



# YARRA RANGES TOURISM MARKETING STRATEGY 2017/20



We market to sell the Dandenong Ranges and Yarra Valley to the visitor, driving economic growth...



YARRA RANGES TOURISM

# MARKETING STRATEGY 2017/20

## INTRODUCTION

Yarra Ranges Tourism is the official Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO) for Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. Established in 2006 as one of eleven Victorian RTOs, we are governed by a voluntary Board and operate as a not-for-profit company to market the region to grow the visitor economy.

Yarra Ranges Tourism has three key strategic funding partners:

- Yarra Ranges Council
- Visit Victoria
- Tourism Industry Partners

The tourism sector is a highly important industry for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges because of the number of businesses that rely on direct and indirect benefits from tourism and visitor economy. To assist this wide range of businesses to achieve the shared goal of driving economic growth in the region, Yarra Ranges Tourism encourages industry partners and stakeholders to use this Marketing Strategy as a guide to inform their own marketing efforts, seasonal campaigns, events and promotions.



**Tourism — a vital  
part of our local  
economy**

The tourism industry contributed an estimated \$1.1 billion to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges economy (13.4% of gross regional product) and employed approximately 10,500 people (11.7% of regional employment)

Source: Value of Tourism to Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, Tourism Victoria, 2015

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

This Marketing Strategy aligns to the *Yarra Ranges Tourism 3-Year Strategic Plan 2016-2019*, and draws on the plans of local government, Visit Victoria and Tourism Australia. In particular, the Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy.<sup>1</sup> It provides specific direction for Yarra Ranges Tourism to lead a collaborative marketing model that includes government, key stakeholders and industry partners. With the key objective of working together to achieve increased visitors numbers, length of stay and spend. The results of which help lead to a growing visitor economy that contributes to investment and jobs in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.



## STRATEGIC FOCUS

*Market the region in partnership with industry, build brand awareness of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges and leverage collective marketing initiatives with all our stakeholders.*

## OUR VISION

*To promote and support the region to be Victoria's premier visitor destination for exceptional wine, food and indulgent short breaks complemented by nature based, cultural and village experiences.*

Through shared leadership and accountability with our industry partners, Yarra Ranges Tourism aims to achieve the following objectives in support of our Vision:

1. **Increase the number of visitors**
2. **Increase length of stay**
3. **Increase visitor spend**

## OUR MISSION

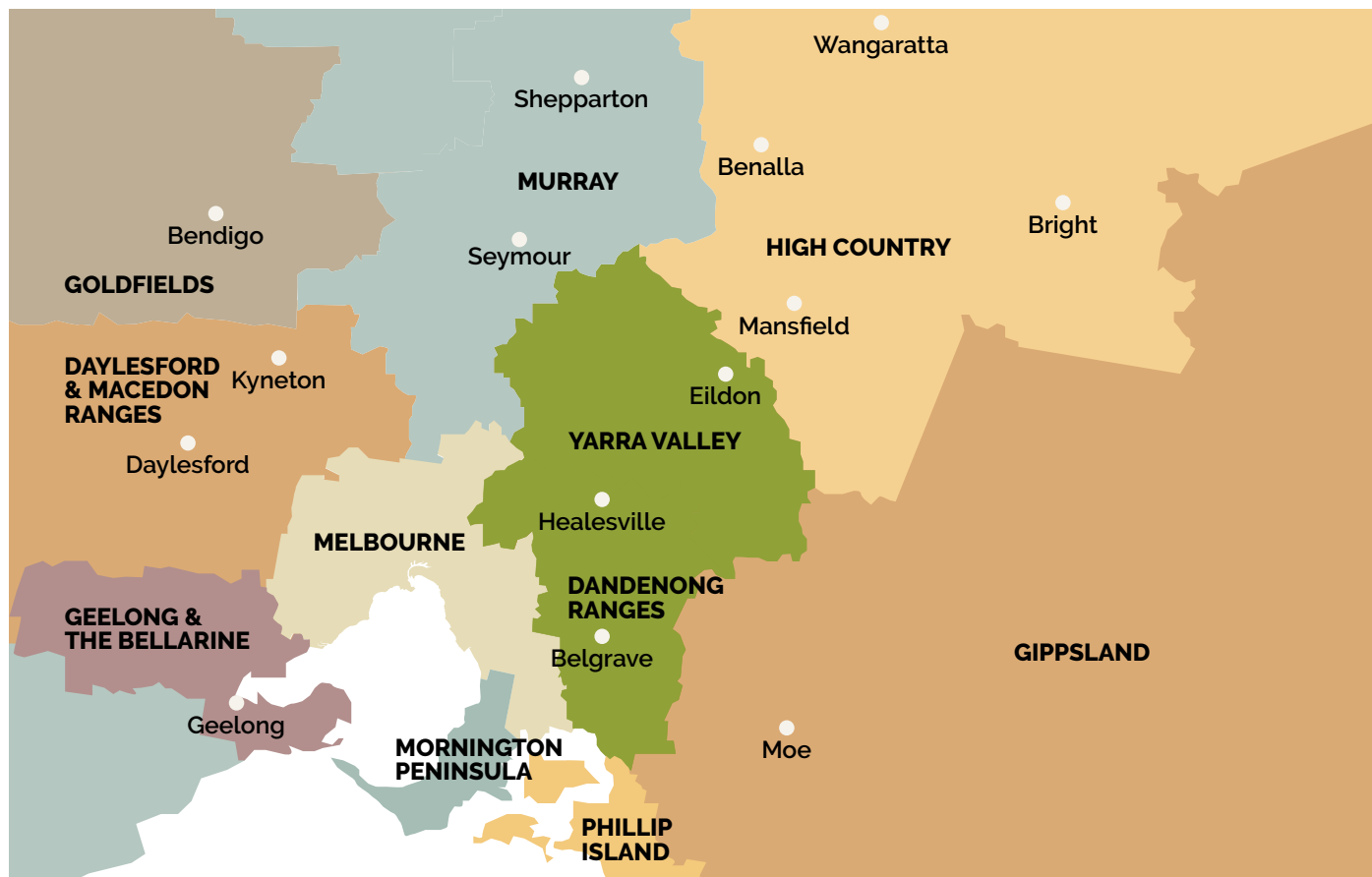
To lead collaborative marketing for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. Facilitated by effective partnerships that embrace industry groups and product diversity to attract, service and retain the visitor.

This Marketing Strategy will be delivered through a blend of planned branding and tactical activities while responding to opportunities that present themselves.

1. Victorian Visitor Economy Strategy  
July 2016

## OUR REGION

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region is located less than 60 minutes by car east of the Melbourne CBD and is defined by the reporting boundaries in the National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey and Survey of Tourist Accommodation. It covers the local government areas of Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, Murrindindi, Cardinia and Casey. It partners with tourism businesses that are located close to these boundaries who are strategically aligned to the regions product offering of food, wine and nature.



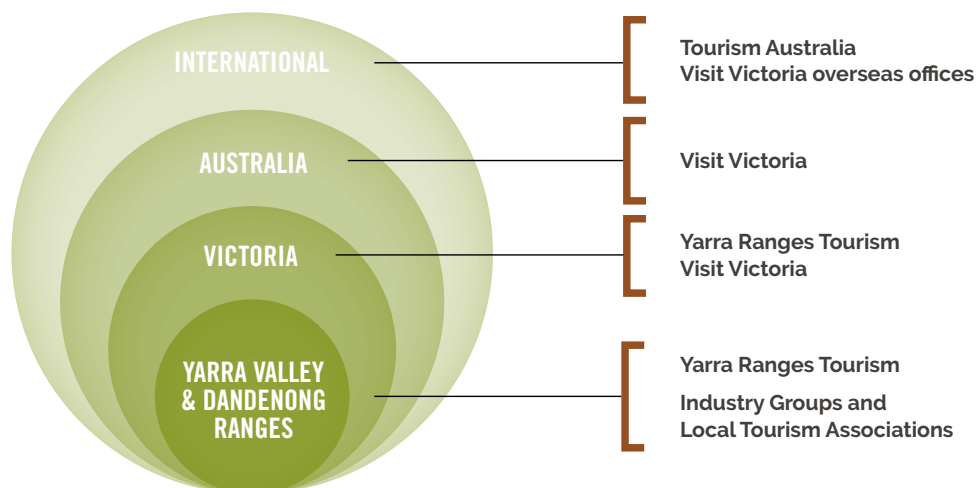
The Yarra Valley is nestled in Melbourne's east and is bound by the Valley floor of the Yarra River from Warrandyte to the Upper Yarra Dam. It includes the hills and valley surrounds including the Great Dividing Range to the north and the Yarra State Forest to the far-east, including Marysville and parts of the Goulburn River catchment.

The Dandenong Ranges is situated directly south of the Yarra Valley and is defined by the prominence of Mt Dandenong and its surrounding villages, by definition it extends east to Gembrook along the townships along the Puffing Billy railway line and to the top of Western Port Bay. Although it is recognised much of its key product and activity is focussed in and around Mt Dandenong and the Puffing Billy Railway corridor.

Both areas have played a significant role in the Victorian tourism industry as a holiday destination since Melbourne's early settlement.

## COLLABORATIVE MARKETING

Yarra Ranges Tourism works with a number of organisations to collaboratively market the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. By working together we can extend the reach of our resources (human and financial) to attract larger audiences, than by working alone. Our key focus is attracting the domestic market of Melbourne and Victoria and we work closely with Visit Victoria and Tourism Australia on cooperative marketing opportunities to attract interstate and international visitors.



## PRODUCT STRENGTHS

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges offers visitors a diversity of experiences, stemming from our strengths in Food, Wine and Scenic Nature. We hold a unique position in the hearts of visitors for our range of product. This includes new market leaders to mature established brands leveraging our proximity to Melbourne. Giving the region a distinct competitive advantage in both domestic and international markets. The breadth and depth of high value and memorable experiences provides the visitor with additional incentives to choose the region as a preferred destination, providing a wide scope for the theming of branding and tactical marketing activities.

### Food, Wine, Cider and More

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges have the food and drink stories covered: delicious and diverse range of wineries, cider houses, craft breweries, farm gate experiences and beautiful rooms in which to dine. Visitors can taste what all the talk has been about at award winning wineries and gin distilleries, shake hands with producers at a farmers market, indulge a sweet tooth at a chocolaterie or pick their own fruit at a U-Pick farm. Only an hour out of the CBD, people can immerse themselves in a food and drink experience that can be as family friendly or as top-end luxury as they wish.

