



Australian Government

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE**



Colac Otway  
SHIRE

# COLAC

DESTINATION ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2025  
FEBRUARY 2020



GREAT OCEAN ROAD  
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the Colac Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd as part of the strategic planning for the region's visitor economy development.

The process brought together representatives from stakeholders that benefit from the visitor economy; local government, industry and the community to develop a plan. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing Colac as a visitor destination and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered would increase Colac's competitiveness.

Specifically, we would like to thank the people who actively participated in the plan development process:

## Facilitator

Wayne Kayler-Thomson

## Industry, Council and Community Representatives

Bronwyn Thomas	Cr Stephen Hart	Michael Andrews
James Myatt	Brad McLeod	Ian Seuren
Robyn Barrand	Cr Chris Potter	Debbie Frizon
Adrian Healey	Michael Greene	Cr Brian Crook
Cr Jason Schram	Anthony McDonald	Kane Leerson
Lionel Sexton	Andrew Nosedo	Ernie Andres

Images courtesy of Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism.



## INTRODUCTION

The visitor economy is driven by all visitors, not just leisure tourists, attracted to destinations and experiences which meet their interests and needs.

The Great Ocean Road region is a collective of destinations and experiences of international and national significance attracting over 6 million visitors each year. Strong growth is forecast for the region but this is challenged by relatively low levels of visitor spend and dispersal.

The Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road Region Visitor Economy 2015-2025 provides the strategic direction to address the challenges and opportunities to maximise the economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits from this vibrant global growth industry.

However, to successfully capture the benefits of the visitor economy, the destinations of the region need to also plan and take action.

To facilitate this, Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd has implemented a Destination Action Planning process that engages local stakeholders, to consider and prioritise affordable and achievable actions. These actions with collaborative leadership, will maximise the value of the visitor economy to the destination and in turn benefit the region.

This Plan identifies strategic actionable priorities for the next three years and will be reviewed and renewed on an annual basis. The Plan will also provide direct input to the Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Destination Action Plan sets out the vision and aspirations for the visitor economy of Colac over the next three to five years.

## TOP PRIORITIES

### Visitor Economy Management

1. Develop a governance structure to support delivery of a collaborative and cohesive approach to growing the return from the visitor economy of Colac.

