already arrived in the region.

Workshop participants confirmed the findings of the original Strategy in terms of the region's primary target markets – Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and 'day trippers', particularly from Melbourne, which can clearly provide a very substantial 'feeder' population. (It is also understood that some of those who are initially part of the VFR market, return as independent travellers to explore the region further.) However, the most successful destination marketing is based on a deep understanding of the desired targets markets.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

Effective marketing must be based on rigorous research; it is the foundation on which to identify and confirm the region's target markets and their preferences and expectations regarding leisure activities. Research is a core concept in Destination Management Planning (CCTS, p.17). The CCTS also noted the absence of tourism research applicable to the Cardinia Shire (p.13) and the need to undertake it (p.33). The Casey Cardinia region has a significant opportunity to build a vital understanding of its target markets at a critical juncture in its development as an emerging visitor destination.

Sound research will enable all tourism stakeholders to better understand their markets, provide for those markets appropriately and enable them to specifically focus their limited resources on the region's most profitable prospects. It must also continue beyond the initial recommendations in this Strategy. Ultimately, social media can be one of the most useful, measurable sources of consumer engagement with a particular destination.

Central to this process is a strong understanding of local residents and their communities. For the VFR market, they are the 'key influencers' so it is equally important to understand what they currently enjoy, and the kind of leisure activities that they would like to see in the future. By extension, they will encourage their friends and relatives to participate in the same activities.

The increasing numbers of local residents have a secondary opportunity to promote the region. The majority of those in work are employed outside the region; therein lies the additional prospect of encouraging their colleagues to visit Casey Cardinia.

Future success for the region requires both internal and external marketing:

- Encourage residents/locals to visit and support the diversity of family experiences within the region as well any other preferred tourism activities noted in the research

- Develop a recognisable and consistent brand identity for Casey Cardinia tourism

- Develop a suite of marketing tools that raise awareness and provide tangible information for visitors before, during and after their visit

- Build collaborative partnerships between tourism stakeholders to leverage marketing opportunities

- Build a social media strategy (which will include local participation).

> For a great example of involving residents in a marketing campaign, see what Destination Cleveland did to change the negative perceptions around its city and encourage community pride
>
> https://destinationthink.com/destination-cleveland-shifting-perceptions-mobilising-locals/

Please refer to the **Marketing Plan 2017-2018**, p.22 for further details.

6. GOVERNANCE

Strong and effective governance is a core concept in best practice destination management.

TOURISM ASPIRATIONS FOR THE CASEY CARDINIA REGION

- Healthy, sustainable and profitable tourism industry

- Strong leadership

- Community engagement

- Coordinated, collaborative approach

- Attractive, differentiated and accessible experiences

- An effective industry voice to Government

- Great reviews on Trip Advisor

- A clear and marketable identity

- Excellent customer service and products

- A tourism industry that is recognised

- Appropriate communication

- Tourism that is integrated with other activities for mutual benefit.

Source: Stakeholder Workshops June/July 2016

Following a recommendation from the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy, a joint independent Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to lead the implementation of that Strategy, and subsequently the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017–2020.

> The Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy addressed the role and function of those organisations that typically embody the structural elements of a regional tourism industry (p.8, pp.24-25). This information remains highly relevant and should be reviewed by way of background to further discussions.

The current Committee comprises 10 industry and two Council representatives from Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey, respectively. The Committee is well balanced and includes representatives from the region's higher profile attractions – e.g. Puffing Billy railway, Moonlit Sanctuary and Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. Membership is voluntary and inevitably, it is challenging to maintain the necessary momentum.

While recognising the important work of the TAC to date, key industry stakeholders, including members of the Committee, are of the view that its' terms of reference are too limited. Ultimately the Committee's role is 'to provide advice to the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Councils' (CCTAC 2016-2018, Expectations and Guiding Principles). There has been an understanding that over time, the TAC may transition to a regional tourism organisation.

Workshop participants were of the strong view that the industry should move towards an organisational structure that is capable of 'doing', rather than simply advising, and that the current arrangements could not take the region 'to the next level'.

The following diagram represents the preferred option. However the group endorsed this structure on the basis that it was important to consider a range of potential partners as required. Casey Cardinia is already a sub-region of Destination Melbourne, and as such it should work closely with that organisation to leverage further marketing opportunities, including a revised Melbourne and surrounds map. Neighbouring, more mature tourism bodies – Destination Gippsland, Yarra Ranges Tourism and the Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism Board can provide mentoring and marketing leverage on a 'needs' basis.

Preferred model: Regional Tourism Board (RTB)
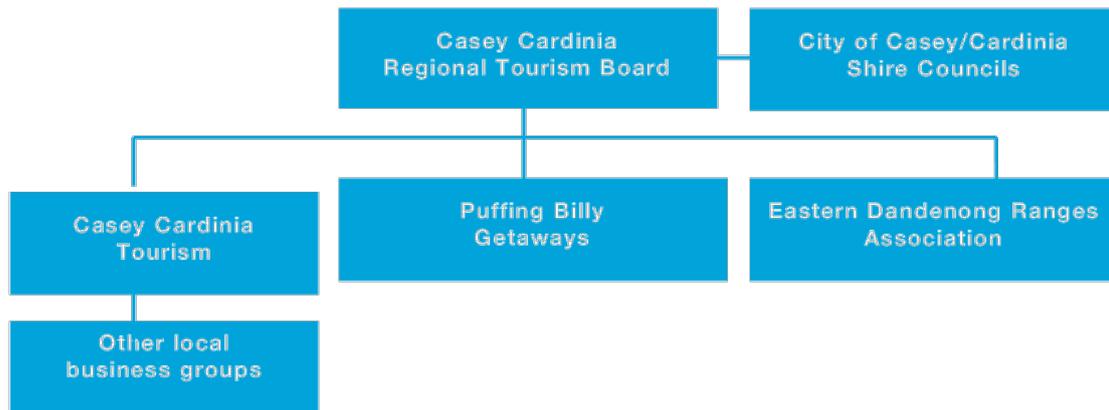
Potential scenario: The RTB consists of a skills-based board with nine members, including two Council representatives, one from the Cardinia Shire and the other from the City of Casey. It includes representation from local business and tourism associations. (Other local business groups may become involved over time.) This is similar to the TAC structure and would assist towards a balance of interests and a sufficient number of members to cover the range of necessary tasks. RTB structures across Victoria vary considerably, according to their respective circumstances.

In some regions, Councils have opted out of the RTB, but given that Casey Cardinia is an emerging visitor destination with, potentially, a new industry structure, it is very important to maintain a close partnership with the Councils. To date, Councils have provided industry leadership, so the RTB structure will require the industry to step up and take ownership and responsibility.

A Casey Cardinia RTB structure can offer the region several key advantages:

- An independent organisation, which can be agile and opportunistic in accessing benefits from larger, more developed RTBs

- The ability to grow as the industry grows – flexibility is important, particularly in a region undergoing such expansion and change

- Better value than buying into a neighbouring RTB, where proportional representation could be problematic

- Opportunities to share the workload – e.g. Yarra Ranges Tourism includes several working groups with specific interests/specialist skills.

Casey Cardinia tourism stakeholders can shape their industry structure in a way that best suits the environment in which they operate; it is not necessary, or advisable, to develop a prescriptive approach. As one workshop participant noted, 'don't limit the vision; industry may look very different over the next three-five-ten years'.

However, there are some aspects of a successful Casey Cardinia governance structure that are essential, including:

> Ultimately it will be the people, not the structure that will make the RTB work effectively.

- Industry leadership 'on the ground'

- Clear roles and responsibilities

- An Annual Plan

- Funding (monetary and in-kind) from Councils to support the RTB's operational/administrative requirements and assistance with the fulfillment of the marketing plan

- Tangible benefits for members, encouraging 'buy-in'

- Measurable outcomes (KPIs/accountability) – industry will be looking for a direct link between the activities of the RTB and their business success, and Council need clear evidence that their resources are being well spent

- Appropriate representation particularly given the diversity of the region

- Succession planning

- A strong and continuous dialogue with all key stakeholders.

THE TRANSITION FROM TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO REGIONAL TOURISM BOARD

The following time frames for the potential shift from TAC to RTB are not mandatory; they are simply offered as a guide.

Key Actions

Immediately:

- TAC lobby Councilors for industry support

Short term (within 6 months/early 2017):

- The TAC seeks Council agreement for an initial transition from an advisory group to a working group structure (current members and volunteers)

Medium term (within 12 months):

- Assuming that agreement will be forthcoming, TAC expands its operating model to accommodate increased responsibility – e.g. introduce working sub-committees and consider appointing a Deputy Chair.

  As the TAC transitions, there will be an additional workload (endorsed Recommendations, new Marketing Plan, a potential change in organisational structure, a new Council) and the need to build capacity at both an operational and strategic level. A Deputy Chair can provide assistance to the Chair during this dynamic period of change, and decrease operational risk during any unforeseen absence by the Chair. Many organisations fail to consider the future until it is almost upon them. A Deputy Chair can also be a knowledgeable successor to the Chair, enabling a smooth handover and continuous stability.

- It will be particularly important to address the issue of industry membership in the first instance; membership of the existing business and tourism associations is very low, and it is crucial that the Council/industry relationship is based on a tangible and mutual commitment.

- Industry (through the TAC) works with Council to develop a funding model to enable the Marketing Plan and Recommendations (where specific funding is required), and commence discussions regarding the longer term resourcing requirements for a new regional organisation.

- Industry (through the TAC) and Council commence the implementation of the Action Plan and the Marketing Plan subject to funding availability

Destination Southern Highlands (NSW) extends its membership beyond the tourism industry and has made a strong and successful bid for membership from the wider business community. This is based on an understanding that 'tourism is everybody's business'. Casey Cardinia's regional tourism organisation will need to work hard, over time, to build a broader understanding of the importance of the visitor economy to regional development.

Longer term (within 18 months):

- Reconsider the preferred RTB model, ensuring that it is 'fit for purpose' and that an appropriate level of funding is secured. If there is broad support for the original option (illustrated on p.14), a full transition should commence towards a membership-based regional tourism association, supported by Council. (This will include a Communications Plan, recruitment of Board members, determination of administrative/operational requirements and governance and alike, specifically relating to the RTB.) It will be important to remember however, that **the first task of a destination management organisation is to build that organisation.**

RECOMMENDATION

Governance

- Establish a governance structure for tourism in the Casey Cardinia region that is viable, resilient and 'fit for purpose'

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7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The original Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy (CCTS) incorporated a series of recommendations, which has been updated annually by the Council's Business Development Officer. *The following plan addresses the recommendations based on the current, revised Visitation Strategy, including the City of Casey, and also acknowledges any outstanding recommendations from the previous Strategy. Key recommendations also include those identified directly through the consultation process.*

PRODUCTS AND EXPERIENCES

INDEX   **High** = within 12 months   **Medium** = next 2-3 years   **Low** = 3 years + **WCB** = within Council budget

Recommendation 1   Build a regional database of tourism products and experiences

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry Note: 'Councils' refers to both Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey unless otherwise specified.	WCB

Recommendation 2   Develop a touring route/s, themed trails and product packages

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High/Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	N/A

Recommendation 3   Encourage additional cafes, retail, attractions and activities in the 'hills villages'

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High/Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Cardinia Shire Council	N/A

Recommendation 4   Foster brand-related products and experiences that specifically build visitor appeal

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	N/A

Recommendation 5   Investigate how Casey Cardinia tourism can capitalise on the new facilities at Bunjil Place and other arts and cultural experiences in the region

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	N/A

Recommendation 6   Provide broadly-based support to the Gumbuya Park redevelopment

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 7   Continue supporting the region's iconic attractions particularly in relation to their business development programs

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Recommendation 8   Continue addressing issues arising from the Mystery Visits program and work towards enhanced customer service throughout the region

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	Variable

EVENTS

Recommendation 9   Build the potential of existing events to drive new and repeat visitation

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	TBC

Recommendation 10   Explore the possibility of the City of Casey providing a more expansive role in relation to regional events

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 11   Develop a coordinated, regional calendar of events

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 12   Build a database of significant events venues in Casey Cardinia

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 13 Undertake a regional Events Strategy

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Medium-High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	$5,000 - 10,000

Recommendation 14 Develop a major, signature event for the region

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Medium	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

INDUSTRY SUPPORT

Recommendation 15 Utilise the programs delivered by Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC), Destination Melbourne and neighbouring regional tourism associations, including tourism business skills and social media

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	Variable

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Recommendation 16 Strengthen relationships with appropriate State Government departments/authorities at a strategic level - e.g. Regional Development Victoria, Infrastructure Victoria, Visit Victoria and State Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 17 Continue liaising with neighbouring regional tourism organisations with a view to potential joint activities and information sharing

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	N/A

Recommendation 18 Build stronger collaboration between industry stakeholders - e.g. Casey Cardinia Tourism Day, 'famils' and other networking opportunities

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	Variable

GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Recommendation 19 Establish a governance structure for tourism in the Casey Cardinia region that is viable, resilient and 'fit for purpose'.

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

Recommendation 20 Encourage Councils to include tourism in their respective strategic plans in recognition of its importance to the region's visitor economy

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	N/A

Recommendation 21 Update the Cardinia Shire's Tourism Policy to include the City of Casey and a regional approach

Priority	Responsibility	Cost
High	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	WCB

8. MARKETING PLAN

The Marketing Plan acknowledges that the Casey Cardinia region is a largely undiscovered part of Victoria from a tourism perspective. The next 12 months will require some fundamental activities to ensure its recognition as an exciting, emerging visitor destination. Clearly these activities will not occur without appropriate resourcing.