### Scenic Nature

The rolling hills of the Dandenong Ranges is a place where you can discover charming mountain villages, historic gardens and the grandeur of mountain ash forests, all while traveling along some of the most scenic roads in Victoria. Continue on to the nearby Yarra Valley and meander through its myriad of vineyards and restaurants, framed by the blue backdrop of the Great Dividing Range. It's a place that encourages visitors to get back to nature by taking a walk, cycle or balloon ride, or take advantage other seasonal nature-based experiences such as snow and autumnal colour.



## Key Attractions

Lead attractions play an important role in stimulating primary visitation that leads to secondary visits to other businesses and experiences. The key drivers of this region include the state significant Healesville Sanctuary and Puffing Billy Railway complemented by the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie & Ice Creamery and SkyHigh Mt Dandenong. These are supported by a diverse range of attractions and experiences that service different market segments in arts, culture, food, wine, families and adventure. They all lead the way in maintaining our region's media prominence in innovation and quality.

## Villages

Scattered amongst the tall trees of the Dandenong Ranges nestles a network of unique boutique shopping, cosy cafes and artisan wares with their carefully curated window displays. The Open Studios, community festivals and market opportunities that feed the 'meet the maker' story encourage visitation to the Dandenong Ranges and the townships of the Yarra Valley.

**“What started as a networking group for the ‘Upper Melba highway’ operators has, under the guidance of YRT, developed into a fully fledged and functioning Trail Map. It’s increased business to the participants and improved the regional experience by promoting products that suit the individual’s interests and tastes of visitors.”**

**KARA HOOD,  
CELLAR DOOR  
MANAGER,  
DE BORTOLI YARRA  
VALLEY ESTATE**

### Destination Experience Awareness of the Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges

When consumers think of places in Victoria outside of Melbourne, the Yarra Valley comes first to mind for:



Fresh Regional Produce



Restaurants & Dining



Quality Food & Wine



Wineries



Cideries & Breweries

While the Dandenong Ranges is a top five response for:



Scenic Drives



Cycling



Spectacular Nature Experiences



Shopping



Unique Accommodation

Source: Visit Victoria - Destination Awareness & Association Study 2017, undertaken to assess destination level insights supporting the Wander Victoria campaign.

## KEY CHALLENGES OF THE REGION

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges region has outstanding strengths, however the aim of this Marketing Strategy is to address the following regional challenges identified in our 3-year Strategic Plan:

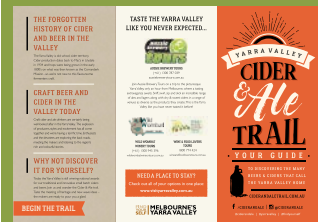
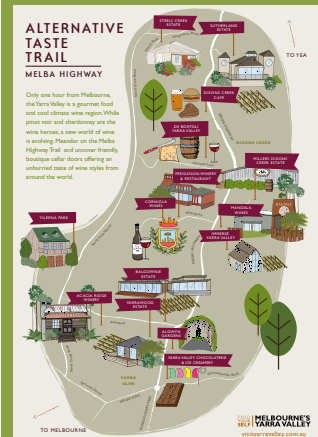
- Increasing yield through mid-week visits and overnight stays.
- Developing a sustainable and effective servicing model for visitors to source consistently branded information at all stages of their travel journey.
- Delivering multilingual service and product suitability to the growing Asian market.
- Cross-promoting the diversity of brands within the sub-regions.
- Developing product that addresses service supply gaps.
- Growing significant and sustainable events that attract new market segments to the region, particularly in off-peak periods.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES OF THE REGION

The region's strengths and challenges lead to the following opportunities:

1. Melbourne - growing from 4.5 million to 8 million (2051)<sup>2</sup> people >1-2 million in the east /southeast within 30-40 minutes with living less than one hour away, and with easy access via Eastlink.
2. Regional Victoria campaign, Wander Victoria and supporting activity that:
  - a. Grows regional event experiences to drive visitation and create new reasons to visit, with extended stay beyond weekends.
  - b. Leverages pre / post touring opportunities associated with conferences and major events in Melbourne.
  - c. Attracts new International visitors from China, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Indonesia and New Zealand.
3. New Melburnians: First generation immigrants including students and families and their visiting friends and relatives.
4. Maximizing use of the Digital infrastructure developed by Yarra Ranges Tourism that facilitates the engagement of visitors and their dispersal.
5. Product packaging, trails and itineraries that cross promote more regional product.
6. Working with industry to create a value proposition for mid-week visitation and stays.
7. Leveraging our natural assets as a primary reason to visit (native flora & fauna).
8. Leading accessible tourism travel experiences.

2. Plan Melbourne, 2017-2050 Strategy.



## MARKETING OBJECTIVES

The marketing objectives developed in this strategy support our Vision, they will be achieved through effective marketing initiatives, strong partnerships and shared leadership across industry:

1. **Building Brand Awareness**
  - 1.1 Promote the FIND YOUR SELF Brand Campaign as the overarching brand campaign for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges
  - 1.2 Partner with Visit Victoria's Wander Victoria campaign to increase brand exposure for the region
  - 1.3. Brand Awareness through Storytelling
  
2. **Grow Mid-Week Overnight Visitation**
  - 2.1 Increase Business Events and Conferences in the region
  - 2.2 Increase the mid-life household market segment from Melbourne
  - 2.3 Increase International visitors to the region, leveraging the Go Beyond Melbourne touring route
  
3. **Provide our domestic target segments, living in Melbourne, with new reasons to visit**
  - 3.1 Product development and packaging of our key offerings
  - 3.2 Attracting new festivals and events that address off-peak travel
  - 3.3 Create a connection with first generation Melburnians about the opportunities in the region for their Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)
  
4. **Delivering a leading edge digital platform for online information promotion and marketing, and sales conversion**
  - 4.1 Inbound Marketing (Digital)
  - 4.2 Digital Infrastructure for the Future
  
5. **Delivering effective communication to industry Partners that promote its engagement in collective marketing activities.**
  
6. **Deliver ongoing tactical marketing activities, through dedicated team, resourced to facilitate marketing outcomes that support the growth of the Visitor Economy in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.**



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

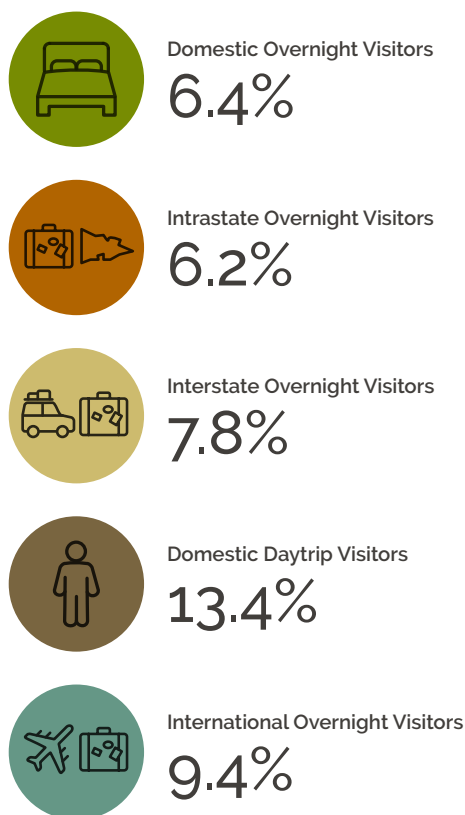
Successful implementation of these marketing objectives will be measured by:

1. Visitation to our regional websites including number of unique visitors, page views and length of time on website.
2. Trending mid-week visitation leading to overnight stays.\*
3. Database and social media acquisition growth and engagement.
4. Engagement of first generation Melburnians.
5. Growing Melbourne Major Events partnerships for pre/post touring.
6. Adoption of FIND YOUR SELF brand campaign by our industry partners.
7. Consistent promotion and media coverage (print and digital) of regions new products, packages and events.
8. Yarra Ranges Tourism seeks to leverage its competitive advantage to increase its share of the visitor market in comparison with other regions in Victoria.

\*The Visitor arrivals and expenditure as reported in the National Visitor Survey, International Visitor Survey and Survey of Tourist Accommodation are used as an indicator, however they track gross visitation and do not delineate mid-week from weekend travel.

### Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges - Regional Victoria Visitation Market Share

(YE March 2017):



\*note any future comparison of this data needs to be against the same quarter, to take into account seasonal variation eg. Summer, Autumn etc.

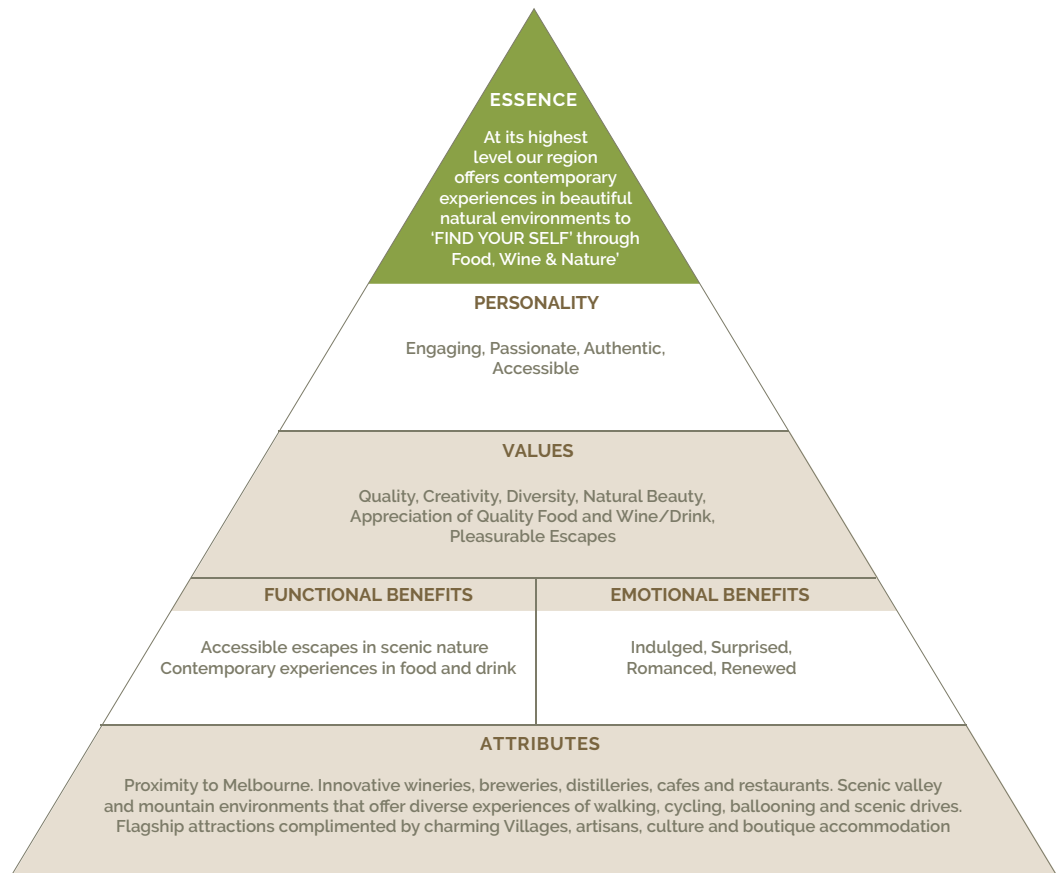


## BRAND FRAMEWORK

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges brand framework defines the qualities, experiences and attributes that make up our region's unique tourism offer. We use our brand framework to help guide the development of all marketing materials. It is the foundation to our brand story, language and all written and visual elements of our communication.