### Visitor Economy Development

2. Develop a vision and brand positioning for Colac and to inform product development & infrastructure priorities.

### Visitor Economy Development – Public Infrastructure

3. Prioritise public investment to maximise delivery of the vision for Colac.

### Visitor Economy Development – Private Investment Attraction – Accommodation

4. Support the development of a range of accommodation to cater for target markets.

### Visitor Economy Development – Investment Attraction – Attractions and Services

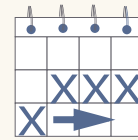
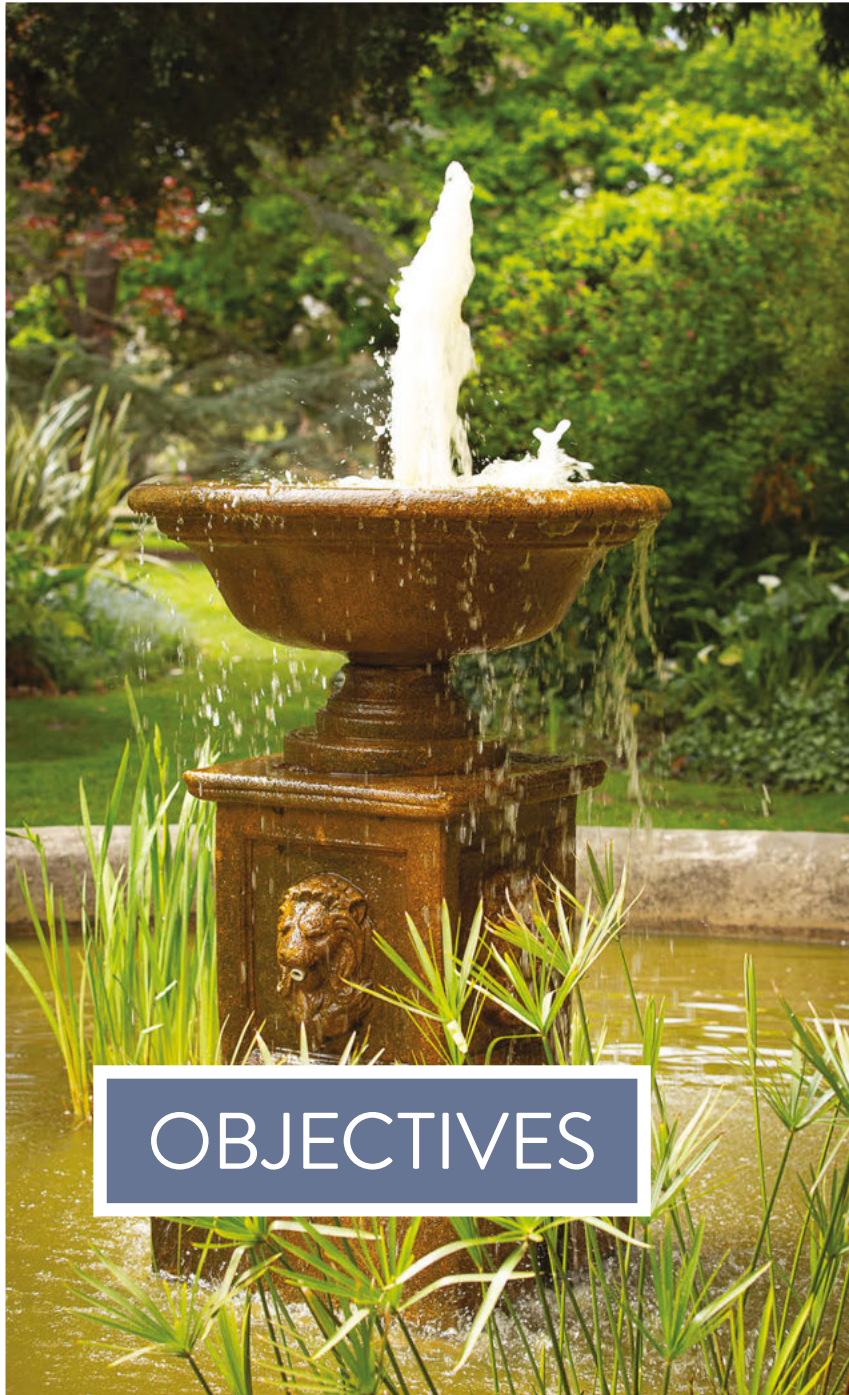
5. Support the development of a range of products and services to deliver the vision and build Brand Colac.

### Industry Development

6. Prepare an industry development program that builds business professionalism and cooperation to improve the service offering to visitors.

### Marketing

7. Develop a marketing strategy to underpin brand Colac.



Increase length of stay



Increase satisfaction



Increase expenditure



Increase dispersal – geographical, seasonal and mid-week



Industry & community engagement

The objectives for the Colac visitor economy are:

1. To increase visitor length of stay
2. To increase visitor numbers
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction plus
6. To leverage the iconic appeal of the Great Ocean Road for both domestic and international visitors.

# OUR VISION

Colac is a destination positioned as a hub for visitors to the Otways and the Great Ocean Road region due to its geography, variety of experiences, excellent transport connections and a welcoming community.

There is a rich offering of experiences with produce sourced from the Otways and Volcanic Plains, cultural experiences drawn from the same landscape and a diverse range of accommodation, attractions, shopping and activities in a country city environment.

The lake is the heart of the community for locals and for visitors to enjoy recreational activities while staying in the destination or passing through on their Great Ocean Road journey.



# OUR VALUES



Good service  
Respectful  
Positive  
Friendly  
Attractive & Clean  
Welcoming  
high Quality  
Open For Business

Culturally Aware  
Knowledgeable  
Integrity  
Genuine  
Inviting  
Happy  
Environmentally sustainable  
Ready for investors  
Proud  
Collaboration  
Reliable  
Caring  
Resilient  
Honest  
Trusting  
Diverse  
Leaders  
Generous  
Interactive  
Dynamic  
Supportive  
Entrepreneurial  
Investor ready  
Creative  
Inclusive  
Can Do Attitude  
Engaged  
Innovative  
Professional



## OUR CHALLENGES

The group discussed a range of challenges that impact on the capacity for growing the return from the visitor economy for Colac including:

- Creating a culture of collaboration and communication across businesses and community
- Combatting negative perceptions of Colac
- Challenges of planning for economic development and growth – zoning/overlays etc.
- A breadth and depth of visitor infrastructure, experiences and events
- Parking and public amenity
- Business – community communication
- Marketing efficiency
- Technology uptake/impact
- Balancing environment with tourism development
- Fostering a strategic and collective approach by businesses
- Creating a culture of quality visitor servicing
- Limited transport and connectivity including road conditions
- Strategic risk management
- Political support
- Lack of quality and consistent leadership
- Cooperative business community supportive of each other
- Emergency Management Planning
- Willingness for change.