The Plan focuses on a combination of necessary 'first steps' and a series of cost-effective, achievable recommendations to understand key target markets, develop a brand identity, build accessible visitor information including social media, and leverage the value of collaboration with industry partners. Some recommendations are inevitably ongoing and responsibility may change over time, depending on governance arrangements.

*In some areas of the Plan, suggestions have been made regarding individuals/companies who have the capacity to carry out particular recommendations on behalf of Casey Cardinia and whose work is known to Sarah Lebski & Associates.

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
RESEARCH			
1. Undertake professionally designed research and analysis of local tourism stakeholders (survey + interviews) to build a profile of existing visitation including information sources and demographic data	Within 3 months	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	$11,000 (inclusive of Recommendations 2 & 3) Dr Meredith Wray, Wray Sustainable Tourism and Research
2. Undertake a community-based survey and analysis to ascertain VFR visitation, and resident/visitor needs and expectations regarding leisure activities	Within 6 months	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	$11,000 (inclusive of Recommendation 2 & 3 as noted above)
3. Develop a standard survey enabling operators to consistently collect visitor data	Within 6 months	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	No direct cost (developed by TAC)
4. Undertake external tourism research specific to the Casey Cardinia region to gain a better understanding of both current and potential visitor markets	Within 12 months	Lead: Councils Support: Councils	To be negotiated *Dr Joseph Cheer, Monash University, Australia and International Tourism Research Unit
BRAND			
5. Develop a regional brand identity and communication plan For more information: CCTS pp.31-33	Within 12 months	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	$10,000 Tania Farrelly, I Spy
6. Build an image library and video footage that can be submitted to Visit Victoria and utilised for other marketing and promotion	Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	Variable

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
VISITOR INFORMATION 7a. Commence the development of a high quality regional web site, which can be easily enhanced over time and managed internally. Key features should include: ▪ mobile-friendly ▪ easily accessed using appropriate keywords on search engines ▪ built on best practice content management ▪ simple transfer of administration rights.	Within 6 months/ Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	Between $3000 - $10,000 depending on the level of sophistication
7b. Develop and promote quality printed/ downloadable maps for residents and visitors, that include major attractions, activities, accommodation and touring itineraries, and incorporate the website address on all printed material 7c. Include a calendar of events on the website as a key priority 7d. Develop a distribution plan for printed collateral	Within 6 months	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	Variable
8. Create a regional Google Map, highlighting key points of interest; this will not only provide a PDF map, but also an interactive one that visitors can access via their mobile phone for navigation and touring	Within 6 months	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	No cost
9. Develop a social media strategy (possibly a staged approach), but will initially include acquiring appropriate social media @handles and URLs, plus domain names (if required), advice regarding content, suitable channels, maximising social sharing, analytics etc.	Within 12 months	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	$1,500 - $6,000 Rebecca King, Kingthing Marketing

Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017- 2020
Sarah Lebski & Associates Tourism Consultancy   24

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS 10. Partner with residents/locals/, ensuring they have all the information required to promote the best of the Casey Cardinia tourism region, and ensure they are active participants in the region's social media strategy	High/ Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry, Residents/Locals	Variable/WCB
11. Develop a partnership with Destination Melbourne to leverage their marketing capacity in favour of the Casey Cardinia region	Ongoing	Lead: Councils Support: Industry	Variable and dependent on available opportunities
12. Promote touring/special interest itineraries and packaging ideas in print and online, to showcase regional diversity, encourage visitor dispersal and increase spend - e.g. cycling, food/farm gate, family fun	Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Council	Variable
13. Develop a strong collaboration with Visit Victoria to encourage inclusion in visiting journalist's itineraries, internal 'famils' and other related opportunities	Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	At cost
14. Build active relationships with neighbouring Regional Tourism Boards - e.g. Destination Gippsland and the Yarra Ranges RTB for potential or specific partner opportunities in appropriate tactical marketing campaigns.	Ongoing	Lead: Industry Support: Councils	Variable and dependent on available opportunities

9. APPENDICES

Appendix 1

CARDINIA
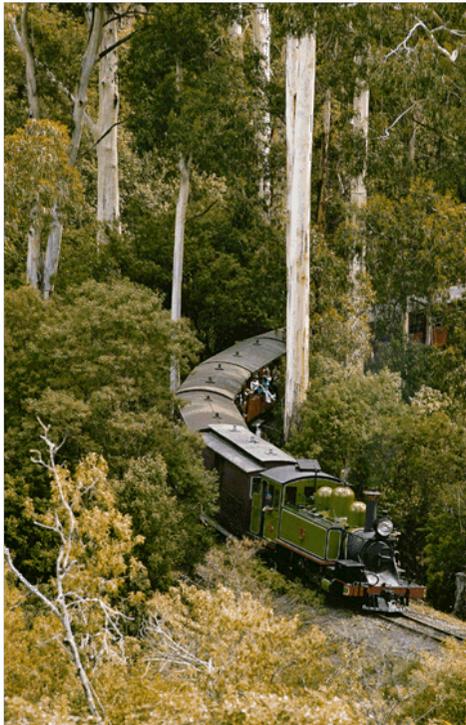
Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy
Cardinia Shire Council

July 2012

BILL FOX & ASSOCIATES PTY LTD
Tourism Planning & Management Services

| Adopted: | May 2013 |
| Review date: | May 2018 |

Disclaimer

The Cardinia Shire Council Strategic Tourism Plan has been prepared specifically for Cardinia Shire Council.

Neither Bill Fox & Associates Pty Ltd nor any member or employee of Bill Fox & Associates Pty Ltd takes responsibility in any way whatsoever to any person or organisation (other than that for which this report has been prepared) in respect of the information set out in this report, including any errors or omissions therein. In the course of our preparation of this report, recommendations have been made on the basis of assumptions and methodology.

This plan and its contents are not to be referred to, quoted or used by any party in any statement or application, other than by Cardinia Shire Council, without written approval from Bill Fox & Associates Pty Ltd.

This plan has been prepared in good faith and in conjunction with Cardinia Shire Council.

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CARDINIA

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CARDINIA

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CARDINIA

Consultation

We would like to acknowledge those individuals and organisations who kindly participated in the development of the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy through the consultation process.

Your contributions are appreciated.

Interviews

Michael Muaremov	Mary Farrow	The following organisations were consulted:
Ian Hollingsworth	Lynne Trensky	Destination Melbourne Limited
Eamonn Seddon	Destination Melbourne staff	Yarra Valley & Dandenongs Marketing
Nadine Hutchins	Yarra Valley & Dandenongs Marketing staff	Tourism Victoria
Ian Rees	Garry McQuillan	Parks Victoria
Joanne Staindl-Johnson	David Wilkinson	
Walter Berger		

Presentation

Cardinia Shire Councillors
13 February 2012

Workshops

Lindsay McNaught	Andrea Hall	Sheila Hampson
Nicole Edgar	Walter Berger	Graeme Eadie
Marie Harding	Mary Farrow	Frank McGuire
Melissa Steele	Merle Matheson	Nadine Harding
Michael Muaremov	Ian Hollingsworth	Ken Aldred
Owen Deppeller	Dr Hamish Russell	Michael Axel
Chris Williams	Julie Pugh	Jim Byrne
Lesley Bock	Sonia Athanaileas	Ian Rees
Jo Mooney	David Nickell	Cardinia Shire Council staff

Acknowledgements

CARDINIA

The municipality of Cardinia is the third fastest growing Shire in Victoria with a current population of 77,233 estimated to reach approximately 130,000 by 2022.

Tourism is not a key economic generator for Cardinia Shire however the Cardinia Shire Council is to be commended for initiating the development of a Tourism Strategy to ensure that the development of tourism is sensitively managed and nurtured over the next few years.

The northern part of the municipality provides the greatest opportunities for tourism both in terms of enhancing existing opportunities and developing new ones. The hill top villages of Emerald, Gembrook, Cockatoo and Upper Beaconsfield provide a 'country' experience next door to the city; a unique market positioning.

However in order to capitalise on this opportunity, a number of initiatives need to be undertaken over the next three years:

- Planning issues associated with open space (Green Wedge) will be increasingly challenging for the Cardinia Shire Council.

- The enhancement of existing product and experiences requires focus. There is a need to create a reason for visitors to stay longer and be able to spend more.

- Industry must aspire to providing excellence in customer service and also raising the levels of industry professionalism. This is best achieved via active and responsive Local Tourism Associations working together.

- The neighbouring City of Casey shares many similarities to Cardinia Shire, so it is logical for these two municipalities to collaborate on strategic tourism matters. Similarly Cardinia Tourism Inc. could work closely with the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association on local initiatives.

- Cardinia Shire's competitive advantage and product strengths are centred on the 'countryness' located so close to the city. This brand positioning provides a definitive strength for a developing destination.

- Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) will be the primary market segment for Cardinia Shire (and the City of Casey) with day trips being their focus.

- The major tourism attraction is Puffing Billy, which attracts a significant number of international and interstate visitors to the region. The future expansion of Puffing Billy's operations in creating additional scheduled services will create new opportunities for local businesses.

- The few existing restaurants provide a sophisticated experience in quality settings and they are supported by a small but competent wine industry providing good wines.

- The relocation of the Pakenham racecourse to a major new facility at Tynong will provide opportunities particularly with regard to events.

- Equestrian events and activities will continue to expand particularly in the north east of the region creating new opportunities.

The Cardinia Shire Council is committed to the region's economic, social and environmental well being. This strategic tourism plan will assist both the tourism sector and the Cardinia Shire Council in approaching destination development in a considered manner.

Executive summary

CARDINIA

Cardinia Shire is the third fastest growing Victorian municipality (2012). The municipality has an area of approximately 1,280 square kilometres and is growing by an average of five families every day.

The Shire is currently home to an estimated 77,233 residents. By 2031, the population of the Cardinia Shire will be 155,619, an increase of 101% making it bigger than Darwin is today.

In addition to residential development, there is land available for the development of employment precincts catering for up to 100,000 people living in the region. This will not only provide jobs for local residents, but will make Cardinia Shire a significant employment destination for the region.

The Shire is not currently considered a major tourist destination. However it is expected that strong residential population growth will be favourable for the growth of tourism within the area, driving demand for visitor experiences and increasing the public profile of Cardinia Shire. Therefore the development of a tourism strategy is very timely.

The following tourism strategy will provide a framework through which the Council and the municipality's tourism industry may focus on the best opportunities to align this growth with the development of complementary tourism product and experiences to establish the Cardinia Shire region as a competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

Methodology

The development of the Strategy was assisted through the application of a best practice, destination management planning framework via the following methods:

- Desktop review of strategies, policies, plans, township strategies and research relevant to tourism in Cardinia Shire

- Consultation and engagement with:

    a. Community groups, identified stakeholders and the various tourism and business groups within the municipality

    b. External tourism organisations and individuals

- Field visits to test assumptions.

A list of those who kindly contributed to the development of this strategy appears under Acknowledgements.

The objectives of the Tourism Strategy are to:

1. Identify the tourism market and brand to position the Cardinia Shire as a tourism destination.

2. Define the role of the Cardinia Shire Council in relation to tourism.

3. Identify the opportunities for the Shire and local business to leverage maximum benefit from visitors/tourism.

4. Identify opportunities to build the capacity of the Cardinia Shire as a tourism destination.

5. Create greater industry ownership and leadership within the key tourism precincts.

6. Establish good communication between industry, community and Council.

7. Increase visitor dispersal, length of stay and visitor expenditure.

Introduction

CARDINIA

1

About Cardinia Shire

Cardinia Shire is located on the southeast fringe of metropolitan Melbourne only 50 minutes from Melbourne's CBD.

After a number of decades of incremental growth, the importance of the Shire within the south-eastern suburban housing market of Melbourne is set to increase dramatically.

It is one of the five designated growth areas under the Melbourne 2030 Plan. By 2031, the population of the Cardinia Shire will be 155,619, an increase of 165.83% from 2006.

The two main factors driving growth are the influx of new young families and couples who grew up in the west of Cardinia Shire and who are now forming their own household, and the supply of greenfield sites.

The Shire is divided into three areas with distinct geographic, demographic and economic characteristics.

1. **Northern Hills** the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, Puffing Billy, the Cardinia Reservoir, Bunyip State Park and the rolling farmland of the central-eastern part of the Shire. Townships are well established and include Upper Beaconsfield, Emerald, Cockatoo and Gembrook.

2. **Urban Growth Corridor** runs in an east-west alignment adjacent to the Princes Highway through the centre of the municipality. Approximately five families move into the growth corridor each day (June 2012). Much of this growth will occur in the area between Officer, Beaconsfield and Pakenham.

3. **Southern Agriculture and Coastal Area** these areas based on the Bunyip River basin and swamplands feature highly productive agricultural area, notably dairy, asparagus and vegetable production. The sensitive Lang Lang foreshore is located in this part of the Shire.

Growth within the hills and the southern regions is forecast to be minimal due to the area's environmental, agricultural and horticultural significance; and planning restrictions such as being located outside of the Urban Growth Boundary in designated Green Wedges.

Tourism is not a significant industry in the Shire.

The key industry sectors with the largest outputs include Manufacturing (29.4%), Construction (14.9%) and Property/business services (9.3%).

Traditional tourism sectors such as retail, accommodation, cafes, restaurants combined currently account for only 8.8% of the total economic output of Cardinia Shire. With careful planning, this will grow over the longer term.

Statements

- Significant growth in Cardinia Shire residential population – how will they be catered for, what will they do and what opportunities does this afford?

- Manufacturing and construction are two largest sectors.