This framework is designed to be utilised by our industry partners to help guide them in their marketing communications. The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges brand will be strengthened if all industry partners implement a collaborative marketing approach and consistently communicate the region's marketing messages.

This collaborative effort will also lead to a higher level of consumer confidence, due to the perceived image of a united product.



One of the key marketing opportunities for Yarra Ranges Tourism is to maximise the different brand elements of the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges and its sub-regions, whilst maintaining clear and effective marketing messages for the region.

## FIND YOUR SELF | MELBOURNE'S YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES

FIND YOUR SELF is an umbrella campaign developed to articulate the shared brand attributes of the Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges. It was established with widespread input and support from a working group of industry leaders from the region.

The concept of FIND YOUR SELF offers layered meaning to the visitor:

- 1. Literal Meaning:** Physically finding your self in the natural environment.
- 2. Spiritual Meaning:** Sense of finding your self by slowing down and taking time out.

Yarra Ranges Tourism's branding activities drive consumers to the region's official visitor websites where they can access further information in order to convert leads to sales. Developing a strong regional brand ensures visitors, who access alternate information sources, recall the brand and the region's name and assets and are influenced by these positive associations in their decision to visit.

## VISITOR PROFILE TO THE YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES

This document has been designed for our Industry Partners to use as a guide in the development of their marketing plans and objectives, and contains consumer insights to help develop a shared understanding of the visitors coming to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

### SNAPSHOT

DOMESTIC	INTERNATIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.3 Million day trip visitors               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consistently one of the highest day trip destinations outside of Melbourne</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 931,000 overnight visitors               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 81% from Victoria, 19% from Interstate</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 90% of all visitors are domestic</li> <li>• 38% of daytrip visitors are aged 25-44 years, 18% are 45-54,</li> <li>• 23% of overnight visitors are aged 25-34</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 497,100 International day trip visitors               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second most visited day trip destination behind Great Ocean Road</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 49,000 overnight visitors</li> <li>• Top three source markets are New Zealand (19%), United Kingdom (14%), USA (11%)</li> <li>• The rise of Asia continues to be lead by China, which over the past five years has gone from outside the top ten to the top four-source market (6.5%). Supported by neighbouring countries in the region.</li> </ul>
CONFERENCES & BUSINESSES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 84,700 overnight visitors</li> <li>• 9.1% of all domestic overnight travel visitors</li> <li>• A key mid-week travel market</li> </ul>	

### TOURISM OUTLOOK

Overall, the outlook for Australia's tourism industry is positive, which will be driven by an improved global economy. This growth is expected to be underpinned by increasing consumer confidence and upturn of business investment in major advanced economies such as the US, Japan, UK and Canada, and by continued strong growth in emerging Asian economies like China, India and Indonesia.<sup>3</sup>

- **International visitors to drive growth and visitor spend.** Overnight arrivals are forecast to grow by 5.8% per annum over the next ten years and estimated to contribute 72% of the overall growth in overnight tourism expenditure for Victoria.
- **Asia will continue to outperform other overseas markets with China being the primary inbound travel market.** The growing prosperity and consumer oriented middle class. Over the next ten years China is expected to account for 46% of Victoria's total international expenditure, and two-thirds overall international visitor growth during this time.

3. Tourism research Australia – Tourism Forecasts 2017

- **Modest increases in domestic tourism.** Australia's economic growth is expected to remain below its historical averages that will be reflected in total domestic tourism expenditure (daytrip and overnight).
- **Mid-week visitation.** Over the next three years the growing influence of the Baby Boomer (in their 60's and 70's) will be further realised, representing 25% of the population yet owning 55% of the nation's private wealth'.<sup>4</sup>

*It is largely expected that the impact of Marriage Equality legislation would lead to increased consumer activity in businesses that support expenditure on destination weddings and honeymoons, providing an economic boost to the region.*

## PRIMARY PURPOSE OF VISIT

There are three major reasons people travel:

- Visiting Friends and Relatives
- Holiday or Leisure Travel
- Business or conference

### Visiting Friends and Relatives

Visiting Friends and Relatives or VFR travellers, rely very heavily on word of mouth as a source of information in planning their trip. They assume that the friends or relatives that live in the destination are the best source of information to direct them in regards to places to visit, eat, shop, and stay. Hosts are therefore a critical source of information and have significant influence over the activities undertaken by the VFR traveller.<sup>5</sup>

This pattern of referral is observed in both Domestic and International visitor markets. VFR travel is significantly higher for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges than the Regional Victoria average, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Purpose of Visit: Tourism Research Australia, NVS & IVS - YE Mar 2017,

	YVDR	REGIONAL VIC	YVDR	REGIONAL
<b>Holiday or leisure</b>	41%	51%	33%	67%
<b>VFR</b>	45%	34%	60%	29%
<b>Business</b>	9%	10%	3.5%	4%
<b>Other</b>	5%	5%	5.5%	6%

<sup>\*</sup>note some respondents visit multiple regions on international itineraries for different reasons, therefore the percentage equals > 100%.

This presents a significant opportunity for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges to focus campaigns to Melbourne residents, including international students, with a view to attracting their VFR guests by encouraging residents to showcase the region to the friends and relatives, particularly mid-week.

4. McCrindle Research: Australia in 2020: A Snapshot of the Future

5. *The Relationship of VFR Travellers with Tourism Industries*, Elisa Rose Backer

## DOMESTIC VISITORS

### The Melbourne and Intrastate Market

Victoria has a population of 6 million with a growing population of 4.5 million living in greater Melbourne,<sup>6</sup> within one hour's drive of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges. The population of metropolitan Melbourne is expected to continue its growth to 7.9 million residents by 2051.<sup>7</sup>

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges received 5.3 million Domestic visitors (YE March 2017)<sup>8</sup>.

- 83% were Daytrip visitors
- 17% were Overnight visitors

Of the Overnight Visitors:

81% of visitors and 64% of total nights came Intrastate travel  
19% of visitors & 36% of total nights were from Interstate travel

### Key Interstate Travellers

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges received:

- 10% of overnight visitors from NSW, who contribute 11% of total visitor nights
- 4.6% of overnight visitors from QLD, who contribute 15% of total visitor nights

### Opportunities within the Domestic Market:

- Changing society
  - An aging population (over 65's expected to grow from 19% in 2020 to 26% by 2040<sup>9</sup>).
  - Single Income No Kids (SINKs) and Double Income No Kids (DINKs) are staying as SINKs and DINKs for longer, with more people delaying or deciding not to have family.
  - Australia's high migration rate means that Melbourne's population cultural and ethnic diversity is growing and changing. Victoria leads the Australia's growth, with some 28,000 people moving to Melbourne from overseas every year.
  - It is estimated there are 75,000 new (domestic and international migration) residents each year with no knowledge of Victoria beyond Melbourne.

## ATTRIBUTES OF KEY MARKET SEGMENTS

Using Roy Morgan's Helix Personas segmentation framework, Yarra Ranges Tourism has identified two key market segments: Leading Lifestyles and Metrotechs. These segments have been identified because of their logical fit with the region's product strengths, their ability to travel midweek and the opportunity to activate them using cost-effective, targeted marketing initiatives.

6. ABS, Australian Demographics Statistics Catalogue, 3101.0 March 2016, release Sept 2016

7. Plan Melbourne, 2017-2050 Strategy.

8. National Visitor Survey, YE Mar 2017, Tourism Research Australia

9. ABS, 4102.0 - Australian Social Trends, March 2009



## THE LIFESTYLE LEADER

The Lifestyle Leader is based on a mindset that cuts across ages and lifecycle groups. Leading Lifestyles acknowledge their good lot in life, but make no apologies for it – they studied hard, worked hard, developed in-demand skills and professional networks, invested smartly, donated to personally important charities and helped out family members. Lifestyle Leaders<sup>10</sup>:

- Represent around 4.5 million people, across all socio economic groups and make up 23% of Australia's population, aged 18 and over.
- Are progressive, curious, and socially and technologically active through a broad range of platforms.
- Adhere to and seek status.
- Follow and propagate trends and are more likely to share their experiences with and seek to influence their family and friends.
- Have more discretionary spending that allows them to travel more frequently (taking an average of 4.1 trips annually, greater than the Australian average of 3.9 trips).
- Provide a 21 per cent greater spend on travel per year (approximately \$4,058).
- They have an average household income of \$123k
- Are forward thinking and interested in discovering new experiences through travel.
- Are more likely than average to prefer to holiday in Victoria (18 per cent more likely than the average Australian, aged 18+).
- Are more attuned to the products and experiences that Victoria, and in particular regional Victoria, has to offer.
- From a geographic perspective, they predominantly live in the East and South East suburbs of Melbourne and are therefore are within easy reach of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.



## METROTECHS

Metrotechs are cultured, connected, clued in and cashed up, with action-packed social schedules and a desire to enjoy the freedom their upward mobility brings. This community has a conscience and is genuinely concerned about global and environmental issues, and they take good care of their health by exercising regularly and eating well. And they indulge in activities such as travel, fine dining and wine.<sup>11</sup>

- They represent around 2.5 million people and make up 13 per cent of Australia's population, aged 18 and over.
- Are young, single, well educated, inner city professionals
- Have an average household income of \$111k.