The following priorities were identified for action:

- The limited accommodation offering – quality, quantity and diversity of accommodation to cater to a range of visitor markets
- The long term viability of Lake Colac
- Quality of current public and private infrastructure: streetscape, entrances, galleries, toilets, parking, Lake and Surrounds, walking/cycling trails, lake as activity hub.





## OPPORTUNITIES

The group discussed a range of opportunities to support growing the return from the visitor economy for Colac including:

- Development of a diverse mix of new accommodation
- Growing population of Greater western Melbourne and west of Geelong
- Growing skilled workforce to meet future needs
- Influence longer stays and/or repeat visitation – capturing existing visitors/traffic
- Replenishing the water supply to Lake Colac
- The aspirational concept of an annual fishing/camping/boating expo on lake
- Industrial and agricultural history – storytelling experience
- Investment strategy supported by community
- Transport services and links – additional trains
- Develop unique retail precinct and experience
- Business tourism – lifestyle – incubator spaces
- Develop Arts community – exposure/gallery/facility

The following priorities were identified for action:

- Development of the lake precinct as a visitor and community node
- Positioning Colac as a major gateway/hub for exploring the region and its surrounds
  - Great Ocean Road
  - Otways
  - Volcanic Lakes & Plain's
  - Great South Coast
- Creating a community and destination that delivers an authentic regional Victorian experience by:
  - Creating open spaces and product that celebrate history, culture, the environment and active lifestyles. Fostering and growing a vibrant food and beverage sector
  - Sustainable population growth.



## EXISTING PLANS AND PROJECTS CONSIDERED

- Colac Otway Shire Economic Development Strategy 2019-24
- Accommodation Study 2019-20
- Colac 2050 Growth Plan
- Council Plan 2017-21
- Lake Colac Foreshore Masterplan
- Memorial Square Masterplan
- CBD and Entrances Project
- Growing Adventure Tourism in the Barwon South West Trails Strategy
- Colac Otway Shire Active Transport Strategy 2013-23 (Parts 1 & 2)
- Creative Colac Otway Arts and Culture Strategy 2018-22
- Colac Otway Shire Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-21
- Colac Otway Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan 2018
- Colac Otway Shire Environment Action Plan.

## SUCCESS FACTORS – DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Industry research has established that the following factors are present in successful destinations that are achieving the above objectives. The workshop participants considered these factors relative to Colac in reaching consensus on the priority strategies and actions. A focus on continuous improvement of all these factors will contribute to the competitive growth and sustainability of the visitor economy of Colac.

CHARACTERISTICS	RATING*	COMMENTS
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	4.5	Needs attention
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5.7	Collaboration with GORRT essential
3. Local Government support	5.1	Good, with opportunity to strengthen
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	4.7	Needs priority attention
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	5	Not voted upon – in progress
6. Consistent visitor service excellence	3.6	Must be addressed
7. Research driven cooperative marketing	4	Collaboration with GORRT required
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	3.4	Needs priority attention
9. Risk management plans in place	5	Not voted upon
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	3.9	Important for long term success

\*Ratings are on a scale from 0-10



# ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for all stakeholders in the Colac Visitor Economy to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, a Colac Visitor Economy Taskforce (CVET) will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that CVET will consider and review actions progressively. One key consideration will be the availability and securing of resources to progress the implementation of the Plan in a timely manner. It may also be appropriate and necessary to involve other community organisations and advocate for funding for prioritised projects.

The Plan does not commit any organisation to the actions proposed, however, it is a guide to pursuing priorities and actions which will make a positive difference to the objectives above.

The priority actions have been assigned a KPI priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

**HIGH** within one to two years

**MEDIUM** within two to three years

**LOW** within three to five years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by the Implementation Leadership Group which GORRT will coordinate. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan.

## **CVET Organisations**

Colac Otway Shire Council , Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Pty Ltd , Colac & District Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Otway Harvest Trail, Colac Otway Arts Trail , Rotary Club of Colac, Rotary Club of Colac West, and Colac Lions Club.