- The tourism focus, albeit small, is to the north of Pakenham and is likely to remain the key focus area.

Part 1   Background

CARDINIA

2
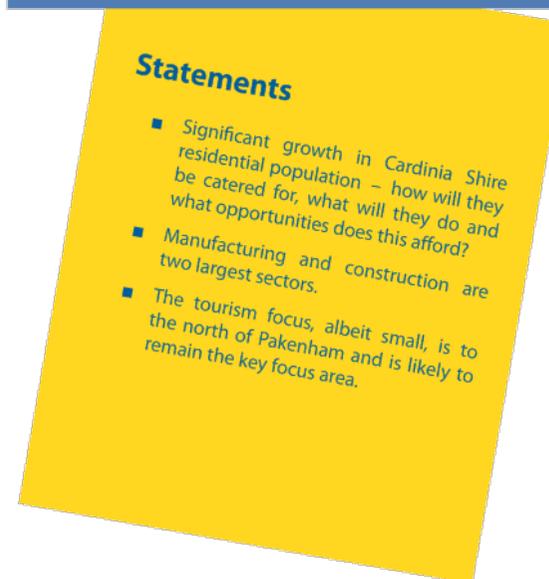
Tourism trends snapshot

Tourism is one of Victoria's fastest growing industries and is a key contributor to the long-term community, industry and business development.

The tourism industry is an amalgam of at least 16 traditional industry sectors including accommodation, retail and food services. It is characterised by many small to medium enterprises that often do not see themselves as part of the tourism industry.

There are many factors that affect the fortunes of the tourism industry. Some recent state and national trends* are listed below:

- **A decline in domestic overnight trips** taken by Australians has fallen by 1.1% on average each year between 2001 to 2010.

- During the same period, a high Australian dollar and the global economic crisis has slowed **the numbers of inbound international visitors.**

- There has been over 14% **growth in Australians travelling overseas** and outbound departures are forecast to grow by a further 6.6% in 2012–13.

- The competition between low cost airline capacity to key outbound markets including China, Indonesia and the United States has meant that **overseas travel is within reach of more Australians** who would traditionally choose to holiday domestically.

- **Australians accumulating leave** has grown by 11% in the past five years, driving a trend for domestic travel in Victoria towards shorter breaks of 2-3 days within 2 hours of the usual place of residence, and shorter booking lead times.

- Home loan interest rates, spending on consumer goods and lack of consumer confidence are **strong competitors against the domestic tourism dollar** with people choosing to reduce debt or improve their lifestyle over holidays.

- **Expenditure declined on 'Holiday/Leisure'** as the main purpose of domestic overnight travel by 3.6% between 2010 and 2011.

- In the same period, **expenditure in the 'Visiting Friends or Relatives' (VFR) increased** by 7.6% and the number of trips increased by 6.2%.

- **Inrastate visitors** accounted for **81% of the total travel** to regional Victoria.

- **Use of technology** for research and during a visit is an emerging trend in tourism which can account for up to 60% of research and bookings in an area.

- **Social tourism is on the rise** as more people are travelling to connect with friends or family and participate in an activity together.

- **Social activities are the most popular activities** for domestic visitors (81%) followed by outdoor/nature (34%) and active outdoor (22%). Social activities include visiting friends and relatives, eating out at restaurants/pubs, and going to the movies, attending an organised sporting event, shopping for pleasure, general sightseeing, going on a day trip to another place, and picnics or barbecues.

- More recent trends show **overnight visitor numbers** to and within Victoria **returning to levels** above the year ending December 2008.*

* Tourism Research Australia, Key Facts Australian Tourism Sector 2011, Tourism data card April 2012.

* NVS data to YE Dec 2011.

Part 1   Background cont.

Social tourism is on the rise?

Statements

- Social tourism is on the rise.

- The Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) is a growing market that is relatively untapped.

- Trend to short breaks close to place of primary residence (less than two hours from home).

- Highly competitive market for international and domestic over-night visitors, therefore product and presentation must be of high quality.

CARDINIA

3

Tourism is everybody's business!

Everyone benefits from tourism

As businesses expand their customer base beyond the limitations of a small town, the community has access to a broader range of opportunities and visitors escape their everyday routine to relax and recharge.

Many local business operators deny that they are in the business of tourism however on closer analysis this myth is readily dismissed. For example:

- Restaurants and cafes prefer to sell local produce and wines to their customer base which supports local growers.

- Professional services such as legal and accounting often rely on local tourism enterprises for a proportion of their business.

- The range and quality of local shopping is often extended because of the increased demand from visitors to the area.

- Local tradespersons provide and service equipment for camping grounds, motels, hotels, restaurants, bakeries and attractions. Some businesses are earning significantly more from tourism than many accommodation providers.

- Vehicles for tours or deliveries may be purchased, serviced and operated by locals.

Without a healthy tourism industry, many of these businesses would not be sustainable if they relied wholly on local residents for support.

Impact of tourism

Depending upon the strength of the tourist destination, the impact of tourism obviously varies. Tourism can have both positive and negative impacts on local communities and needs to be carefully planned and actively managed.

Positive impacts of tourism

- Local residents can feel proud of their town and their community

- Provides pathways for employment, particularly for young people

- More interesting things to do such as attractions to visit and events to attend

- More shopping, dining, and recreation options in the region because of tourism

- Better maintenance and availability of public facilities such as parks, sporting facilities, and transport

- Can present the region in a positive light

- Strengthens the region's economic base where traditional industries are in decline

- Provides for increased property values at point of sale

- Protection and utilisation of heritage assets

- Interpretation of local history and assets.

Negative impacts of tourism

- Potential loss of local character, identity and sense of community

- Increased costs of goods and services

- Increased costs to local government (and ratepayers) in maintaining streetscapes, and public facilities such as toilets, lookouts and playgrounds

- Villages and towns overtaken by visitors during holiday periods particularly at seaside locations

- Potential impact on protected areas and species

- Increased noise and disruption to local residents.

Part 1 Background cont.

CARDINIA

4

Role of local government in tourism

Local government plays a significant role in tourism management and development particularly in those areas where tourism is a major component of the local and regional economy. Ideally local government will have a strong partnership with private enterprise maximising the economic and social benefits for the broader community.

Where tourism is not the primary economic generator for a region, like the Cardinia Shire, local government needs to take a leadership role and nurture tourism growth. This can be achieved through careful planning and consideration of areas that affect tourism, over which Council has influence.

Those areas of influence include:

Developing tourism policy

Tourism policy, whilst having no legislative basis, provides a clear statement of objectives from a local government perspective and encourages a consistent approach and stability to tourism planning and management. This is important particularly to potential tourism business investors as Council priorities can change from time to time.

Champion tourism in strategies

Impacts and opportunities need to be considered by all Council areas, even those not normally associated with tourism. These may include Open Space Plans, Land Use Plans, Structure Plans, Playground Strategies, the Municipal Strategic Statement in the Planning Scheme, Events Strategies and Development Plans.

Industry development

Regions that are successful in tourism are self aware, and the industry led by strong and well developed leaders with good support from all business. Local government will often run development programs or foster strategic partnerships to enable tourism industry growth and professional development.

Enhance existing and attract new business

Major enhancements to existing businesses can generate new and additional jobs for locals and are a strong stimulus for the local economy. Councils need to identify the key businesses that align with local and regional priorities and facilitate planning, grant seeking and lobbying efforts. An investment prospectus developed by Local government is generally the preferred approach to marketing new business investment.

Leadership

Councils generally have an established framework to engage with local businesses and business groups to understand the issues that affect tourism and identify common areas of interest. This will broaden the scope of projects or collaboration between towns for a greater benefit and to reduce parochialism.

Protect character and amenity of the area

Councils need to understand the character and amenity of their area to ensure tourism developments are environmentally and socially sustainable; and support community needs and aspirations. This is important in a high growth area.

Accessibility and council - owned facilities

Local government is responsible for the provision, quality, safety and presentation of key infrastructure and community assets such as walking/cycling trails, sporting facilities, playgrounds, scenic lookouts, toilets, picnic grounds, and car parks to name just a few. Some Councils may also support museums, galleries and convention centres.

Marketing and visitor services

For the more significant tourist destinations, Councils have primary responsibility for Visitor Information Centres and their operations. They may also develop or assist the development of regional branding, visitor websites, signage schemes, tourism maps and brochures.

Statements

- Council has an important support and leadership function in destination development.
- Cardinia Shire has time to focus on long term, strategic priorities.
- Industry development is critical to bring businesses along the journey and gain their input to inform the direction.

Part 1 Background cont.

CARDINIA

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A significant competitive advantage is the close proximity and convenience of the Cardinia Shire to Melbourne and its other primary visitor source markets.

Major transport links will continue to support day trips and short breaks while Puffing Billy, the neighbouring Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges provide strong opportunities to grow visitor numbers.

The lack of tourism product, infrastructure and branding may be regarded as an advantage. The booming residential growth provides opportunity to fund the strategic establishment of infrastructure and brand positioning to capture a unique future position in a competitive tourism market.

Regional strengths

- Within one hour of Melbourne's CBD
- Good transport links via freeways and public transport (bus and rail)
- Close proximity to primary visitor markets of Melbourne and Eastern suburbs including the City of Casey
- Growing population base in the urban growth corridor bringing fresh enthusiasm, ideas and money
- Close proximity to Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges which has complementary tourism product
- Gateway to Phillip Island and West Gippsland
- A progressive Council which works well with neighbouring municipalities
- Highly productive agricultural land
- Good range of sporting and cultural facilities for activities and events
- Equestrian events and activities
- Natural assets.

During the development of this strategy, respondents from workshops identified a strong connection to the land and pride of place:

The natural environment the hills, the air

Go where you haven't been before

City meets country

Rural and urban together

Did you know you are only … away from….

'Countryness' and rural landscapes so close to suburbia

Accessible wildlife

Offering new experiences

Statements

- Cardinia Shire's close proximity to a large source market, Melbourne East.
- Cardinia Shire's primary attraction is the open space and natural landscapes.

CARDINIA

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SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis provides an accurate assessment and summary of the state of the region. Some of the key points will be explored in more detail following.

Challenges	Opportunities	Weaknesses
■ Strong nearby tourism competition offering compelling reasons to visit	■ Blank canvas: Cardinia Shire can write its own script and shape tourism as they want it	■ Not a recognised tourism destination
■ Lack of industry structures with little collaboration, mentoring or leadership	■ Partnership with the City of Casey for tourism	■ Lack of tourism product, iconic attractions and accommodation supply
■ Many businesses don't see themselves involved in tourism	■ Puffing Billy: many opportunities to leverage this major attraction for the benefit of Cardinia Shire	■ Lack of maturity in the industry and products
■ Township rivalry and parochialism	■ Walking/cycling trails and outdoor activities to create regional 'social tourism' hubs for residents and visitors	■ Poor service culture with limited opening hours
■ Consequences of state government strategic planning that impacts on tourism	■ The role of events in attracting visitors	■ No marketing and lack of awareness of region by consumers
■ Community perceptions of tourism are negative in some areas – how do we reduce negativity towards tourism?	■ Emerald Lake as a gateway to the region (estimated 250,000 visitors, Council owned and run)	■ Poor communications amongst operators and businesses
■ Tourism Victoria doesn't see the region as a priority	■ Display home visitors and new residents - how can this huge and growing market be harnessed?	■ The villages lack novelty/unique shops and a sense of character/ambience.
■ Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) market is significant – how do you become a tourist in your own backyard? Also an opportunity.	■ Potential for stronger branding around the Shire i.e. signage – sense of arrival/welcome/place	■ Lack of visitor services (maps, information and signage)
	■ Willingness of some operators to work together to expand tourism activities	■ Lack of collaboration between towns
	■ Inform the community re the value of tourism	■ Mobile network reliability
	■ Agritourism: roadside stops/food trails	■ No regional body to assist marketing or development.
	■ Designated Rural Activity Zones to allow more flexibility in use of poorer agricultural quality.	

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

CARDINIA

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Working together

Achieving maximum tourism potential involves tackling major issues such as transportation, development, communications, regional marketing, infrastructure, technology, engagement and governance. The scale of these issues is such that local government must work together at a regional level in partnership with State and Federal Government plans.

Collaboration reduces the pressure on an individual Council or unit and provides a more efficient way to deliver benefits to business or visitors.

The Tourism Victoria Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009—2012 proposed the alignment of tourism industry as per below and has commenced the implementation of this structure across the state. The key functions of these organisations are as follows:

Regional Tourism Board (RTB)

Responsible for holistic tourism development and advocacy for the region. Functions will include regional marketing, industry development, product development, skills training, mentoring, networking, identifying investment priorities and managing sustainability. The RTB will play an important role in consolidating the strategic direction of the tourism industry for the entire region and communicating with key partners such as Tourism Victoria.

Regional Tourism Association (RTA)

Responsible for the management and development of tourism within a sub-region or product group and increasing visitation and yield through destination marketing. Activities include representing Local Tourism Associations (LTAs), industry sectors and/or local government on issues affecting the tourism industry within their region. RTAs will have an important liaison role between the RTB and local industry.

Local Tourism Association (LTA)

Represents local tourism businesses and focus their efforts on enhancing the visitor experience. Activities include conducting industry networking functions, organising local familiarisation tours and advising local government on local tourism issues.

Underneath this structure are the various Chambers of Commerce, Tourism and Trader Groups, Community forums, and industry associations that liaise with Council. The current tourism industry structure in the Cardinia Shire consists of a number of business groups which generally have a small membership base, a localised area of focus and a reliance on Council for support.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

CARDINIA

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The business groups include:

- Cardinia Tourism Inc. – located in Upper Beaconsfield
- Pakenham business group
- Emerald business group – plus Emerald Township Committee (Section 86)
- Gembrook business group
- Beaconsfield business group

- Cockatoo business group
- Koo Wee Rup Business Association – currently being re-formed
- Australian Asparagus Council
- Casey Cardinia Referral Network
- Women Making It Work.