From a geographic perspective, they predominantly in the CBD and inner suburbs of Melbourne, clustered around North Melbourne, Carlton, Richmond and Albert Park, and are therefore within easy reach of the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.

The following primary and secondary market segments have been identified and nominated for focus within these personas for our marketing activities:

### Primary Market Segments:

- Melbourne DINKS (double income no kids)/ SINKS (single income no kids)** looking for easy escapes close to Melbourne, with 'bragability,' chasing quality food and wine experiences, festival and events and all things new. More likely to travel on weekends. There is an important role in continually market to this segment for repeat business to overcome any attitudes that they have 'done' the region.



10. Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016, Tourism Victoria, December 2013, page 14

11. <http://www.helixpersonas.com.au/browse/metrotech/overview>, Roy Morgan Research

- ii. **Melbourne Mid-life Households** looking for indulgent accommodation and places to relax, reflect and connect – time and space to do things their own way, with flexible options and price points. These empty nesters are looking for new experiences and have the flexibility to visit the region any day of the week.
- iii. **Melbourne Young Families** looking for time to enjoy with their young children without travelling long distances for the experience. Will also stay mid-week, if children are pre-school age.
- iv. **New Melburnians** – These new residents have limited knowledge of Victoria beyond Melbourne, which presents an enormous opportunity to target this market and introduce them to what the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges has to offer. First generation immigrants to Victoria who are seeking uniquely 'Australian' experiences to share with their family and friends. This target market wants outdoor experiences not afforded in their country of origin and they often travel as a family. Another benefit of this market is that they have different seasonality in their travel habits, which are associated with cultural holidays.

### Secondary Market Segments:

- i. **Regional Victoria Mid-life Households** looking for indulgent accommodation and places to relax, reflect and connect – time and space to do things their own way, with flexible options
- ii. **Interstate Market of NSW/QLD Lifestyle Leaders SINKS/DINKS AND Mid-Life Households** looking for escapes with quality food, wine and nature.

### Business Traveller Market

The Business Events industry is the highest yielding sector of the tourism industry, providing \$1.2 billion annually for the Victorian economy. This segment of travellers to the region has been growing consistently, as more companies seek to energise and recharge their workers in regional environments. Research conducted by the Business Events Council of Australia indicates this trend will continue.<sup>12</sup>

The strategic advantage of growing this market segment is based on the suitability of product through our venues, facilities and experiences for Business Travel. Most importantly it primarily yields mid-week visits and stays.

**Since 2013, Business Travel to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges has grown from some 5.5% (YE Mar 2013) to 9.1% (YE Mar 2017).**

The following primary and secondary market segments have been identified and nominated for focus within our Business Events marketing:

### Primary Market Segments:

- i. **Domestic business traveller** coming to the region for Conference or a Pre / Post Melbourne Conference overnight program or incentive<sup>13</sup> visit.
- ii. **Professional Conference Organisers** based in Melbourne and Sydney.

### Secondary Market Segments:

- i. **International Conference Organisers and Incentive Buyers.**

12. The Value of Business Events to Australia, Business Events Council of Australia, February 2015

13. Incentive travel is business-related travel that is designed to provide motivation or incentives to help businesspeople become more successful in their roles and is offered as a reward.



## International Traveller Market

Visit Victoria has identified key International markets under three categories: Strong Growth, Core Markets and Rest of World.

<b>Strong Growth</b>	China India Indonesia
<b>Core Markets</b>	Malaysia Singapore New Zealand UK USA
<b>Rest of World</b>	Hong Kong Germany Canada France Japan Taiwan

Visit Victoria forecast International expenditure is expected to provide 45% of growth in overnight tourism expenditure to Victoria to 2025. Due to the proximity to Melbourne and strong brand, the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges is one of the key regions that will attract international visitation, but the challenge is getting international dispersal beyond the gateway city of Melbourne for overnight stays.

It makes strategic sense for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges to align its marketing focus on Asia and New Zealand. An advantage of promoting to these markets is that they are more cost effective to reach key wholesalers and inbound tour operators than servicing the long haul destinations of the UK, Europe and USA, with our available resources.

In positioning our region for International visitation our competitive advantage remains our reputation of Food, Wine and Nature, but it is critically important that the region demonstrates its diversity for family activities and access to native fauna. Similarly, it is important to recognise the importance of providing itineraries that are not based around alcohol, due to the diversity of religious culture and custom.

The following primary and secondary market segments have been identified and nominated for focus within our marketing activities:

### Primary Market Segments:

- i. International visitors **visiting with friends and relative** members from Melbourne. Particularly, the new immigrant communities throughout Melbourne's East and South East.
- ii. **International Markets from Asia (China, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India) and New Zealand** visiting Australia who see the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges as an outstanding way to experience Australia through the region's great Wine, Food and Nature activities.

### Secondary Market Segments:

- i. **International Markets of United Kingdom, Europe and USA** all offer ongoing growth potential, with independent travellers likely to disperse into the regions for more than one night.





## REGIONAL PRODUCT ANALYSIS

### YARRA VALLEY

The Yarra Valley is identifiable by three main highways leading the visitor to experiences found on main by-ways or tucked away on picturesque country back roads.

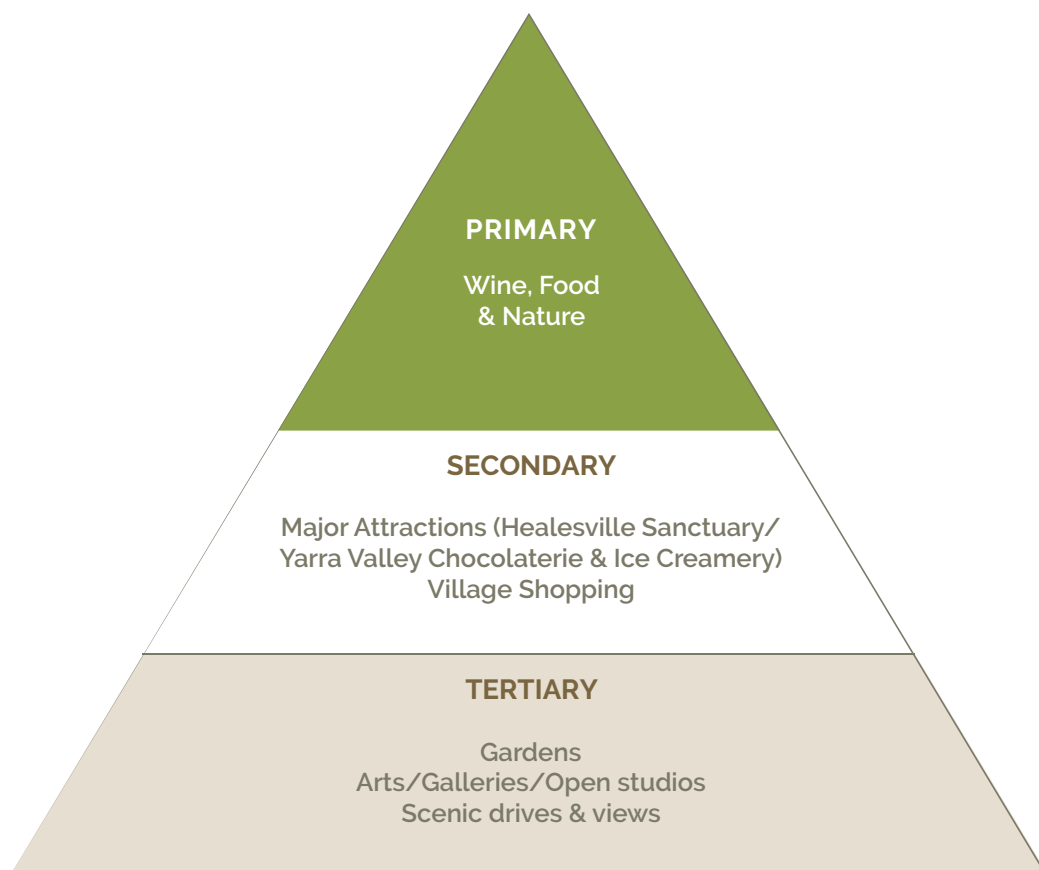
The Warburton Highway follows the Yarra River through farmland and smaller boutique wineries to Warburton where the waters run clear through natural rainforests.

The Melba Highway drive takes the visitor from Coldstream through farms and wineries to Yarra Glen and Dixons Creek, before it climbs the Great Dividing Range to Toolangi, Kinglake and surrounds.

While the Maroondah Highway takes the visitor through some of the big brand wineries to the largest town centre of the region, Healesville, and then through the scenic Black Spur to Marysville, Buxton and beyond.

Each Highway offers a strong itinerary base in its own right or and offers strong cross promotional options to lengthen stay.

### Product Strengths - Yarra Valley



“ Since the Mid-Week digital campaign, I have definitely noticed an increase in the 50+ demographic in my cafe Monday - Friday.”