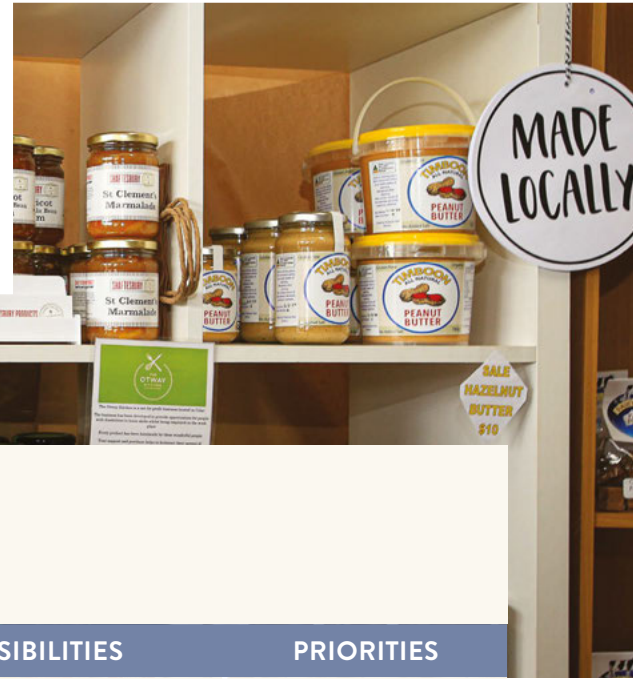


## VISITOR ECONOMY MANAGEMENT

### PRIORITY 1

Develop a governance structure to support delivery of a collaborative and cohesive approach to growing the return from the visitor economy of Colac.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a Colac Visitor Economy Task Force to lead the implementation of this Plan</li> <li>▪ Establish Terms of Reference</li> <li>▪ Appoint stakeholder representatives and second expertise</li> <li>▪ Launch the Plan.</li> </ul>	GORRT – Secretariat	High
2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an industry &amp; community engagement and communication plan to foster a deeper understanding of the value of the visitor economy and the purpose of the Action Plan</li> <li>▪ Consider formal launch and/or socialisation of Plan.</li> </ul>	CVET/ GORRT	High
3. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify year 1 priority projects and prepare a project plan for each               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish specific objectives, actions, timelines and responsibilities to deliver the projects</li> <li>▪ Promote the projects and seek required resources</li> <li>▪ Engage with key stakeholders for support</li> <li>▪ Communicate progress regularly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	CVET/ GORRT	High