In addition, previous tourism marketing activity has aligned Cardinia Shire with the Gippsland region.

Partnerships

- In a regular tourism industry structure, each Local Tourism Association (LTA) is responsible for the coordination of local projects and visitor servicing in their local area. A partnership with a Regional Tourism Association (RTA) provides a level of service in the areas of developing, marketing and managing tourism in the region in a sustainable manner and supporting the LTAs and member Councils.

- A single RTA is not available for a Cardinia Shire LTA to join, however there are a number of partnership options to consider with organisations that can deliver some benefits in the role of an RTO including:

Casey – Cardinia Shire Growth Corridor (300,000 to grow to 600,000 by 2020)

Casey and Cardinia Shire Councils currently have a good working relationship and given the many similarities and challenges shared by these two rapidly growing municipalities, it is suggested that a shared tourism structure be considered (see page 25).

Destination Melbourne Limited (DML)

DML is well resourced and has the expertise to assist with destination marketing particularly in relation to the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) segment. Their current VFR campaign is tailored to suit the outlying areas of Melbourne and both Cardinia Shire and Casey should plan to participate in this program in the next 2-3 years when their products are sufficiently developed. DML can also assist with various industry development programs.

Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Marketing (YV&DRM)

YV&DRM are also well situated to assist with the marketing and promotion of the 'Hills Villages' experiences and also offer industry development programs for the participation of interested operators. The development of an MOU is worth considering provided the terms are geared towards that of a developing region.

Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association (DRTA) and Cardinia Tourism Inc. (and future BTAs) to discuss establishing an MOU with DRTA for mutual benefit.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

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Puffing Billy

Puffing Billy is clearly Cardinia Shire's major tourist drawcard attracting some 270,000 visitors each year. Although the busiest section lies west of the Cardinia Shire boundary, a significant proportion of the operation lies within Cardinia Shire.

Given the state significance of Puffing Billy as a major tourist attraction, it is important for Cardinia Shire to have a cooperative relationship with the management of Puffing Billy rail for the following reasons:

- Continued expansion of the scheduled services from Menzies Creek station to Gembrook

- Incorporation of the 'Hills Villages' businesses in that expansion.

Victoria Tourism Industry Council

VTIC is the peak industry body for the Victorian tourism industry and provides advocacy support for its members. As Cardinia Shire is a financial member of VECCI, membership to VTIC is included. The organisation provides a range of benefits to their members including:

- Professional development and networking

- Business support, workplace relations etc.

- Research.

Melbourne South East

The Melbourne South East group (MSE) comprises 10 local government authorities, utility providers and support from both State and Commonwealth governments. Cardinia Shire Council is a member of MSE. MSE recognises the interdependence of Melbourne's South East as a significant economic region. MSE members work together to ensure the future growth and success of the region.

Statements

- The Councils of Cardinia Shire and Casey can grow tourism in partnership.

- Cardinia Shire and Casey have a number of strategic partners such as VTIC and Destination Melbourne that can assist along the way.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

CARDINIA

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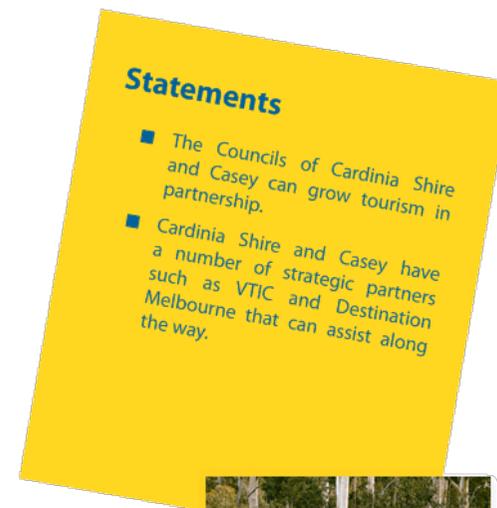
Product strengths/tourism assets

The following product strengths have been identified to provide focus for Cardinia Shire to ensure competitive advantage and positioning in the marketplace.

- **Product strengths** include family attractions, 'Hills Villages', events

- **Emerging strengths** include food and local produce, eating out, outdoor activities, major events.

| **Existing** product strengths | **Family attractions**
Puffing Billy, Emerald Lake Park, Gilwell Park, Caldermeade Farm and Cafe, Warrook Cattle Farm, Gumbuya Park, Nobelius Park

'Hills Villages'
Pristine, green villages of Gembrook, Emerald, Cockatoo, Beaconsfield Upper, Clematis, Avonsleigh

Eating out
Examples include Forest Edge, Pine Grove Hotel (family friendly), Elevation, Emerald Bakery, Slippery Jacks, 4 Figs, Georgies, Corridor Café, Cork & Barrel, etc.

Major events
Puffing Billy Great Train Race, state, national and international events at the major Equestrian Centres and Pakenham Racing Club and sporting tournaments at venues such as Pakenham Regional Tennis Centre and Cardinia Life. |
| **Emerging** product strengths | **Food and local produce**
A number of boutique wineries, Trout Farm, Rayners Orchard, self pick orchards, berry farms, lavender farms and fresh produce

Eating out
Extending the range and choices of venues

Outdoor activities
Bunyip State Park (adventure activities), cycling & walking trails, fishing (Emerald Lake Park and the Garfield Recreation Reserve dam with future opportunities to be included), camping (Gilwell Park), walking and hiking at Mt Cannibal Reserve

Major events
There is currently a good mix of events including quality village markets, PAVE, Yakkerboo, agricultural shows, Lang Lang Rodeo, Gembrook Hotrod show, etc. |

Statements

- Puffing Billy is Cardinia Shire's major tourist attraction.

- The 'Hills Villages' are emerging strengths for Cardinia Shire.

- Cycling and walking trails will add to the liveability of the municipality.

- Major events provide an opportunity for Cardinia Shire to redefine and build upon.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

CARDINIA

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Product gaps

What is missing?	What is required?
- A major attraction as a 'social event' destination and drawcard for families - Galleries/specialty shops - The villages lack novelty/unique shops and a sense of character/ambience–a reason to stay/spend - Agri-businesses and on-farm experiences - Touring routes for local and nearby residents - Effective marketing of local tourism opportunities - Major sporting, cultural and agri-events - Tourist accommodation—although being so close to Melbourne, Cardinia Shire is seen as a day visit destination. (Demand from the corporate sector and for sporting tournaments is higher and may attract investment in the near to medium future.)	- Pathways strategy that considers walking and cycling trails connecting visitor nodes, towns and destinations (walking/cycle trail to Gembrook considered a priority by forums) - Open space planning to cater for regular 'social tourists' considering the role of playgrounds, picnic grounds and outdoor activities as visitor attractors - Emerald Lake Park development plan ongoing implementation - Further development of quality markets to increase frequency and number of stalls and promote the regions agricultural assets - Planned approach to support priority events - Investigate and carry out planning amendments that will help achieve the objectives of the strategy - A marketing brand - When strategies are due for review and where appropriate, strategies to be updated to incorporate tourism measures that help achieve the objectives of the strategy - Development of marketing material around key and emerging product strengths.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

CARDINIA

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Marketing

Brand

A good brand should position a destination in a way that appeals to its target market and best presents the region's key competitive advantages and product strengths.

A brand must reflect values and meaning through images and stories whilst the visitor experiences resonate and align with the brand values. Brand is best described as the region's 'personality', something that sits in our minds and emotions. A brand can be thought of as a unique promise of quality that is supported or reinforced through the customer's experience.

Victoria's Jigsaw brand is a good example of brand build and brand refreshment considering it was developed in the early 1990's. New Zealand has also built a strong and lasting brand (New Zealand 100% Pure) and delivered on the promise.

Good marketing doesn't rely on a snappy slogan, a logo or a significant budget.

A strong visitor brand is communicated using every means available: print, colour, smell, taste, imagery, language and feeling.

Current visitor publications (refer to Appendix 5) don't reflect competitive advantage or product strength; they all look different and are created to inform rather than appeal.

As an example, the neighbouring Yarra Valley, is a vibrant visitor destination with a strong brand that resonates in the minds of consumers.

Marketing

There has been limited tourism marketing of the Cardinia Shire region primarily due to insufficient tourism product and a lack of industry collaboration.

However, the stronger tourism enterprises have promoted their attractions in both the domestic and international market place and done so very successfully. Puffing Billy attracts a significant proportion of international visitors and also strong numbers from regional Victoria and interstate.

Caldermeade Farm and Café and Warook Cattle Farm also attract a number of international visitors enroute to Phillip Island.

The Cardinia Shire Council has produced a regional Visitor's Guide promoting the key attractions throughout the municipality.

There is limited tourism research that can be confidently applied to this plan, however the Melbourne East data will suffice and meet most needs.

Statements

- Cardinia Shire is in a position to create a compelling tourism brand.
- Puffing Billy has a strong and effective marketing campaign in both the domestic and international markets.
- There is an absence of relevant tourism research to apply to Cardinia Shire.
- There has understandably been very little tourism marketing for Cardinia Shire.

Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

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Part 2   Regional analysis cont.

Visitor profile

Who are Cardinia Shire's visitors and what experiences are they seeking?

As noted earlier, the lack of tourism research to inform the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy is an issue but can be addressed by using the Melbourne East Visitor profile.

The table below provides a profile of the many visitors to the Melbourne East region. Melbourne East is the southern subset of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges 'Campaign' region including 'Upper Yarra'.

Melbourne East visitor profile

Type	How many?	What do we know about them?
Domestic day trip visitor	• 2,529,000 visitors • 86% of total visitation to the region • Regional spend of $185m in 2010/11	Spend on average $73 per day 43% of expenditure was on food and drink, fuel (27%), shopping (13%) & entertainment (12%) Holiday day visitors spent $85 compared to $51 for visiting friends or relatives Main purpose of visit is visiting friends and relatives (46%) which is 14% above the state average. In contrast, holiday/leisure was 40% (11% below the state average) The most popular activities are visiting friends and relatives (45%), eating out (26%) and just walking/driving around (17%) Young midlife singles/couples (31%) and older non-working visitors (31%) were the most likely to visit, closely followed by parents with children (27%) 1/3 More visitors were aged 65 and over compared to the state average.
Domestic overnight visitor	• 389,000 visitors • 13% of total visitation to the region • Regional spend of $142m in 2010/11 • Accounted for 73% of visitor nights	Spend on average $139 per day Stay 3 nights average 38% visit for holiday/leisure Holiday/leisure has 31% share of visitor nights Visiting friends and relatives 46% share of visits Visiting friends and relatives has 53% share of visitor nights 'Property of friends or relatives' has a 69% share of nights 'Hotel/motel' has a 9% share of nights Most popular experiences are 'food and wine' (48%), nature-based (26%) and culture and heritage (10%) Top information source was the internet (45%), previous visit (15%) and friends or relatives (13%) Travel party was adult couple (34%), travelling alone (29%) or family group (21%) 35% of expenditure was on food and drink, accommodation (25%) fuel (14%), shopping (11%).
International visitor	• 26,000 visitors • 1% of total visitation to the region • Regional spend not recorded	Spend not recorded Stay 15 nights average (skewed by students) Most popular purpose of visit was visiting friends or relatives (79% of nights) Most popular accommodation was 'property of friends or relatives' (82%) Most popular experiences were food and wine (91%), nature-based (72%) and culture and heritage (61%) Top information source was the internet (38%), previous visit (30%) and friends or relatives (22%) Visitors from the UK accounted for 34% of international visitation Travel party was travelling alone (58%) or adult couple (25%).

Source: Tourism Research Australia, Regional Tourism Profile for Melbourne East 2010/11.

Totals for 2010/11

Visitors	Nights	Expenditure
2,944,000	1,405,000	$327m

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Tourism vision and framework

The Council's strategic vision supports the Tourism Strategy.

The Tourism Strategy will allow Council and business to respond to the vision and achieve a number of goals identified in the Council plan, including but not limited to:

- Increased business diversity and a sustainable small business community

- Access to a variety of services for all

- Improved health and wellbeing for all with a variety of recreation and leisure opportunities

- A balanced response to the needs of development, the community and the environment.

'Cardinia Shire will be developed in a planned manner to enable future generations to enjoy and experience the diverse and distinctive characteristics of our Shire'.

What type of tourism for Cardinia Shire?

The Cardinia Shire doesn't have international product, capacity for significant overnight visitation or much established tourism product. It does have a rapidly growing community that will expand exponentially, at the risk of losing the characteristics that attracted residents to the area initially.

It is recommended to focus on tourism strategies to support three particular types of tourism; those that capitalise on the close aspect to Melbourne, best fit the character of the community and provide best opportunity to generate yield (expenditure, overnight stays, dispersal and repeat visitation) in the current environment.

Visiting friends and relatives

The VFR market is strong now and will increase even more with residential growth. Local residents become ambassadors for a growing region, hosting their friends and family in easily accessible visitor nodes such as trails, picnic grounds, adventure playgrounds, lakes, parks and gardens. VFR tourism promotes community pride and the positive aspects of tourism.

Social Tourism

Refers to experiences, events, and activities that enable all groups – and particularly youth, families, retirees and individuals with modest incomes, to enjoy activities together, through access to experiences that are different from their regular life; escape the city for berry picking, a farm experience, a great meal in a local pub with real atmosphere and scenic views, or meeting local businesses passionate about their craft.