EMILY,  
NANCY'S OF  
THE YARRA VALLEY

## Yarra Valley SWOT Analysis

***“Yarra Ranges Tourism aims to remain focused promoting the region's strengths, while working with industry and government to address the product opportunities and weaknesses”***

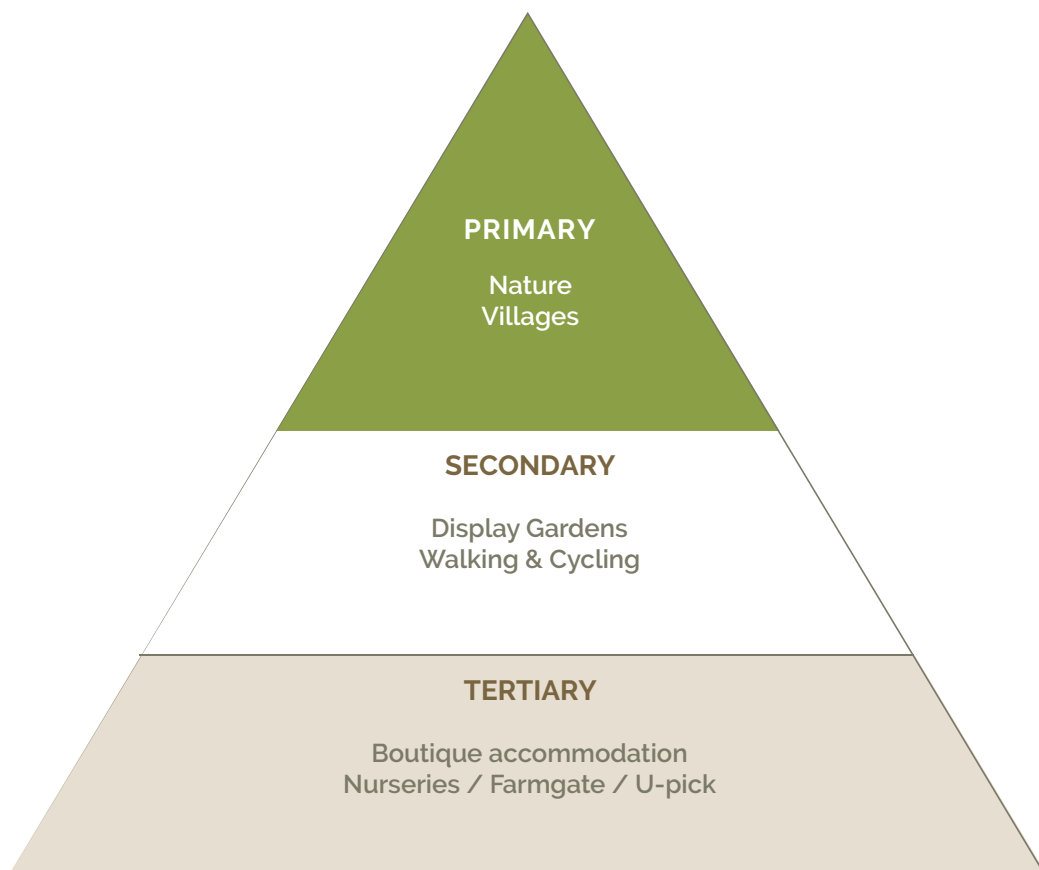
STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World class winery experience - well known big brand wineries</li> <li>• Variety of restaurants/café's – increasing number of well known chefs</li> <li>• Scenic valley dotted with wineries, backdrop of Great Dividing Range</li> <li>• Craft Cider and Ale</li> <li>• Hot Air Ballooning</li> <li>• Natural setting for Walking and Cycling</li> <li>• Well known major attractions</li> <li>• Significant Art Museum</li> <li>• Public transport access to start of the region – rail to Lilydale</li> <li>• Access to International airport – 1 hour</li> <li>• Romantic destination</li> <li>• Village appeal</li> <li>• Big nature walks, adventure activities</li> <li>• Scenic drives and views</li> <li>• Closest snow to Melbourne – Lake Mountain Alpine Resort and Mt Donna Buang</li> <li>• Quantity of accommodation venues available for small and large group capacities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boutique wineries – family owned and operated</li> <li>• New product for Cycling hub mountain biking and trail riding – Warburton</li> <li>• Growing awareness of Farm Gate and providores</li> <li>• Golf packaging in close proximity to one another, accommodation and wineries.</li> <li>• Regional Festivals and Events to provide urgency to visit – Food and Wine / Sport and Recreation in natural settings</li> <li>• Packaging of mid-week deals for accommodation and attractions</li> <li>• Activities for families both free and paid</li> <li>• Farm products and activities suited to Asian visitors - U Pick activities</li> <li>• Continued private investment to create further visitor experiences of products</li> <li>• Leveraging existing wine competitions to provide greater consumer activity (eg, James Halliday Chardonnay Challenge/ Yarra Valley Wine Show)</li> <li>• Aboriginal Cultural Tours</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller accommodation operators requiring a two night minimum</li> <li>• Perception as a premium or expensive wine region</li> <li>• Access to Melbourne makes it easy to return to city preventing overnight stays</li> <li>• Low awareness of 'plus one' experiences in addition to wine</li> <li>• Limited public transport beyond Lilydale railway</li> <li>• Limited transfer (ride sharing/taxi/hire) service at night</li> <li>• Lack of purchasable product/tours in natural environment – eco lodges / eco tours / private tours</li> <li>• Lack of farm stay product for Asian market</li> <li>• Lack of large accommodation within villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mornington Peninsula and other regions competing for Wine, Food, Farm Gate positioning.</li> <li>• Industry operators choosing not to collectively market, and go alone.</li> <li>• Accommodation not prepared to take bookings mid-week</li> <li>• Interstate food wine and regions such as Barossa, Margaret River, Hunter Valley growing in their appeal for the visitor experience and their events.</li> <li>• Continued strength of Melbourne in reputation for food, wine, culture, events, shopping and entertainment.</li> <li>• Extreme weather events</li> </ul>



## DANDENONG RANGES

The Dandenong Ranges is a set of low mountain ranges, the remains of an extinct volcano, that rise to 633 metres at Mount Dandenong, approximately 35 km east of Melbourne. In the early 1850's the region was a main source of timber for Melbourne and then became a place of respite and retreat for Melbourne's workers. Famous for the Puffing Billy Railway that meanders through the hillside, the area is also well known for its horticultural production. It is a well-known place to get back to nature and for a romantic getaway with its village shopping, extensive walking trails and display gardens.

### Product Strengths - Dandenong Ranges



“ A booked client answered my questionnaire:

Q: How did you hear about me?

A: The Visit Yarra Valley article I read.

Thanks again for looking out for me!”

RICK LISTON, YARRA VALLEY PHOTOGRAPHER

## Dandenong Ranges SWOT Analysis

*“Yarra Ranges Tourism aims to remain focused promoting the region’s strengths, while working with industry and government to address the product opportunities and weaknesses”*

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical and significant gardens</li> <li>• Natural settings for walking</li> <li>• Native fauna</li> <li>• Abundance of nurseries</li> <li>• Romantic destination</li> <li>• Access to National Parks, native forests, waterfalls, tall trees</li> <li>• Village Shopping</li> <li>• Well known attractions: Puffing Billy Railway/Sky High</li> <li>• Scenic drives and views</li> <li>• On and off road Cycling – variety of training terrains and climbs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Packaging with Penguins / Phillip Island</li> <li>• Festivals and Events growth</li> <li>• Garden Open Days</li> <li>• Nurseries working together</li> <li>• Tulip Festival expansion or other floral expos</li> <li>• Building on Farm Gate Trails and integrated experiences</li> <li>• Greater depth of Day Spa product linked to natural environment</li> <li>• Aboriginal Cultural Tours</li> </ul>
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception of being old fashioned</li> <li>• Smaller accommodation operators requiring a two night minimum</li> <li>• Limited capacity of accommodation – regularly full on weekends</li> <li>• Accommodation style not reflective of all target segments</li> <li>• Smaller number of quality contemporary food venues</li> <li>• Limited new product generating renewed interest and local competition</li> <li>• Limited public transport for visitors beyond rail access to Belgrave and Upper Ferntree Gully.</li> <li>• Reliant on car travel and car parking</li> <li>• Small number of events and markets and suitable venues</li> <li>• Limited large scale accommodation</li> <li>• Venues at Capacity</li> <li>• Limited transfer (ride sharing/taxi/hire) service at night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller number of tourism products compared to Yarra Valley</li> <li>• Lower product brand recognition</li> <li>• Accommodation not prepared to take bookings mid-week or for single night stays</li> <li>• Lack of private investment because of planning restrictions and local opinion concerned about the impact of tourism.</li> <li>• The continued strength of Melbourne in reputation for food, wine, culture, events, shopping and entertainment.</li> <li>• Extreme weather events</li> <li>• State investment and maintenance resources for National Parks</li> </ul>

## MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR GROWTH

These strategies for growth support the Marketing objectives for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges as identified in the Yarra Ranges Tourism Three Year Strategic Plan.

### 1. Build Brand Awareness

#### 1.1 *Promote the FIND YOUR SELF Brand Campaign as the overarching brand campaign for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges*

The key focus for Brand Awareness to our key target markets are:

<b>SINK's &amp; DINK's:</b>	Increase awareness of region through continuation of Find Yourself Campaign
<b>Mid Life Households:</b>	Focus on Conversion for mid week visitation
<b>Young Families:</b>	Increase awareness of region via school distribution and early infant communities
<b>First Generation Immigrants:</b>	Target appropriate cultural media publications of Melbourne

There is an immediate need to refresh the brand guidelines used by the organisation to visually present its creative material and collateral under the key messages of FIND YOUR SELF, [visityarravalley.com.au](http://visityarravalley.com.au) and [visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au)

Yarra Ranges Tourism has developed a range of Find Your Self calls to action that it uses in media images, video and banner assets that can be utilised for digital initiatives.

Around least 30% of the marketing budget will generally be utilised for the delivery of brand awareness outcomes, with the remainder focussed on tactical strategies.



Midweek in the Dandenong Ranges video  
Posted by Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Facebook.



**“ Successful  
tourism regions  
work together as  
allies to market  
the strengths of  
their local area.  
A united story  
always sells well.”**

**SIMON O'CALLAGHAN,  
CEO YARRA RANGES  
TOURISM**

### **Measuring Success:**

Yarra Ranges Tourism acknowledges that it is very difficult for it to directly measure the success of general branding activity, due to the high cost of surveying random consumers for product recall. It does however see that measures like increased website traffic, regional visitation numbers over time, search volume data and social brand listening as indicators of performance success.

#### **How can Industry get on board to support regional Branding?**

- Participate with Yarra Ranges Tourism as a Marketing Partner and create a powerful offering of visitor experiences that build your brand within the region.
- Develop appropriate 'deals' or 'value-add' offers for promotion to specific segments.
- Use #FINDYOURSELF #YarraValley #DandenongRanges in your social media posts.
- Offer your venue or experience for visiting journalists coordinated by Yarra Ranges Tourism.

#### **1.2 Partner with Visit Victoria's Wander Victoria campaign to increase brand exposure for the region**

The Visit Victoria campaign Wander Victoria, has been developed as a major destination marketing initiative to promote regional Victoria. It aims to inspire Victorians - particularly Melburnians - to take time out to rediscover and reconnect with Victoria's regions, advocating the simple pleasures and benefits of wandering through the diverse natural settings and experiences on offer.

The Campaign seeks to combat tourism leakage of the Victorian market choosing to travel interstate or overseas. It is targeting the lifestyle leaders who are progressive and aware of trends, seek cultural experiences, are socially connected and influence peers' opinions.