Short breaks

A future market to consider as capacity builds, enticing Melbournians away from their hectic pace of life to a more relaxed destination with opportunities to unwind together or with friends, and escape the rigours of everyday life.

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The Strategy

The Australian Government Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism recommends that local government adopt a Destination Management Planning (DMP) framework to achieve sustainable tourism potential.

Sustainable tourism is about delivering triple-bottom-line outcomes (economic, social and environmental) in partnership with industry, government and community.

The Strategy addresses the three components of the framework; Destination Development Planning, Destination Marketing and Destination Management.

Destination Development Planning

- Critical assessment of tourism potential investment and infrastructure.

Destination Marketing

- Research
- Target markets
- Events
- Brand and marketing.

Destination Management

- Adequate resources
- Quality experience
- Consultation and collaboration
- Sustainable growth.

Figure 1: Destination Management Planning core concepts

The following pages outline key actions under these headings to implement over the next few years, in order to lead Cardinia Shire on a path to sustainable tourism and becoming a competitive tourism destination.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Direction 1   Destination development planning

Destination development planning

Tourism may evolve with or without planning, however the sustainability of a destination depends on whether the type and scale of tourism is suited to the destination. Effective destination management relies on a continual planning process that integrates tourism into a community's social, economic and environmental aspirations.

Elements of effective destination planning are achieved through three steps— the situation analysis phase, the planning process and ongoing engagement.

Primary considerations

Day visit and VFR market

Cardinia Shire is and will remain primarily a day visit destination. A significant component of the total visitation is likely to be generated within less than one hour's drive. It is also important that the tourism product is attractive to the VFR market.

Offerings

Given the high number of young families living in Cardinia Shire, it will be important to create opportunities that are aligned with the family market both in the pricing and the appeal of the product/activity.

Enhance existing products

There is a recognised need (an outcome of industry forums) to improve opening hours, customer service, quality and presentation of the existing products and experiences. Cardinia Shire sits between mature, highly competitive tourism regions and if the industry is to develop, then standards and attitudes need to change accordingly.

Further expansion of the Puffing Billy operation is planned and also considered a priority by the State Government.

Create new products

The strong population growth in the Beaconsfield – Pakenham – Officer corridor together with even greater expansion in the adjoining City of Casey provides a number of opportunities for investment attraction and major events.

Green Wedge Management Plan

Whilst this plan is protecting the major asset of Cardinia Shire (rural open space), consideration needs to be given to rural activity zones that can accommodate appropriate tourism activity.

In short, effective destination planning should be:

- A **collaborative process** that ensures the engagement, participation and commitment of all relevant stakeholders;
- A **co-ordinated approach** that is based on clearly defined processes and frameworks;
- **Based on an understanding of existing internal and external operating environments** of the destination;
- Based on a sound understanding of **tourism supply and demand** forecasts for the destination; and
- **Consider all relevant information** including market research, stakeholder values, the planning environment and available resources and assets.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Risk management
What must we protect?

Perceived uncertainty of the expansion of urban growth boundary threatens:

Incremental urban creep on Green Wedge (outlined in more detail below).

Natural environment – the retention of the natural areas across Cardinia Shire will become more critical given the residential creep and the continued demand for housing. The vast tracts of forested areas to the north and the rich agricultural land to the south will require considered planning and management in the future.

'Countryness' – the attractive rural landscapes as you leave suburbia and enter the region, particularly heading north and south from the bypass, are a sudden but appealing sight. To be amongst both large and small farms is such a pleasant transition from the city outskirts. To retain this country feel so close to the city will require innovative and assertive planning and decision making by Cardinia Shire Council and the State Government.

'Village Charm' – there is a special ambience created throughout the small villages. The many changes created by strong seasonality add to their appeal and have a close resemblance to the nearby Dandenong Ranges villages (e.g. Olinda, Kallista and Sherbrooke).

Destination brand

Cardinia Shire is a developing tourist destination and it is important that the brand reflects a caring and professional tourism industry providing quality experiences. The reputation of the destination will be judged on many fronts.

The Council and industry must collaborate in decision making to ensure excellence in destination development and management.

Maintaining the local identity

As the community grows it is important that their local identity is not lost and that neighbours do not become 'strangers'. The attraction of living in these once small and connected communities is under threat and is at grave risk brought about by rapid urban sprawl.

Industry professionalism

It will be critical for tourism operators and those businesses which connect with visitors to the region, that a level of professionalism is maintained and enhanced. Positive 'word of mouth' promotion is priceless for emerging destinations and social media is now the 'norm' for telling friends about both good and bad tourism experiences.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Enhancing existing experiences

The Hills area

Puffing Billy and the villages of the Cardinia Shire hills are the primary tourism attractions for the region. The attractive rural views and countryside provide a stunning backdrop to create an enjoyable visitor experience. However, with the exception of Puffing Billy, most experiences/activities are under developed and inconsistently delivered although they do have potential.

The following proposals will assist in enhancing the current visitor experiences on offer:

'Hills Villages' (Emerald, Cockatoo, Gembrook, Upper Beaconsfield)

- Ensure excellence and consistency in customer service levels
- Ensure opening hours align with consumer expectations
- Create a reason to stay longer – e.g. specialty shopping, art trails and galleries
- Improve directional signage
- Council to continue to implement the Emerald Lake Park plan
- Promote the park to the VFR market as a family day trip destination.

Food and wine

- Operators to collaborate and extend the opening hours
- Promote the 'family friendly' venues to the VFR market
- Village markets to develop and extend their local produce offerings —aim for a point of difference and build a reputation for quality locally grown produce. Promote to Melbournians.

Farm produce

- Self pick/farm gate – further develop this experience again to position it as a strength and point of difference for Cardinia Shire
- On-farm experiences – extend the current activities and appeal.

Nature-based

- Trails (walking & cycling) – further develop, better promote and sign the existing trail network including rail trails
- Camping – promote the excellent Gilwell Park camping experiences to the broader market
- Bunyip State Park – work with Parks Victoria to continue to promote the adventure- based activities in the Bunyip State Park.

Equine activities

- The major equestrian centres provide a hub to further develop horse riding and equine activities across the region. The close proximity to the Melbourne East population creates an opportunity for families to participate in horse riding activities and events catering for all levels of competencies. (Refer to the Cardinia Shire Equestrian Strategy.)

Puffing Billy

- Expand the existing services between Emerald and Gembrook and create a regular schedule between the two villages
- Gembrook businesses to provide consistency in the levels of customer service and opening hours to ameliorate risk to the expansion of services by Puffing Billy.

The provision of additional tourist accommodation has not been proposed as a priority due to the destination being less than one hour's travel from the source markets and the probability that supply will continue to meet demand.

Cardinia Shire will predominantly remain a day visit destination for the majority of visitors.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

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The Central area/railway towns

The central corridor of Cardinia Shire will cater for business, manufacturing, transport linkages and housing with tourism unlikely to feature as a priority. Residents will have restaurants, galleries, shopping and sporting and leisure activities which they can readily access. It is highly probable that the residents in these central growth areas will venture to the north for their tourism and leisure activities or beyond the region. However events provide an excellent opportunity for Cardinia Shire to entertain both residents and visitors in a range of sporting, cultural and other activities often at little cost. It will be a range of events that will entertain and also contribute to community pride.

Events

Review the events strategy (outdated) to reflect the needs of a rapidly expanding community and to also enhance the existing events where appropriate:

- Sporting
- Cultural
- Agriculture.

Continue to expand and promote equestrian events throughout the region.

Pakenham Racecourse

- The Pakenham Racing Club has recently purchased a 235 hectare site in Tynong which it intends to develop as a 'Racecourse and Training Facility'. The activities currently undertaken at the Pakenham Racecourse will move to the Tynong site and will be operational by 2013. The new facility will host 30 meetings annually with potential for up to 60 meetings in the long term. Permanent trackside facilities have been designed to accommodate an average race day crowd of 1500.

- This new facility will provide additional and exciting opportunities for events.

The Southern area

Caldermeade Farm and Cafe, Warrook Cattle Farm

- Promote on-farm experiences to the VFR market (Cardinia Shire and Casey)

- Continue to develop the on-farm and farm gate experiences.

Koo Wee Rup Market

- Continue to enhance the market with a focus on fresh produce – the place to go and buy fresh asparagus from the local growers.

Recommendations

1. The 'Hills Villages' require additional cafes, retail, attractions, etc, for visitors to increase their length of stay and spend more.

2. Enhance the existing levels of customer service throughout Cardinia Shire.

3. Create a greater point of difference in the product offerings – uniqueness.

4. Ensure tourism is considered in Council strategic planning.

5. Review the events strategy to create new and additional opportunities.

6. Align the experiences and activities with the VFR market.

7. Continue working with Puffing Billy in regards to their business development program.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Cardinia Shire Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy

A healthy and active lifestyle is of major importance to the community and Cardinia Shire is well placed to support such a rapidly growing pastime for walkers, runners and cyclists.

Recommendation

8. Council reviews the existing **Cardinia Shire Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy** within the next three years to take into account the needs of the VFR market and changing consumer trends.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Creating new products and experiences

Given the relatively 'blank canvas' there is an opportunity for Cardinia Shire (and Casey) to shape tourism as they wish. This enviable position allows the Councils in consultation with their communities, to take a cautious and considered approach to any infrastructure development.

It also needs to be understood that any new developments take considerable time to plan, consult, finance, construct, market and to sustainably operate. However the significant population growth to the east of Melbourne would suggest that an investment in a major attraction that focused on the family market would attract investor interest.

Proposal 1   Major attraction

Considering there is no major family attraction in Melbourne's South East with a population of 1.4 million, and given the popularity of the Geelong Adventure Park at Wallington, there may be an opportunity to consider a similar attraction in the Cardinia (and Casey) Shire.

The attraction would need to:

- Provide an appropriate return on investment given the reluctance of banks lending to tourism developments

- Meet the needs of young families with limited disposable funds

- Be environmentally sustainable and meet community expectations in regards to tourism infrastructure

- Be fun and have sufficient activities to ensure repeat visits

- Be somewhere for locals to take their visiting friends and relatives

- Be able to cater for significant visitor numbers.

Recommendation

9.   **Cardinia Shire and Casey Councils** jointly discuss with Tourism Victoria, the feasibility of this project.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Proposal 2   Touring route(s)

The attractive landscapes to the north along with particular points of interest, lend themselves to the development of short touring routes catering for the local and VFR markets.

In developing the routes, the following themes could be included:

- Special interest i.e. food trail
- 'Hills Villages' trail
- Heritage trail
- Motorbike and bicycle trails.

The Working Group has proposed two routes which could be further investigated:

- A 'gardens' route linking to the Dandenong Ranges gardens
- A trail linking local attractions including Emerald Lake Park, trout farm, Nobelius Park, Rayners Orchard, Kurth Kiln and a winery.

Recommendation

10. Council in conjunction with the various interest groups, plan the development of **a touring route(s)** which will be of sufficient interest and appeal to the target market.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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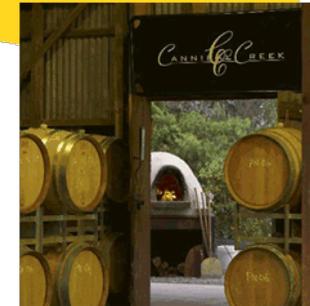
Direction 2   Destination management

Destination management

A key element to the success of any destination is leadership and role clarity. Depending on the maturity of the destination, leadership can either be provided by local government or the industry.

Where a destination is well developed and tourism is a primary economic generator, there is generally strong industry leadership. However, where tourism is in a development phase, such as is the case with Cardinia Shire (and Casey), leadership is generally provided by local government with the support of business and the local community.

Role clarity is often a major issue for developing regions and is rarely defined, which usually results in a duplication of effort and a disgruntled membership. The expertise of the members is not fully utilised and with limited resources, members become disenchanted resulting in declining memberships and ultimate collapse of the local association. This situation continues until new leadership and renewed energy comes along with the support of local government.

Regional management and support

Cardinia Shire is geographically situated between a number of major Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs) and highly competitive tourist destinations. Not one of these neighbours is a natural fit for Cardinia Shire given the expansive area between the northern and southern extremities of the municipality.

Destination Melbourne Ltd can, and will partner with Cardinia Shire particularly on marketing and industry development activities.

Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges Marketing (YV&DRM) can and will collaborate on a number of initiatives for the 'Hills' area but this is not a particularly good fit for the central (Pakenham) area of Cardinia Shire and even less so for the southern part of the region. It is highly probable that the Shire of Yarra Ranges, the major funder of YV&DRM, would be seeking a financial contribution for joint membership of the RTA which at this point in time is probably not the best tourism spend for Cardinia Shire Council.

The 'Hills' associations should align with the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association for joint marketing and industry development activities, given the close geographic connection.

Destination Gippsland Ltd has a strong focus on nature-based tourism and given the close proximity to Melbourne, Cardinia Shire doesn't really align with the broader Gippsland region.

VTIC, the State's peak industry organisation, will provide ongoing industry advocacy and support to members and as Cardinia Shire is a member of VECCI, they are automatically a member of VTIC. Excellent industry development support is available via VTIC and is encouraged.

City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council have an established working relationship and this can be formalised via a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for tourism.

Activities to collaborate on include:

- A shared industry structure

- Website information re tourism attractions, activities, communiqués and cross-selling key attractions such as the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens and Puffing Billy

- Industry development activities/seminars/networking, etc.

- Events calendars

- Joint marketing and promotions

- Investment attraction.

Recommendation

11. Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey establish an **MOU** for collaborating on tourism matters.

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## Proposed structure for Cardinia Shire and Casey

Most tourism destinations are organised around Local Tourism Associations (LTAs) and Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs). Refer to pages 27 and 28 for descriptions and benefits of these groups. With support, the industry in Cardinia Shire could transition into LTAS and an RTA.

It is proposed that:

1. Cardinia Tourism Inc. broadens its membership base to include any member who wishes to join the tourism association and that the fees are reflective of most LTAs (approximately $300.00). See Appendix 1

2. Cardinia Tourism Inc. and the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association consider developing an MOU to collaborate on various industry development and promotional activities.

3. The Cardinia Shire and Casey Councils jointly create a Tourism Advisory Committee to help strengthen industry collaboration. Councils would facilitate the committee until the industry can provide the necessary leadership and support to maintain a traditional RTA.

Establish a Tourism Advisory Committee that:

- Retains and respects existing Associations

- Strengthens the collaborative partnership between industry and Councils

- Reflects a developing region.

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┌──────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
│  Cardinia Shire  │──────────│  City of Casey   │
│     Council      │          │                  │
└──────────────────┘          └──────────────────┘
   │              │               │
┌─────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐
│Business │ │Joint Tourism │ │Business &   │
│& Tourism│ │Advisory      │ │Tourism      │
│Assoc.   │ │Committee     │ │Associations │
└─────────┘ └──────────────┘ └─────────────┘
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The functions of a Tourism Advisory Committee are:

- To be a conduit between the community, the tourism and business sector and Council on tourism matters

- To assist Council in the implementation of the strategic tourism plan and monitor the outcomes

- To provide strategic advice to Council on matters impacting on tourism within the municipalities

- To provide an advocacy role for the tourism industry.

Recommendations

12. Cardinia Tourism Inc. broadens its membership base and reduces the membership fees.

13. Cardinia Tourism Inc. and the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association consider developing an MOU to collaborate on various industry development and promotional activities.

14. Cardinia Shire and Casey Councils establish a joint **Tourism Advisory Committee** for the oversight of tourism management, planning and development.

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Role definition

The supportive role of council/local government in tourism

The role of local government in tourism is highly dependent upon the strength of the destination and the capacity of the tourism sector.

Cardinia Shire and neighbouring Casey are both in the early stages of developing tourism as an important element of the social fabric and providing for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors.

It is important for Cardinia Shire Council to define the roles and responsibilities of both Council and the tourism sector at this early stage and to also collaborate with Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC), the State's industry organisation for guidance.

It is proposed that the Cardinia Shire Council considers the following support functions and adopts a position that best represents its current position in regards to tourism.

Primary functions	Other roles
• Provision of leadership to a developing industry sector • Strategy development – review, evaluation, response • Planning frameworks inc. land use, Green Wedge management planning • Protecting assets whilst facilitating appropriate development • Marketing the region • Brand development, promotions, information provision and distribution in partnership with industry • Promoters of the local attractions, what to do and see (Council website) • Product development – as per Tourism Strategy (Destination development planning) • Investment attraction – led by the Strategy • Industry development – training, networking forums and awards programs • Fostering partnerships, leading synergy • Destination management • Providers of the attractions/venues and infrastructure trails, toilets, roads, signage, etc. • Facilities – quality presentation/maintenance • Business support and guidance • Events strategy and management.	• Risk management • Legal requirements – operating frameworks • Advocacy • Stimulating communities • Valuing the efforts of and supporting tourism businesses/operators • Recognition and awareness of issues confronting businesses • Managing industry and community interface • Selling the benefits of tourism to the community • Understanding the value and impact of tourism • Awareness of what's happening in a broader sense • Communications support • Administrative support • Volunteer support • Community capacity strengthening.

Recommendation

15. Cardinia Shire Council develops a **Tourism Policy** that outlines council's function and reflects Council's supportive role in tourism.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Role clarity for industry

It is important that there is consistency and clear role definition for the tourism sector, otherwise limited resources are wasted and efforts duplicated. As to how much a local business or tourism association takes on will be determined by the size and enthusiasm of their membership.

The following role statement is provided as a guide for the tourism industry to transition to over the next year or so. External support is readily available from the partner organisations listed previously.

Key functions of a Local Tourism (and Business) Association (LTA/BTA)
(Primarily visitor servicing and member representation)

Advocacy
a. Co-ordinate and represent businesses and individuals to local government, public and business.

Visitor services
a. Strive for enhanced levels of customer service throughout the business sector
b. Provide information on accommodation, attractions, services and events
c. Work with Council on ensuring adequate visitor amenities
d. Produce a local visitor guide and / or map
e. Support the Council signage plan.

Industry development
a. Conduct industry networking functions, internal familiarisation tours, and link into the various training programs provided by industry organisations (both members and non-members).

Tourism industry research
a. Facilitate the collection and analysis of local customer research amongst the membership.

Marketing
a. Develop and maintain a quality image library, fact sheets and media kits.

Product development
a. Work with Council on encouraging development of new tourism businesses, infrastructure and events.

Maintain partnerships
a. Council, neighbouring LTAs, Regional Associaton if appropriate, VTIC and nearby regions.

Communications
a. Facilitate regular communication on a range of topics with members, non-members, key stakeholders and the broader community, particularly on the value of tourism.

Recommendation

16. The business/industry associations adopt the above role statement and transition to **Tourism and Business Associations (BTAs)**.

The role of LTAs is therefore critical in ensuring that visitors have a positive experience whilst in a particular area – it must be seamless. When the experience meets or exceeds a visitor's expectation, yield is generally higher and return visits are possible resulting from positive 'word of mouth' recommendations to family and friends. On the other hand, when the experience fails to meet visitor's expectations, the reverse generally applies.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Key functions of a typical Regional Tourism Association (RTA)

Representation
- a. Advocacy - represent LTAs and local government at both a state and national level on key issues.

Strategic planning
- a. Develop a 3-5 year Strategic Tourism Plan to provide clear direction for the growth of tourism across the region
- b. Develop a 1 year business plan.

Research
- a. Undertake research to evaluate and monitor:
  - i. Effectiveness of marketing
  - ii. Visitor satisfaction
  - iii. Value of tourism
  - iv. New products needs and opportunities.

Marketing
- a. Develop and implement a 3 year strategic marketing plan which also underpins the State Strategy - includes brand and tactical campaigns.
- b. Develop and implement a 1 year regional co-operative marketing program for intrastate and interstate markets
- c. Identify research priorities
- d. Monitor distribution channels and campaign effectiveness
- e. Develop digital marketing platforms in cooperation with partners
- f. Manage the regional brand
- g. Co-ordinate journalists familiarisation tours.

Industry development
- a. Identify regional priorities for industry skills development and enhancement
- b. Facilitate implementation (can be via LTAs)
- c. Encourage participation in tourism awards and accreditation programs.

Product development
- a. Undertake a regional product audit
- b. Work with local government and LTAs to identify product gaps in infrastructure
- c. Identify new tourism experiences
- d. Develop a regional events strategy.

Visitor services
- a. Advise local government in the management of visitor information services.

PR & communications
- a. Develop and implement a Communications Plan for the region
- b. Communicate activities and achievements to industry, stakeholders and the community on a regular basis.

Develop and foster strong partnerships
- a. Local tourism associations
- b. Local government
- c. VTIC
- d. Industry associations
- e. Chambers of Commerce
- f. Tourism Victoria
- g. Tourism Australia
- h. Other.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Industry development

Growing industry professionalism over the next few years is a key priority for Cardinia Shire tourism.

Industry or skills development is generally a primary function of a regional tourism association however as there is no such organisation, Cardinia Shire Council, with the support of industry can address this important function.

This is best achieved by undertaking two tasks:

1. **Industry audit**

   Establishing what assistance the membership is seeking by:

   - Undertaking a brief member survey using the Council or member website
   - Workshop at the regular forums to determine member needs.

2. **Accessing and delivering industry development programs**

   Locating access to the various industry development assistance packages available is relatively straight forward and can be achieved by:

   - Researching opportunities on industry websites e.g. VTIC, Destination Melbourne, YV&DRM, Tourism Victoria
   - Discussing and sharing with other industry/business organisations.

The delivery of the various skills enhancement programs can often be best achieved by Council and the LTA jointly facilitating the sessions and making their meetings more interesting, particularly in attracting new members. Often the skills can be found in-house and through utilising some expertise already available.

Undertaking the various administrative functions of LTAs including roles such as Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary offers a great learning opportunity for members via the mentor system. Such an opportunity is grossly underestimated and overlooked by many associations. If it is managed properly, this kind of upskilling can also address succession planning.

Recommendations

17. Cardinia Shire Council in partnership with industry under-takes an **audit of industry development** requirements of the existing business and tourism associations.

18. Cardinia Shire Council utilise the industry development support **programs delivered by VTIC,** Destination Melbourne and neighbouring regional tourism associations.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

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Direction 3   Destination marketing

Destination marketing

Tourism is a highly competitive service industry and destinations face the challenging task of effectively reaching the various markets to raise consumer awareness of their products/experiences and to generate sales. Marketing is a core function of any tourism business, however it is generally limited by resource and funding availability. The marketing activities of a business should be guided by an overall marketing plan and underpinned by the business' unique selling point and core brand values.

As identified in Tourism Victoria's, Tourism Excellence Modules, there are seven ways to drive profit in any business:

1. Increasing the **number of leads**
2. Increasing **conversion to sales**
3. Increasing **average sales value**
4. Increasing **sales per customer** (repeat visitation)
5. Increasing the **profit margin per sale**
6. Decreasing **variable cost per sale**
7. Decreasing **fixed overheads.**

The majority of these opportunities can be significantly influenced by the type of marketing strategies that a business employs. Successful business marketing should:

- Be based on market research and identification of the business's unique selling point
- Employ relevant promotional and advertising actions to influence visitor perceptions, awareness and product choice
- Employ effective sales and distribution channels to enable conversion of intention into actual visitation
- Identify and leverage cooperative marketing programs with tourism organisations and businesses to provide resource synergies and increased visitation potential
- Gain 'cut-through' of the business's marketing message through innovative, cost effective marketing tactics such as media and PR generation.

Marketing Cardinia Shire

While creating a brand for Cardinia Shire is important, it is not the highest priority for Council at this early stage of developing the destination.

It is far more important to develop additional quality tourism experiences and to create a reason to visit. It is also essential that the quality of visitor servicing is very high and consistent. Once these key elements are evolving you are then better placed to promote your tourism assets.

However taking into consideration the above points, a number of marketing and promotional activities will be recommended.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

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Brand

Best practice in destination marketing demonstrates that the initial development of a strong brand (and associated policy) can ultimately protect a destination brand and inform decision making about product development, infrastructure and quality. The introduction of an event or festival that is linked to an iconic attraction and celebrates community values can also help shape a destination image, attract like-minded visitors and provide entertainment and recreation opportunities for residents.

The brand pyramid for Cardinia Shire is an overview of the competitive advantage, product strengths and attributes that reflect the offer. (The concept is based on Tourism Victoria's, Brand Guide principles.)

It is proposed that Cardinia Shire develop a brand positioning around the 'naturalness' – city joins country theme (competitive advantage), whereby visitors to the region can immerse themselves in that 'country' feeling created by a stunning backdrop of rolling, green hills and villages on the ridge tops surrounded by lush forests.

The primary tourism precinct will be north of Pakenham.

This area has retained open space, is relatively undeveloped, has attractive hillside villages and contains a highly appealing natural landscape: yet it is so close to suburbia – a unique strength to own from a marketing perspective.

This positioning was also reinforced by the stakeholder engagement forums where the view was unanimous regarding Cardinia Shire's unique strength was the 'countryness' next door to the city.

The following brand elements best describe Cardinia Shire and will form the basis of brand development as the destination evolves towards a 'must visit' tourism precinct.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

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'Country by the City'

Community integrity, creativity, a feeling of naturalness

Proximity to Melbourne, unspoilt countryside, sense of freedom & escapism

Puffing Billy, 'hillside villages', fresh local produce, walking and cycling trails, gardens, Emerald Lake Park, country family-friendly pubs, horse riding, golf, events, Gilwell Park, farm visits, State parks.

Recommendations

19. Cardinia Shire creates its **brand positioning** around its competitive advantage; the 'countryness' theme, promoting a healthy lifestyle conducive to having fun with family and friends

20. Cardinia Shire Council and industry continue to **develop the range and quality of tourism experiences that** capitalise on the brand positioning.

A number of tag lines were proposed by the Working Group including:

- 'Go where you haven't been before'
- 'Where city meets country'.

The 'Eastern Dandenongs, Hills and Villages' was also proposed as a brand development theme, to promote and support the key competitive advantages identified as the current strengths. This positioning is consistent and can also be applied by Emerald and Gembrook in their brand alignment.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

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Marketing

Cardinia Shire in partnership with the Tourism Advisory Committee should consider developing a marketing plan to address the key marketing activities, although this task is not an immediate priority.

The plan needs to consider the following actions:

- Undertake research specific to Cardinia Shire tourism to gain a better understanding of the current and potential market profiles

- Determine what products and experiences are market ready and how they may be promoted

- Determine how these products and experiences can be effectively marketed

- Develop a schedule and identify funding requirements for the implementation of the various marketing and promotional activities.

The plan should also consider what joint marketing activities may be available for Cardinia Shire to align with, e.g. Destination Melbourne's campaign 'Get to know your own backyard'.

It should be noted there is a significant amount of research available on the Tourism Victoria website which is readily accessible and easily interpreted.