The key message of Wander Victoria is that Regional Victoria is the ideal place for an easy short break in nature. It allows you time to indulge your passions – to feel relaxed, enriched and invigorated.

There will be ongoing opportunities to for Yarra Ranges Tourism to partner with Visit Victoria on their campaigns to deliver stronger visitation for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges, leveraging these opportunities will rely on Industry providing suitable narrative, new and unique experiences, specials and packages for re-marketing.

#### **How can Industry get on board to support Wander Victoria?**

- Support Yarra Ranges Tourism in providing new content.
- List your business on visitvictoria.com, via Yarra Ranges Tourism State Marketing Package.
- Develop special offers and deals for specific campaigns.
- Use #wandervictoria and #YarraValley #DandenongRanges in your social media posts (and encourage your visitors to do the same).

### 1.3 **Engage our Visitors through storytelling**

#### a. **Create authentic and engaging content**

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges offers a rich culture and history and this provides an ideal opportunity for visitors to connect with the region in a meaningful way.

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges is full of interesting people with interesting stories to tell. By personalising the products operators are offering, visitors will feel more connected and engaged with their experiences and with the region, which will enhance the visitor experience, increase word of mouth promotions and encourage repeat visitation.

#### b. **Provide third party websites with rich content on our region**

When content is shared or published by a third party in an unpaid brand mention, it is known as 'earned media' and is an increasingly important way to reach target audiences as it gives the brand third-party credibility, which is viewed favourably by search engines.

Appropriate third-party content distribution also enables the brand to reach a wider audience by tapping into the third-party's followers.

#### **How can Industry get on board to engage visitors through story telling?**

- Develop special stories about the why and how behind the what of your tourism offering and share with Yarra Ranges Tourism and others to help cross promote your business.
- Showcase the personalities involved with your product including the artisans, makers and the lovers of the business who give it an edge.
- Regularly refresh your pitch to the visitor, and test with the market.

## 2. **Grow Mid-Week Overnight Visitation**

### 2.1. **Increase Business Events and Conferences in the region**

Work with industry partners to collaboratively market the region as a unique destination for:

- Small conferences ranging from 20 people through to 80+ delegates for overnight accommodation
- Pre and Post touring destination for conferences held in Melbourne
- Destination close to Melbourne to host incentives for corporations

Develop the tools to help promote the region including a dedicated website.

Host Business Event and Conference buyers to the region to showcase the conference facilities.

#### **How can Industry get on board?**

- Participate generously in business events familiarisations.
- Work collaboratively at trade shows to brand the region as a capable business events destination.
- Identify target industry segments and buyers of business events travel in the region.



**“Working collectively in region to attract the visitor is really important to us and we see great value in partnering with the activities of Yarra Ranges Tourism”**

**NADINE HUTCHINS,  
PUFFING BILLY  
RAILWAY**

## **2.2 Increase the mid-life household market segment from Melbourne**

The mid-life household group are empty nesters, their children are independent and they now have the time and the finances to get involved in life again. They are looking for new experiences and indulgent accommodation options and the majority are not tied down to weekends.

Undertake marketing campaigns to attract mid week escapes by Melburnians via print and digital media.

### **How can Industry get on board?**

- Work collaboratively with industry peers to create integrated mid-week package and deals that will attract mid-life householders.
- Invest in infrastructure to ensure venues are accessible.
- Build a regional culture that we are always open for business.

## **2.3 Increase International visitors to the region, leveraging the Go Beyond Melbourne touring route**

Target international markets that have higher preference to stay overnight in regional Victoria:

- UK
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- New Zealand
- USA
- China

Yarra Ranges Tourism will attend key travel events to showcase the region, develop a database of key distribution partners in the travel industry and endeavour to keep them informed of new product or product packages in the region.

Host international travel trade and media in the region to showcase the range of product and develop suggested itineraries for the industry to use as a guide.

Assist the industry in the region to service the needs of the international traveller and inform them of the distribution channels internationally.

Utilise 'VFR' Visiting Friends and Relatives based in Melbourne to 'showcase' the region to their international friends and relatives.

Work collaboratively with other regions to jointly market a touring route close to Melbourne, under the branding of 'Go Beyond Melbourne'. While in its infancy, longer term this may become the primary vehicle to drive international visitation to our region due to efficiencies, funding opportunities and potential market penetration.



## International visitors Go Beyond Melbourne



Established in 2016 Beyond Melbourne is a newly formed touring alliance developed by Visit Victoria and four participating regional tourism organisations: Geelong & The Bellarine Peninsula, Mornington Peninsula, Phillip Island and Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges.

The aim of this collective is to promote the touring and overnight stay opportunities within these regions to International Visitors, particularly the self-drive market. Touring and self-drive is a key product platform for Victoria, given the State's compact nature and diversity. Road trips are becoming increasingly popular with maturing international markets gaining new levels of confidence in their ability to self-drive.

Go Beyond Melbourne aim to break the 'Hub and Spoke' behaviours of travel, where international visitors base themselves in Melbourne City and then daytrip to the regions within close proximity. Building a narrative about the ability to arrive at Melbourne International Airport and then travel directly to a region spend a few nights before travelling across to the neighbouring region, forms the basis of the Go Beyond Melbourne marketing push.

### How can Industry get on board?

- Participate in our International Marketing Program.
- Work collaboratively with industry peers to create integrated packages and deals that will attract international visitors from different markets.
- Leverage our fresh food experiences such as U-Pick.
- Being aware of international holiday periods and cultural differences.
- Showcase native fauna in imagery.
- Develop you commissionable product pricing strategy.
- Support trade events or regional representation by Yarra Ranges Tourism/Go Beyond Melbourne that assists you international ready capabilities.

### 3. Provide our domestic target segments, living in Melbourne, with new reasons to visit

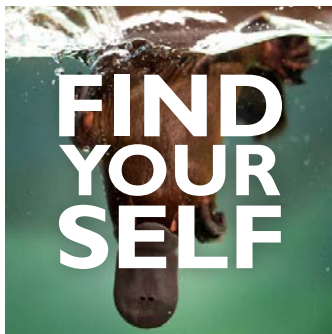
#### 3.1 Product development and packaging of our key product offerings

The then, Tourism Victoria 2012 Consumer research of Yarra Valley<sup>14</sup> indicated that some feel that they have done the Yarra Valley many years ago and that they know the product offering and don't need to come back. The region has evolved over the recent years with significant new restaurants opening along with new attractions and nature based activities. Having product diversity in a region offers new reasons to visit, encouraging repeat visitation, and also attracts new target segments.

The key product offerings are as follows:

- **Wine** – 70 + cellar doors with increasing number of cider & ale breweries and distilleries. There are a number of trails offered for the visitor currently including: The Coldstream Trail, James Halliday Hand Picked Yarra Valley, Cider & Ale Trail and Melba 'Alternative Taste' Trail.

14. Tourism Victoria – Yarra Valley  
Positioning Research, 28 September  
2012



- **Food** – restaurants/cafés in wineries and other scenic locations or villages of the region, plus farmgate experiences, providores. The Coldstream Trail, Farmgate Trail
- **Nature based activities in our natural assets** – such as walking and cycling trails. A number of trails have been developed showcasing our public natural places including: Scenic Drives, Best Picnic Places, Best Views, Cool Climate Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges
- **Villages** – arts & culture, food and wine, shopping, produce
- **Key attractions** – Healesville Sanctuary, Puffing Billy, YV Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery and SkyHigh Mt Dandenong all attract significant primary visitation to the region and have the ability to leverage visits to other venues and attractions.
- **Festivals and Events** that strengthen our brand and draw people to the region, the opportunity is for these events to extend their offering into mid-week.
- **Accommodation Escapes** – relax and unwind in a picturesque setting

#### *Itinerary Development to showcase 'Plus One' more activity*

Yarra Ranges Tourism is committed to working with industry partners to develop product suitable for specific market segments. This product development focuses on the development of trails and works best with the formation of short term industry working groups.

An example of product developed with Industry groups include:

- James Halliday Hand Picked Yarra Valley
- Cool Climate Gardens of Dandenong Ranges
- Coldstream Trail
- Top views
- Cider & Ale Trail
- Business Events
- Farmgate Trail
- U Pick Trail
- Top picnic spots
- Top scenic drives
- Family friendly activities
- Cider and Ale Trail
- Art Lives Here

The next generation of these trails is to see Industry working together to create integrated packages for purchase online and through tour operators the delivery value and unique experience.

### **Product Gaps Identified**

Yarra Ranges Tourism has identified product gaps in the region that would further drive overnight visitation.

- Accommodation
  - Eco Lodges in nature
  - Farm stay or on-farm accommodation
  - Group accommodation within villages
  - Multi room accommodation in Dandenong Ranges (10+ rooms)
- Nature Based Experiences and Tours
  - Private touring off the beaten track, small groups, for visitors to get close to nature/wildlife, have quality food and wine experiences in exceptional natural locations – not often visited, offering private guiding and personalised interpretation.



- High Value – Food and Wine experiences and special food events
  - Special matched menu evenings showcasing local food and drink
  - Dinner and guest speakers and/or entertainment at seated venues
- Integrated Packages selling a more complete experience, or 'Plus One':  
Eg, Cultural performance, dinner and accommodation.

### How can Industry get on board?

- Work collaboratively with industry peers to create integrated mid-week or off-peak packages and deals that will attract mid-life householders.
- Invest in their infrastructure to ensure venues are accessible and contemporary.
- Delivery of exemplary customer service that wins the hearts and minds of visitors.
- Develop new trails of complimentary or like minded experiences.
- Contribute content, both written and visual (imagery and video).



### 3.2 Attracting new festivals and events that address off-peak travel

Major and business events are a critical component of Visit Victoria's wider strategy to raise awareness and increase visitation to Victoria's regions.<sup>15</sup>

Tourism Research Australia data shows that events are key drivers of visitation to regional destinations, with:<sup>16</sup>

- 87% of Australians travelled domestically in the last two years.
- 56% visited a regional destination.
- Almost one-quarter of Australians have been to at least one event in a regional area in the last two years.
- Respondents attended an average of three events, which was largely consistent across different demographic groups and for visitors from capital cities and regional areas.
- Event goers are likely to attend more than one event, which provides opportunities for crosspromotion using databases and direct marketing.
- The most popular events were:
  - Food and wine
  - Music related
  - Garden and botanical
  - Sport (as a spectator)
  - Art exhibitions.

The Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges core tourism strengths align well with these event types and, with its accessibility to Melbourne, the region is perfectly positioned to capture visitors through the development of a range of events. Although it needs to be recognised that regional events need to develop a stronger reputation with the consumer. Our major regional competitor in this remains Melbourne City who owns this space as the leader for visitation.

The \$20 million Regional Events Fund 2016-17 to 2019-2020 being delivered through Visit Victoria. This provides a significant short term capability to work strategically as a region to attract and develop new large-scale events that will achieve events that genuinely impact visitor numbers, extending length of stay and spend.

15. *Victoria's Regional Tourism Strategy 2013-2016*. Tourism Victoria, December 2013, page 20

16. *Events: Drivers of Regional Tourism (Summary)*. Tourism Research Australia, August 2014, page 4

## Yarra Ranges Tourism Event Attraction Strategy

Yarra Ranges Tourism launched a Yarra Ranges Tourism Event Attraction Strategy in February 2015. The Key Recommendations were divided into the two regions:

### Yarra Valley

- Establish a signature food and wine event in the region
- Create a benchmark Balloon festival
- Develop a arts and culture event, possibly involving the history of Coranderrk
- Develop a cycling event, utilising the resources of the Warburton region

### Dandenong Ranges

- Expand on the success of the Tesselaar Tulip Festival and develop a Spring Bud Burst Festival
- Develop a Cherry Blossom Day
- Writers Festival
- Showcase the significant display gardens

The Yarra Ranges Council has supported Yarra Ranges Tourism with funding stream to attract events that would generate significant visitor arrivals to the region. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for event attraction sponsorship via Yarra Ranges Tourism, with a total pool annually of \$50,000. These grants are to assist in the development and marketing of events.

Yarra Ranges Tourism prioritises support to events that target our prime target markets and the identified opportunity areas. It also can provide in-kind marketing support for events utilising its database assets and digital platforms to connect with visitors.

Longer term it is expected that events will grow their offering to extend length of stay beyond one day experiences if they are to seek funding support.

### How can industry get on board?

- Work collaboratively with any events hosted in the region that are seeking to showcase regional food and produce at the event venue.
- Create reasons and offers for event patrons to return to the region to visit your business.
- Volunteer time at events as regional ambassadors.
- Help sponsor incoming major events where possible.

### 3.3 *Create a connection with first generation Melburnians about the opportunities in the region for their Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)*

Leveraging the region's direct and neighbouring residents for VFR travel needs to consider ongoing ethnic change happening within Melbourne's Outer East/South East. This includes people on student visa's and those New Zealand do not need to be granted residency.

The areas of Melbourne Outer East that continue to see the largest increases in cultural diversity are the local government areas of:<sup>17</sup>

- City of Monash: China, India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.



- City of Casey: India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, China, Philippines.
  - City of Whitehorse: China, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.
- Secondary to the above the areas of Maroondah are noted for their Burmese and Indian communities, while Manningham for China, Malaysia and Iran.

In marketing to these communities it is key that the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges forms an authentic relationship, that is welcoming and ongoing, with the first generation immigrants before they develop alternative behaviour patterns and travel traditions of their own that does not include travel to our region. We want the New Melburnians to have the same brand awareness of the region as the existing domestic resident population.

#### How can Industry get on board?

- Create specific events and festivals catering to specific ethnic groups.
- Undertake relevant cultural diversity training to understand relevant customs and practice.
- Collectively work with industry peers to cross promote suitable itineraries in relevant cultural media (print and digital).
- Showcase cultural diversity in promotional imagery and video.

#### 4. Delivering a leading edge digital platform for online information promotion and marketing, and sales conversion

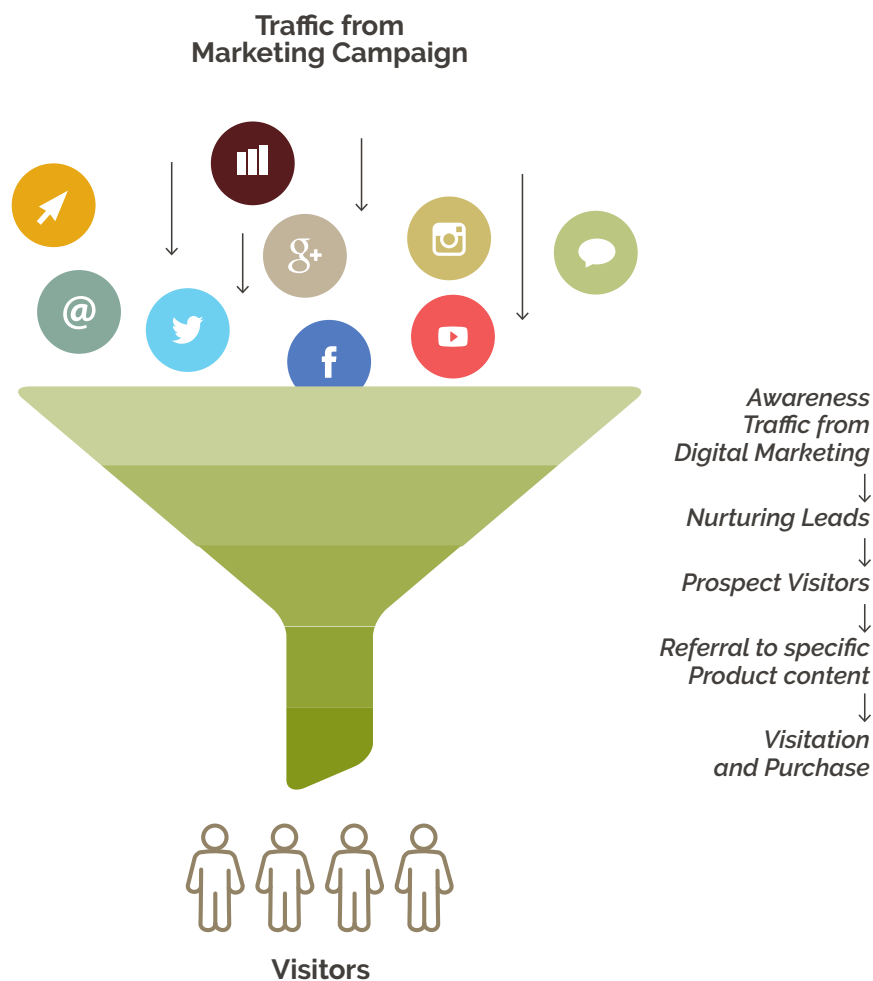
Yarra Ranges Tourism has developed a three year Digital Action Plan that guides our ongoing digital infrastructure development, resourcing and online promotion.

##### 4.1 Inbound Marketing (Digital)

An effective digital inbound marketing strategy that focuses on creating quality content attracts visitors the official regional websites to encourage dispersed visitation, itineraries and sales (either online or at venue), this is achieved through:

- Quality content about the region to encourage new and repeat visitors to the website in new product segment areas not well serviced with visitor information, e.g. weddings, walks, riding, drives.
- Developing primary Search Engine Optimisation (SEO), secondary SEO and tertiary SEO keyword strategies that are tracked and matched to key products and experiences in the region.
- Search Engine Marketing (SEM), that generates online awareness, attract online visitors, offers valuable content supported by call-to-action strategies that help convert leads to sales.
- Encouraging visitors to explore more online content to book online for accommodation, tours and attractions.
- Personalisation of content and messages to visitors through targeted e-communication and using tools like Online Chat.
- Building an active and engaged audience through effective use of digital channels including social media and website.
- Developing opportunities to monetise products for online sales that are unique and local to the region, creating instant conversion and commitment to visit.

<sup>17</sup> <http://blog.id.com.au/2011/population/demographic-trends/migration-victoria/>



#### 4.2 Digital Infrastructure for the future

Maintain optimum digital platforms and data management tools that ensure the Official Regional Websites maintain high ranking positions for key search terms, user experience and engagement, including:

- Multi-lingual communication capacity
- Development of online tools to support the visitor journey and access to information
- Analytics analysis to inform digital infrastructure development, maintenance user experience

#### How can Industry get on board?

- Develop content for sharing and promotion including blogs, imagery and video.
- Up-skill in tourism and travel digital applications.
- Regularly update and refresh online content on the regional websites.
- Service online chat and feedback from travel rating sites.
- Develop an about the region page on you business website and provide links to the official regional websites [visityarravalley.com.au](http://visityarravalley.com.au) and [visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au).
- Share and like social media posts about the region.

**5. Delivering effective communication to industry Partners that promote its engagement in collective marketing activities.**

Established to provide agile marketing and promotion for the Yarra Valley and Dandenong for its funding partners, Yarra Ranges Tourism delivers an ongoing program of the opportunities for partnership. The effectiveness of which is greatly enhanced by high levels of industry engagement.

It achieves this through communicating with industry operators through a range forums including one-on-one, workshops and forums, formal invitation, annual prospectus of opportunities and ongoing e-news updates.

The success of this communication needs to consider the audiences varied communication styles and preferences in its delivery of information, to achieve the suitable disruption levels to ensure it is be absorbed and understood by Industry.

**How can Industry get on board?**

- Encourage industry peers to at least participate as 'Keep In Touch' partner with Yarra Ranges Tourism, so they can learn more about regional marketing opportunities.
- Keep up to date by reading Yarra Ranges Tourism Industry updates.
- Respond to surveys and provide feedback on how your business is going and future opportunities to grow the Visitor Economy.
- Service online chat and feedback from travel rating sites.
- Develop an about the region page on you business website and provide links to the official regional websites [visityarravalley.com.au](http://visityarravalley.com.au) and [visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au).

**6. Deliver ongoing tactical marketing activities, through a dedicated team, resourced to facilitate marketing outcomes that support the growth of the Visitor Economy in the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges.**

## TACTICAL INITIATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following tactical activities are a representation of the ongoing operational marketing delivered each day by Yarra Ranges Tourism:

**1. Drive visitation to our websites for information, referral and conversion**

Yarra Ranges Tourism operate two major regional websites:

- [visityarravalley.com.au](http://visityarravalley.com.au)
- [visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au)

We also manage two other websites with industry group support:

- [visitwarburton.com.au](http://visitwarburton.com.au)
- [yarravalleybusinessevents.com.au](http://yarravalleybusinessevents.com.au)

Our two regional websites are the source of all visitor information, showcasing our partner's products and experiences, trails, itinerary planner, and general information about the region. The websites offer the ability for the visitor to book product directly from the website, or click through to the operators own website for direct conversion.