Target market

The Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market is the predominant market for Cardinia Shire to focus on. It is also important for Cardinia Shire to develop and align products and experiences to meet the needs of this significant market segment.

Trends indicate a growing emphasis on social tourism whereby people want to reconnect either with family members, friends or work colleagues. These reconnecting experiences can either be a short break away from home or simply sharing leisure activities of mutual interest. Cardinia Shire is particularly well placed to host this growing phenomenon.

Recommendations

21. **Brand** – that Cardinia Shire develop its brand around its competitive position and product strengths

    Colours – that Cardinia Shire branding aligns with the Dandenong Ranges colour palette (soft greens) as it reflects the lush, green hills and forests (see the Gembrook Village brochure in the appendices as an example of good use of colour).

    Words – apply the descriptors used in the brand pyramid to promotional information.

    Images – use quality images to illustrate the lush, green hills, villages and leisure activities (walking/cycling) with families and friends having fun; images of Puffing Billy should also be used.

22. **Marketing plan** – that Cardinia Shire consider developing a marketing plan.

23. **Market segment** – that Cardinia Shire focus on the VFR market segment.

Part 3   Strategic directions cont.

CARDINIA

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Recommendations for Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy

Destination development planning

Action	Responsibility	Priority	Est. Cost
1. The 'Hills Villages' require additional cafes, retail, attractions, etc, for visitors to increase their length of stay and spend more.	Industry	High/Ongoing	–
2. Industry to enhance the existing levels of customer service throughout Cardinia Shire.	Industry	High/Ongoing	–
3. Create a greater point of difference in the product offerings – uniqueness.	Industry & Council	Ongoing	–
4. Ensure tourism is considered in Council strategic planning.	Council	Ongoing	WCB
5. Review the events strategy to create new and additional opportunities.	Council	Low	$25,000
6. Align the experiences and activities (current and future) with the VFR market.	Industry & Council	Ongoing	–
7. Continue working with Puffing Billy in regards to their business development program.	Industry & Council	Ongoing	–
8. Council reviews the existing Cardinia Shire Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategy within the next two years to take into account the needs of the VFR market and changing consumer trends.	Council	Med	WCB
9. Cardinia Shire and Casey Councils jointly discuss with Tourism Victoria, the feasibility of this project.	Joint Councils	Med	$10,000
10. Council, in conjunction with the various interest groups, plans the development of a touring route(s)which will be of sufficient interest and appeal to the target market.	Industry & Council	Med	WCB

Index   High = within 12 months   Medium = next 2-3 years   Low = 3 years plus   WCB = within Council budget

Part 4   Priorities for Cardinia Shire—Action Plan

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Destination management

	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Est. Cost
11.	Cardinia Shire Council and the City of Casey establish an MOU for collaborating on tourism matters.	Councils	High	-
12.	Cardinia Tourism Inc. broadens its membership base and reduces the membership fees.	Industry	High	-
13.	Cardinia Tourism Inc. and the Dandenong Ranges Tourism Association consider developing an MOU to collaborate on various industry development and promotional activities.	Industry & Council	High	WCB
14.	Cardinia Shire and Casey Councils establish a joint Tourism Advisory Committee for the oversight of tourism management, planning and development.	Industry	High	-
15.	Cardinia Shire Council develops a Tourism Policy that outlines Council's function and reflects Council's supportive role in tourism.	Council	Med	WCB
16.	The business/industry associations adopt the LTA role statement and transition to Tourism and Business Associations (BTAs).	Industry	High	-
17.	Cardinia Shire Council in partnership with industry undertakes an audit of industry development requirements of the existing business and tourism associations.	Industry & Council	High	WCB
18.	Cardinia Shire Council and the tourism industry utilise the industry development support programs delivered by VTIC, Destination Melbourne and neighbouring regional tourism associations.	Industry & Council	Ongoing	At cost

Index   High = within 12 months   Medium = next 2-3 years   Low = 3 years plus   WCB = within Council budget

Part 4   Priorities for Cardinia Shire—Action Plan cont.

CARDINIA

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Destination marketing

	Action	Responsibility	Priority	Est. Cost
19.	Cardinia Shire creates its brand positioning around its competitive advantage; the 'countryness' theme, promoting a healthy lifestyle conducive to having fun with family and friends.	Council led	Ongoing	WCB
20.	Cardinia Shire Council and industry continue to develop the range and quality of tourism experiences that capitalise on the brand positioning.	All	Ongoing	-
21.	Brand – Cardinia Shire develops its brand around its competitive position and product strengths. **Colours** – Cardinia Shire branding aligns with the Dandenong Ranges colour palette (soft greens) as it reflects the lush green hills and forests (see the Gembrook Village brochure in the appendices as an example of good use of colour) **Words** – apply the descriptors used in the brand pyramid for use in promotional information **Images** – use quality images to illustrate the lush, green hillsides, villages and leisure activities (walking/cycling) with families and friends having fun; images of Puffing Billy should also be used.	Council led Industry adopt	Ongoing	WCB
22.	Marketing plan – Cardinia Shire to consider developing a marketing plan.	Council	Low	$10,000 Consider Monash University for assistance
23.	Market segment – Cardinia Shire to focus on the VFR market segment.	All	Ongoing	-

Index　　　High = within 12 months　　　Medium = next 2-3 years　　　Low = 3 years plus　　　WCB = within Council budget

Part 4　Priorities for Cardinia Shire—Action Plan cont.

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Tourism Strategy implementation and review

Implementation of the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy will include the development of an annual Action Plan by Council in partnership with local businesses and the tourism industry to identify priorities, resources and actions required to meet the desired outcomes of the Strategy.

As tourism is a highly contested and dynamic environment, a regular annual review of the Strategy is vital, to ensure that actions and outcomes identified by Council remain relevant.

Part 4   Priorities for Cardinia Shire—Action Plan cont.

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Part 5   Appendices

Appendix 1

Transition to Business & Tourism Associations (BTAs)

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Current brochures promoting Cardinia Shire tourism assets and opportunities

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Appendix 1   Transition to Business & Tourism Associations (BTAs)

A number of townships throughout the municipality have a business group representing their local businesses with varying levels of activity and membership. A small number of tourism businesses are currently represented by Cardinia Tourism Incorporated.

A key issue for tourism growth is the need for greater collaboration between business operators in these townships whether in retail, services sector or hospitality and to have a professional and consistent approach to visitor servicing. This growth is unlikely to occur under the current structure.

Most townships throughout Australia have Local Tourism Associations (LTAs) in place representing tourism and business operators with their key functions being:

- Advocacy – member representation
- Visitor servicing
- Industry/professional development

- Marketing, tourism research and product development
- Partnerships and communications

For the municipality to develop tourism, these key functions must be addressed via a planned and coordinated approach and this is best achieved via creating a basic, but proven model structure.

Phase 1 (next 12-18 months)
Broaden the functionality and membership of Cardinia Tourism Inc. via:

- Develop a basic business plan that addresses the key functions and priority activities of an LTA (refer to page 27)
- Set 'benchmark' membership fees – approximately $300
- Conduct a membership drive across the municipality initially targeting tourism related businesses.

To broaden the membership base, a discounted membership fee would need to be created that recognises companies that are currently members of other business groups.

Phase 2 (mid 2014)
Create Business & Tourism Associations (BTAs) in those townships where tourism has the potential to be an economic generator. Whilst some existing business associations may be reluctant to transition to a more representative role, this move would generate a stronger tourism presence and tourism business development.

Once established and functioning, these active BTAs could then assume the role currently undertaken by Cardinia Tourism Inc.

Tourism Advisory Committee (commence July 2013 and continue for 3 to 5 years)
A Tourism Advisory Committee would provide an overarching advisory role to Council as well as a two way partnership between the tourism industry and Council. The City of Casey will ideally be included in this partnership. This committee would remain in place for the next three to five years by which time the broader region (including the City of Casey) could consider establishing a regional tourism association and board.

Part 5   Appendices cont.

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Appendix 2   Factors for regional success

There are eight factors that are pivotal to the success of regional tourism:

1. Strong private sector driven regional tourism associations, focused on their core role of destination marketing, working cooperatively with local tourism associations and providing an umbrella marketing and representation role

2. Strong local tourism associations focused on their core role of visitor servicing

3. Support from local government for visitor servicing, destination and infrastructure development and co-operative marketing

4. Strategic planning for integrated and consistent marketing and holistic tourism development that is owned and implemented by all stakeholders

5. Co-operative marketing which maximises the effectiveness of industry, local government and state government contributions;

6. Leadership by strong and visionary organisations and individuals

7. Quality visitor services create satisfied visitors and lead to word of mouth promotion

8. A breadth and depth of quality tourism product and infrastructure that meets the demands of target markets and reflects tourism trends and best practice development and operation.

'To be successful in the long term, regional tourism also has to ensure there is community support for tourism development and promotion, ongoing investment in visitor facilities and infrastructure and that the natural, cultural and community assets on which the industry is based, are protected into the future'.

Source: Tourism Chambers of Commerce

Part 5   Appendices cont.

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Appendix 3   Glossary of research terms

1. National Visitor Survey (NVS) definitions
2. International Visitor Survey (IVS) definitions
3. NVS & IVS shared definitions

1. National Visitor Survey (NVS) Definitions

Domestic day trip visitors: Those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least 4 hours, and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel. Same day travel as part of overnight travel is excluded.

Domestic overnight visitors: People aged 15 years and over who undertake an overnight trip of one night or more and at least 40 kilometres away from home are referred to as overnight visitors. Only those trips where the respondent is away from home for less than 12 months are in scope of the NVS.

Domestic travel: Domestic travel is travel by Australians in Australia (including to Australian external territories such as Christmas Island).

Domestic visitor nights: Visitor nights refer to the number of nights spent away from home in association with individual visits.

Interstate tourism: A person is an interstate visitor when they visit a state or territory other than that in which they reside. An interstate visitor night is any night spent in a state or territory other than that in which the visitor resides.

Intrastate tourism: A person is an intrastate visitor when they visit a location in the State or Territory in which they reside. An intrastate visitor night is any night spent in the same State or Territory as that in which the traveller resides.

2. International Visitor Survey (IVS) Definitions

International visitor: A person is defined as an international visitor to Australia if they are currently a resident overseas, have been in Australia for less than one year and are aged 15 years or over.

International nights: International visitor nights refer to the number of nights spent away from home, in association with individual visits by an international visitor.

3. IVS and NVS Definitions

Visiting friends and/or relatives (VFR): Visitors who nominate visiting friends and/or relatives as their primary reason for travelling. Visits to friends and relatives may also include travel to attend the wedding of a friend or relative or travel to attend a funeral.

Business visitors: Visitors who nominate business as their primary reason for travelling or visiting a particular location. Business travel comprises business, work travel for transport crews, attendance at conferences, conventions, exhibitions and trade fairs, and training and research related to employment.

Expenditure: Expenditure amounts reported by survey respondents include expenditure by, and on behalf of, travellers during a trip, airfares and other transport costs such as bus and train fares, amounts spent on trip-related items before and after the trip.

Holiday/leisure visitors: Visitors whose primary reason for travelling is having a holiday. Holiday/leisure travel in the NVS comprises holidays, travel for leisure, relaxation and just "getting away", entertainment, sport (both participation and as a spectator) and shopping. The IVS includes additional categories for accompanying a business traveller and 'working holiday'.

Purpose of visit: Purpose of visit is the main purpose, or the major reason for visiting a particular location. The major categories of purpose of visit in the NVS and IVS are: Holiday/leisure (leisure for domestic day trips); Visiting friends and/or relatives (VFR); Business; Education (IVS only) and Other. The 'other' category includes travel for educational purposes (NVS only), personal appointments, health reasons, and employment/leisure purposes (for example, working holidays) (NVS only).

Tourism regions: Tourism regions are formed by the aggregation of Statistical Local Areas (SLAs). Tourism Research Australia (TRA) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics have adopted a coordinated approach to the use of tourism regions to enable comparability of regional data from different tourism surveys.

Source: Tourism Victoria

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Appendix 4　Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used throughout this document:

BTA – Business & Tourism Association

LTA – Local Tourism Association

DML – Destination Melbourne Limited

DMP – Destination Management Planning

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

RTA – Regional Tourism Association

RDA – Regional Development Australia

VECCI – Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce & Industry

VFR – Visiting Friends & Relatives

VTIC – Victorian Tourism Industry Council

YV & DRM – Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges Marketing

Part 5　Appendices

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Appendix 5   Current brochures promoting Cardinia Shire tourism assets and opportunities

Part 5   Appendices cont

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Appendix 2

Updating the Cardinia Shire Tourism Strategy
Casey Cardinia Workshop 1: 2 June 2016
Summary notes

Tourism aspirations

- Healthy, sustainable and profitable tourism industry
- Strong leadership
- Community engagement
- Coordinated, collaborative approach
- Attractive, differentiated and accessible experiences
- An effective industry voice to Government
- Great reviews on Trip Advisor
- A clear and marketable identity
- Excellent customer service and products
- A tourism industry that is recognised
- Appropriate communication
- Tourism that is integrated with other activities for mutual benefit.

Strengths

- City fringe location/day trip/accessible transport (point to point)
- Diversity of landscape and green hills
- Natural beauty/nature-based activities/specific natural resources
- Attractions for a range of demographics
- Vibrancy of new growth
- Brand new, quality sporting facilities
- Niche markets - equestrian; cycling, parachuting, sky-diving = soft adventure
- Observatory
- Good retail support
- Country hospitality
- History and heritage - e.g. old cheese factory and other buildings suitable for adaptive re-use
- High levels of food production - e.g. asparagus, herbs, potatoes; small lot farmers; insufficient products/experiences (?)

Challenges

- Public transport within the towns/region
- Lack of cohesive and accessible information re experiences/lack of public and industry knowledge
- Constant improvement of customer service
- Digital connectivity - e.g. free wi-fi/apps/push notifications
- Patchy internet service
- Low profile with Tourism Victoria
- Strong neighbouring competition

1

- Connectivity between accommodation businesses
- Poor profile and identity (classified as part of the Yarra Valley/Destination Melbourne)
- Council support and funding
- Infrastructure (Hills)
- Membership numbers
- No Regional Tourism Organisation
- Limited accommodation types and facilities (groups and families??)

Opportunities

- New residents - start local
  - Council newsletter goes out to 400,000 residents every quarter
- Improve customer service levels
- Actively build a relationship with Tourism Victoria: Jigsaw approach is over - opportunity to reposition Casey/Cardinia - but Jigsaw campaign still being funded for the next 3 years.
- Need a major regional event to sell to Tourism Victoria - this is their main focus now
- Puffing Billy Discovery Centre
- Multi-generational destination - i.e. broad appeal
- Day-trippers market rather than VFR: VFR is a subset (?) Market is more than that (?)
- Fountain Gate - one of the largest shopping centres in Australia
- Cruise ship market, particularly given new restrictions in Sydney
- Cockatoo - Gembrook walking trail
- Upgrade of multi-use trail between Emerald Lakes Park and Cockatoo
- Gembrook, as the new events hub for Puffing Billy
- Events funding - combine tourism and community (huge flow-on)
- Maximise existing events as well
- Camping: grey nomads, car clubs and other groups etc
- Leveraging key assets.

Governance

- Key industry players required to drive the industry on the ground - leadership
- Councils need to commit funding resources - currently $30-40,000 + officers' time. Need $500,000 from Councils
- Have a peak body + combined business and tourism associations like the Shipwreck Coast model
- Diverse region, so strong representation required from all areas
- Does TAC do itself out of a job?
- Keep the community voice
- Skills-based Board + reps. from local BTAs and evolve to a purely skills-based Board (?) Not mutually exclusive
- Don't limit the vision; industry make look different over the next 3-5-10 years
- Look at other structures
- Need tangible/measurable benefits for members.

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Appendix 3

Developing the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy
Workshop 2: 7 July 2016
Summary notes

UPDATED ACTION PLAN*

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Develop a regional brand identity and communication [plan] Note: See Actions 5/19/21 from original Strategy	High/short term	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry
2. Develop a list of regional tourism assets • establish criteria in consultation with TAC	High/short term	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry
3. Strengthen relationship with appropriate State Government departments at a strategic level	Ongoing	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry
4. Build stronger collaboration between industry players - e.g. CC Tourism Day	Ongoing	**Lead:** Industry group **Support:** Council
5. Establish a strong and viable governance structure	High/short term	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry
6. Continue to focus on building tourism business skills	Ongoing	**Lead:** Industry **Support:** Council
7. Focus on events as a regional draw card • build on existing events (low hanging fruit) • develop new events to attract visitors (as opposed to community-based events) • develop a regional calendar of events database • update Cardinia Shire's events strategy to include City of Casey	High/short term Ongoing/ longer term Note: Incorporate events into marketing strategy. Calendar of events can help build day trip market. See Action7 in original Strategy.	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry

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ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY
8. Ensure that tourism is considered in Councils' strategic plans in recognition of its importance to the region's visitor economy Note: Action 6 in original Strategy	Ongoing	**Lead:** Industry **Support:** Council
9. Continue working with key regional tourism experiences - e.g. Puffing Billy re business development program (Master Plan and broader community) and Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne (Master Plan)	Ongoing	**Lead:** Council **Support:** Industry
Refer to Action 23 from original Strategy re focus on VFR market Note: Discussed with Frances previously and agreed to remove from AP and address in Marketing Plan. See also Action 8		
Educate residents re visitor experiences in the region Note: The last two 'actions' will be included in the Marketing Plan		

*Actions are referred to as Recommendations in the final Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 - 2020

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Notes

Governance

TAC - comments from the floor

- Not doing the best for the region (that can be done)
- Impeding tourism growth in the region
- AHA model - preferred suppliers/sponsors
- Temporary arrangement with a 3-year transition

Options 2 and 3 - what provides the best funding options?

Group agreement that Option 2 was the best way forward, but important that Destination Melbourne (DM) is included in the mix of potential partners

Already a sub-region of DM

Frances will be talking to all key neighbouring tourism bodies - DG, MP, YV and DM

DM better oriented to attracting daytrippers

Could CC become a sub-region of DM - already has a big structure - *but* DM is a marketing company not an RTO. Is Melbourne too big to ensure our visibility?

Very focused on CBD. Have dropped Melbourne and surrounds map, but understand they need to fix this - could CC strike a deal? (Casey has already worked with DM re video marketing)

Businesses along the PB line had discussion with YR last year

Will need financial support to implement the Marketing Plan - e.g. keeping web sites updated etc.

The Marketing Plan will help dictate governance.

3

Appendix 4

Five criteria for 'best practice' destination websites

- Reflect the destination brand through original, fresh content and imagery; 'content is king'

- Encourage the potential visitor to stay longer, explore further (and spend more) by including itineraries, themed touring routes, packaging ideas and other planning tools that showcase the destination's rich and diverse offerings

- Include nuanced, multi-format storytelling that connects with your target markets and clearly 'sells the benefits' that they are seeking from their holiday (passionate, authentic locals sharing their favourite pastimes, work and real life)

- Build an interactive relationship with your consumers; encourage them to share their favourite images and experiences of the destination

- Provide an intuitive user experience (seamless navigation for easy searching/booking)

- Ensure a 'clean', modular design that enables a substantial amount of content in a relatively small space, which is well balanced and of high visual appeal.

For inspiration and some great examples:

Visit California
www.visitcalifornia.com

Visit Scotland
www.visitscotland.com

Discover Tasmania
www.discovertasmania.com.au

Casey Cardinia
Tourism Advisory Committee Transition to
Regional Tourism Board Report to Council
March 2018

Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee Transition to
Regional Tourism Board

Report to Council - March 2018

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Background

The Casey Cardinia region is one of five growth corridors in metropolitan Melbourne and the second fastest growing region in Australia. With its population expected to reach more than 650,000 by 2036, making it greater than Hobart, Darwin and Geelong combined, Casey Cardinia represents a new frontier for business growth.

The Tourism, Hospitality and Events sector offers a significant opportunity for job creation and broader economic development including local workforce participation. In recognition of the industry's potential, the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council, supported by a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) of industry representatives, have been working together to develop the Casey Cardinia region as a visitor destination.

Guided by the understanding that Council has limited powers to affect industry success, and noting the importance of strong partnerships with industry leaders, the resulting *Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017-2020* (Appendix 1), empowers the local tourism industry to take a leadership role with Council support.

The strategy outlines:
- a prioritised action plan which covers customer service, industry support, tourism assets, products/experiences, events, cultural tourism, collaborative partnerships and governance and policy,
- a marketing strategy to help increase awareness of the region in a crowded market, and
- a staged succession plan for the current Casey Cardinia Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) to transition to a regional skills-based tourism organisation.

The key recommendation of the strategy to transition the TAC to an independent regional tourism board (RTB) to 'establish a governance structure for tourism in the Casey Cardinia region that is viable, resilient and 'fit for purpose.'[1] has commenced.

The City of Casey and Cardinia Shire will establish the required entity and invite nominations for Directors of Casey Cardinia Regional Tourism Board (RTB).

Transition Process and Timeline

A project plan outlining actions, responsibilities and timeline has been developed (CC TAC Transition to Regional Tourism Board Project Plan 02.18 - Appendix 2)

Entity Structure

The City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council sought legal advice from Maddocks as to the options available for the incorporation of the Regional Tourism Board as a legal entity. Of the several options explored, Maddocks recommended the RTB be formed as an Incorporated Association, registered with Corporate Affairs Victoria and operating under the standard or modified Model Rules. (Advice to CCC on establishment of Regional Tourism Board - Appendix 3).

The RTB will comprise a skills-based board of up to nine directors, including industry experts, tourism operators, industry service providers and two CCouncil representatives, one Councillor from Cardinia Shire and one Councillor from the City of Casey. All directors will have equal voting rights. Council Officers from the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council will offer administrative support to the Board.

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[1] *Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017- 2020*, Sarah Lebski & Associates Tourism Consultancy

The inaugural board will be appointed by a Selection Panel convened by the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire. Future directors will be elected by members at the AGM. Initially each Director will be appointed for a term of approximately 12 months to establish the board. The inaugural board will then determine the future tenure of directors, e.g. directors may be elected for a term of three years, with three positions becoming vacant each year according to a rolling schedule.

The Board may establish Board Committees ~~e.g.: a Finance, Audit & Risk (FARa Governance Committee; a Marketing Committee; a Policy Committee etc.~~to support good governance and compliance or to address key strategic opportunities.

The Casey Cardinia Regional Tourism Board will be a skills-based Board. The TAC was consulted in the development of a Board Skills Matrix (Appendix 4) to ensure a range of appropriate skills and core capabilities are present in the make-up of the board; and Director's Position Description (Appendix 5) to clearly identify the duties, responsibilities and expectations of the RTB Directors.

Board Recruitment

A call for nominations for directors of the RTB will be advertised through Council's normal channels as well as through relevant tourism bodies and regional tourism and business associations. Councillors and Council representatives my also identify suitable individuals within their communities, notify them if the formation of the board and invite them to nominate.

To ensure the retention of knowledge encapsulated in the TAC, current members of the TAC will be invited directly to nominate. It's hoped a number of incumbents will successfully apply, as their knowledge of the development of the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 – 2020, and of the opportunities and challenges currently presenting in the sector, will be invaluable in establishing the direction for the organisation.

Nominations will be open for 28 days. Applicants can access the nomination form through the City of Casey website and the Cardinia Shire Council website and submit their nomination form via email or in person to the council offices by the designated date and time.

Applicants will be asked to identify their suitability against the Board Skills Matrix and The Director's Position Description which will form part of the information package provided with the nomination form. The nomination form will also ask the applicant to identify their interest in taking up an executive role on the Board – Chair, Secretary or Treasurer. A summary of these roles is included in the CC RTB Nomination Form. The appointment of the Chair will be at the discretion of the Selection Panel, with final approval by Council.

Selection Panel

A selection panel comprising a representative from Cardinia Shire Council, a representative from the City of Casey and Chris Buckingham, the current Chair of the TAC will assess applications against the Board Skills Matrix and the Director's Position Description. A short list will be established and potential candidates will be interviewed by the panel to establish their suitability for the role of Director of the RTB. Appointment to the Board will be at the discretion of the Selection Panel.

The Selection Panel will submit a summary and profile of their preferred candidates to the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council for approval before appointing the Directors of the CC RTB.

Next Steps

On approval by Council of the Directors and Chair, the City of Casey and Cardinia Shire Council will hold a recognition ceremony to acknowledge the work of the TAC and welcome the RTB.

The RTB will then undertake a series of workshops to ensure governance best practice and accountability is understood and implemented; to create a whole of organisation strategic action plan that aligns with the marketing strategy outlined in the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 – 2020; and to clarify the organisation's purpose, membership structure and amendments to its Model Rules of Incorporation.

Actions for the Inaugural Board
- Appoint additional office bearers
- Establish Governance best practice
- Develop the Board Strategy to:
    - Define the organisation's purpose
    - Define membership structure - what makes up the entity that are they the board of
    - Establish Board Committees if required
    - Identify any modifications to the Model Rules and submit to CAV
    - Undertake a Risk Assessment and create a Risk Management plan
    - Align the Organisation's strategy with the marketing strategy identified in the Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 – 2020
    - Establish a practice of accountability

Appendices
1. Casey Cardinia Visitation Strategy 2017 - 2020
2. CC TAC Transition to Regional Tourism Board Project Plan 02.18
3. Maddocks - Advice to CCC on establishment of Regional Tourism Board
4. CC RTB Board Skills Matrix
5. CC RTB Director's Position Description
6. CC RTB Nomination Form
7. CC RTB How to Nominate Guideline

Casey Cardinia Regional Tourism Board Skills Matrix

Assign skill/competency ratings for each nominee - High = 3, Med = 2, Low = 1, NA = 0

	Importance	Nominee 1	Nominee 2	Nominee 3	Nominee 4	Nominee 5	Nominee 6	Nominee 7	Nominee 8	Nominee 9
Industry Knowledge/Experience	High Med Low	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]	[Insert Name]
Industry experience	High									
Knowledge of Sector	Med									
Knowledge of Public Policy and/or government relations	Med									
Technical Skills/Experience										
Tourism Operator - Attraction	Med									
Tourism Operator - Accommodation	Med									
Tourism Operator - Food and Beverage	Med									
Tourism Operator - Events and Conferences	Med									
Tourism Operator - Transportation	Med									
Tourism Services	Med									
Accounting/Finance	Med									
Law	Med									
Marketing - General	Med									
Marketing - Brand	Med									
Marketing - Digital	Med									
Grant Applications	Low									
Core Competencies										
Knowledge of a Director's Responsibilities	High									
Strategic Thinking/Planning	High									
Financial Literacy	Med									
Knowledge or Understanding of Risk Management	Med									
Visitor Industry Association Membership	High									
Previous Board Experience	Low									
Professional Qualification (e.g.AICD Course)	Low									
Capabilities										
Team Player/Collaberative	High									
Assimilate and Synthesize Complex Information Quickly	High									
Develop and Deliver a Cogent Argument	High									

GENERA

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