#FINDYOURSELF #WANDERVICTORIA#DANDENONGRANGES  
#YARRAVALLEY #MIDWEEK #FINDYOURSELF #WANDERVICTORIA  
#DANDENONGRANGES #YARRAVALLEY #MIDWEEK  
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The content on the website is used for storytelling and providing insights into the regional experiences.

The website incorporates video and imagery to promote high impact of visitor experiences.

Bloggers stories both from the media and also the industry is incorporated for native content and keeping the website fresh.

Ongoing review and development ensures the platforms perform at an optimum level for influence travel decisions.

**2. Communicating our Activities to our Industry Partners and Stakeholders**

Ongoing stakeholder communication ensures that our Industry is up to date with the latest in regional tourism and encourages operators to take full advantage of collective marketing activities.

This is supported by the maintenance of our Corporate website [yarraranges tourism.com.au](http://yarraranges tourism.com.au) and regular e-communication.

**3. Gather Visitor Data and Research**

Develop ongoing market research that informs the region on the demographics of our regional visitation, emerging trends in travel and target segments for future growth. The predominant statistics are sourced from Tourism Research Australia.

**4. Visitor Servicing – consistently branded throughout the region**

**Providing information within region and Partner buy-in opportunities**

**Website:** Ensure visitors are aware of the regional websites to access from their own devices while in the region. Embellish features on the website that will enhance length of stay such as trails and itineraries, and specific calls to action to book.

**Maps:** Production of the Official Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges touring map annually. The core distribution of these maps are at Melbourne Airport, Melbourne's Federation Square and Hotel concierges as well as at operator venues across the region. The maps are also distributed to Visitor Information Centres along core tourist routes in Victoria.

**Township Signs:** Yarra Ranges Tourism maintains 19 Township Information Signs across the region, which highlights regional, local and township maps to assist visitor way finding to key tourism products.

**Visitor Nodes:** relevant points of self-service for access to relevant visitor collateral under one branding scheme that is maintained throughout the region.

**Assisting industry to provide quality service:** via training and workshops opportunities that encourage industry operators to promote length of stay and 'plus one' visitation to the visitor.

**5. Developing Assets for use in marketing**

**Increasing databases for direct consumer marketing via e-communication in the areas of:**

- Consumer database, promoting an ongoing relationship with those looking to travel to the region (3-Ways to Find Your Self, Seasonal updates)
- What's On, promoting a weekly update of activities in the region used for visitor servicing and promoting immediate travel ideas
- Industry 'Keep in Touch' database, promoting Yarra Ranges Tourism activities and collective marketing opportunities





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- International Trade database, promoting regional product, trails and itineraries to agents and wholesalers
- Media database, promoting specific stories for public relations and editorial coverage
- Schools database, promoting family friendly activities

**Video and Photography Production**

Work with the industry to create short promotional videos of individual products or trails for digital promotion through social media.

Undertake photography shoots to refresh imagery of specific experiences and products.

**Increase social media followers and engagement, currently:**

- Facebook 52,000
- Instagram 9,000
- Monitor the ongoing trends and uses of social media platforms as a vehicle to promote tourism

**6. Understanding market requirements and trends**

Work closely with Visit Victoria and other regional tourism boards to keep abreast of visitor trends and visitor arrivals and required market research where required.

**7. Undertake Public Relations activities to gain exposure via media**

Host visiting journalists to the region to gain exposure in their publications (TV, Print, Radio, Digital).

Collect a database of relevant media and keep them informed of new products and packages.

Promotion of products and events on Social Media – over 40 posts per month primarily via Facebook and Instagram.

**8. Domestic Advertising and Marketing**

**Develop advertising campaigns** to market the variety of products and packages in the region to target market segments.

**Undertake E-Newsletters to our databases.**

**9. Target International visitors through the traditional channels of travel agents and wholesalers, and media contacts.**

**Participate in trade events** within Australia and Internationally to showcase product within the region and assist the travel industry in ways they can package products and create itineraries, plus give them the tools such as video content and images that they can utilise in their own marketing efforts to attract visitors to the region.

**Assist the Chinese market**, the core growth market, with ease of finding information by translating relevant information on our regional websites into Chinese, creating fact sheets in Chinese and training the industry on basic servicing of Chinese visitors.

**Work closely with Visit Victoria** offices around the world to provide updates on new products and experiences and assist in hosting international trade and media in the region.

**Undertake E-Newsletters** to International database with product updates.

**Develop trails for self drive** of Free/Fully Independent Travellers or FIT's.

**10. Work with industry to attract Business Events and Conferences**

Maintain a dedicated website to showcase venues, services and attractions that would attract the business sector.

Host Conference Organisers to the region to showcase products and services.

Participate in trade events targeting conference buyers.

Grow a database of qualified leads of prospect Conference Organisers to participate in hosted familiarisations.

**11. Work with the industry to develop product packages and trails**

Provide new reasons to visit by creating new packages or trails such as the Coldstream Trail, U Pick Trail and Family Friendly Trail.

Work and lead various industry working groups to develop ongoing marketing initiatives.

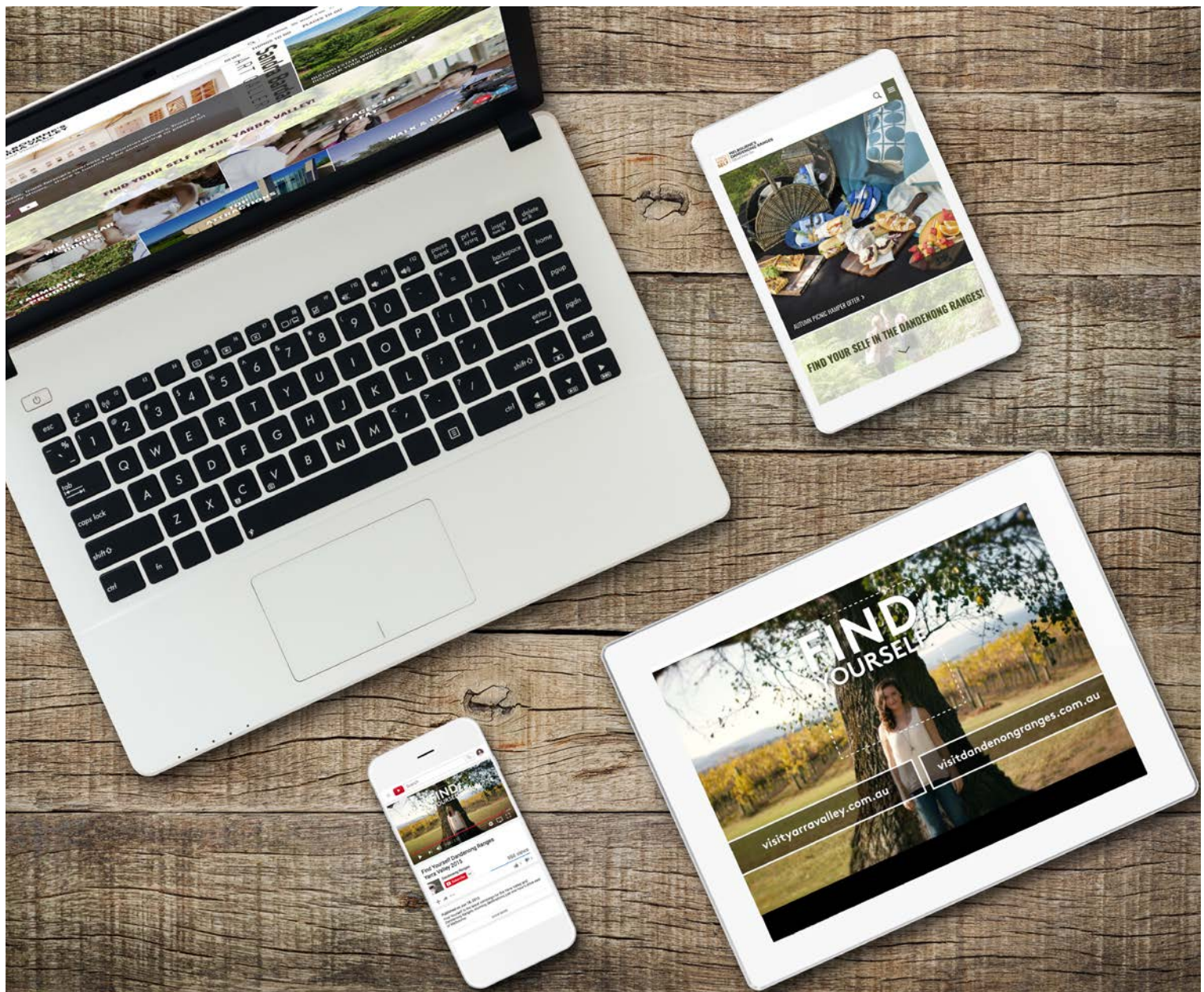
**12. Attract events to the region that will bring significant visitors**

Using the Event Attraction Strategy (2015), work with industry, promoters and event management companies to assist them in delivering events targeting our key market segments and aligned to the opportunities of the region. This includes managing a sponsorship grant program, and providing advice to Visit Victoria.

Market the events as key visitation drivers to our target segments and promotion added itinerary and stay options.

*Yarra Ranges Tourism values the industry's support in collective marketing to bring visitation to the region. The greater the support from industry, the greater the opportunities to market the region.*

*Industry participation includes hosting visiting journalists and trade representatives, participation in groups to develop product, attending workshops and seminars to improve services to the visitor and continuing to support Yarra Ranges Tourism through our marketing partnerships.*



For an appointment to discuss your business opportunities with Yarra Ranges Tourism, please contact us

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## JUST WANT TO KEEP IN TOUCH?

Subscribe to our industry database to receive industry and consumer e-newsletters, and notification of industry events (pay to attend). [yarrarangestourism.com.au](http://yarrarangestourism.com.au)

## REGIONAL CONSUMER WEBSITES:

[visitdandenongranges.com.au](http://visitdandenongranges.com.au)  
[visityarravalley.com.au](http://visityarravalley.com.au)

## SISTER WEBSITES:

[visitwarburton.com.au](http://visitwarburton.com.au)  
[yarravalleybusinessevents.com.au](http://yarravalleybusinessevents.com.au)



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