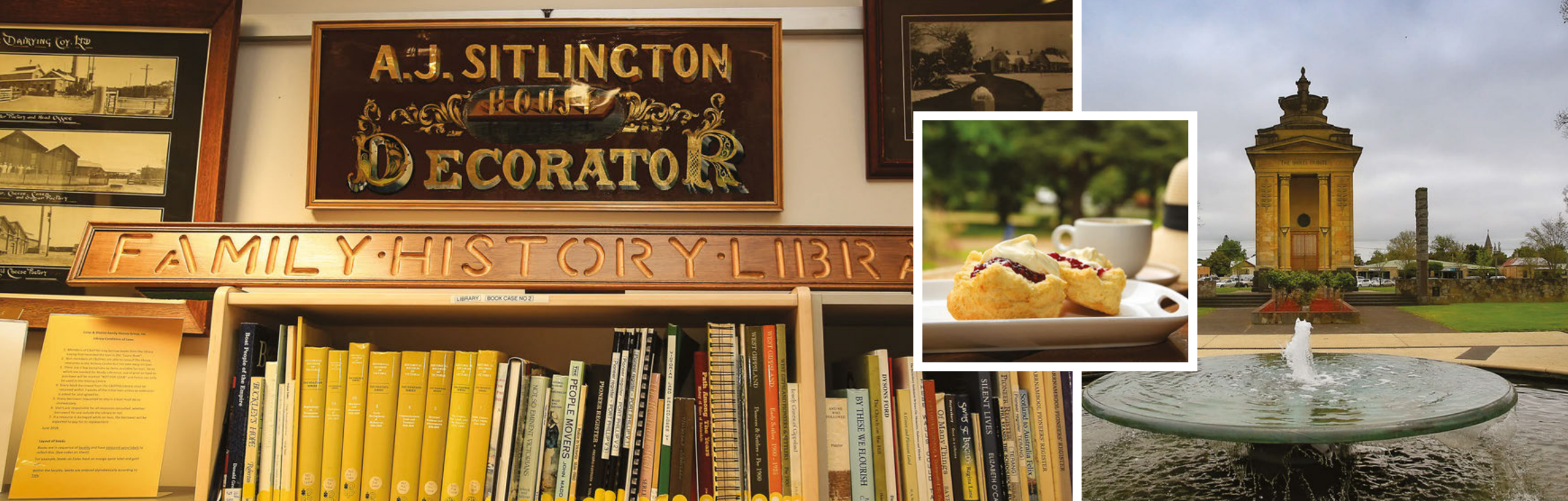


## VISITOR ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

### PRIORITY 2

Develop a vision and brand for Colac and inform product development and infrastructure priorities.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. Undertake an audit of current visitor economy products (accommodation, attractions, services and experiences).	COS & GORRT	High
2. Undertake a brand positioning process to consolidate vision and aspirations for Colac.	GORRT (with involvement of all relevant organisations including COS) and CVET	High
3. Use the brand positioning to develop and implement a refreshed Colac Tourism Market Strategy.	COS, GORRT, CVET	High – Ongoing
4. Use the brand positioning to inform and influence public amenity developments, new and existing products and events.	COS, GORRT, CVET	High – Ongoing
5. Use the brand positioning to inform a population attraction and marketing strategy for Colac.	COS, GORRT, CVET	High – Ongoing



## VISITOR ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT – PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

### PRIORITY 3

Prioritise public investment to maximise delivery of the vision for Colac. (\*Note these actions are either being addressed or are planned to be addressed).

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. Review Councils development plans to ensure they cater for Colac's future visitor management requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public visitor amenities</li> <li>▪ Visitor servicing infrastructure and services (consistent with the recommendations from the 'GOR Future of Visitor Servicing Project')</li> <li>▪ Facilities for activity hub services (active adventure, history, food, environment and culture tours)</li> <li>▪ Develop a CBD parking plan to provide tour bus parking in the CBD.</li> </ul>	COS, GORRT	Medium – Low
2. Accelerate implementation of the Lake Colac Master Plan.	COS	*High
3. Accelerate implementation of Memorial Square Master Plan.	COS	*High
4. Identify funding programs to support development and delivery for public infrastructure.	COS, GORRT	Medium – Ongoing
5. Accelerate implementation of Colac CBD & Entrances Strategy.	COS, CVET	*High

\*While all these project area high priority we need to be mindful that limited funding is available so they're not all likely to be funded in the first year.



## VISITOR ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT – PRIVATE INVESTMENT ATTRACTION (*Accommodation*)

### PRIORITY 4

Support the development of a range of accommodation to attract identified target markets.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. Undertake a product gap analysis and assess the type of accommodation required to support the vision and brand for Colac.	COS (with GORRT Support)	High
2. Review and refresh the accommodation audit undertaken by Colac Otway Shire.	COS	Ongoing
3. Develop an investment prospectus for preferred locations.	COS	High
4. Market the accommodation opportunity to prospective investors.	COS (with GORRT Support)	High
5. Annually review prospective sites for accommodation.	COS (with GORRT Support)	High





## VISITOR ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT – INVESTMENT ATTRACTION (*Attractions & Services*)

### PRIORITY 5

Support the development of a range of products and services to deliver the vision and build Brand Colac.

#### ACTIONS

1. Identify private sector product development opportunities and priorities including:
  - Hospitality precinct and experiences
  - Attractions and services relative to the brand positioning
  - Activities hub/precinct
  - Produce hub/precinct.
2. Develop a 'Business Opportunities' prospectus/Activity program for private sector investment and population attraction.
3. Work with and advocate to Government and agencies to support appropriate private sector development.
4. Support private investors to engage with industry and community to grow local support and pride in new investment.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

COS, GORRT, CVET

COS

COS

COS

#### PRIORITIES

Low

Medium

Ongoing

Ongoing



## INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

### PRIORITY 6

Prepare an industry development program that builds business professionalism and cooperation to improve the service offering to visitors.

#### ACTIONS

1. Work with business to create consistency in opening hours and service standards within precincts.
2. Work with businesses to foster greater understanding of visitor market segments and support development of products and services to cater for their needs.
3. Investigate the establishment of an innovation hub and co-working space to foster local talent and increase collaboration.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Colac Chamber of Commerce, CVET  
GORRT  
COS, CVET, Colac Chamber of Commerce

#### PRIORITIES

High  
High  
Low



## MARKETING

### PRIORITY 7

Develop a marketing strategy to underpin brand Colac.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1. Develop assets to support promotion of Brand Colac.	COS, CVET, GORRT	Medium
2. Develop a marketing strategy to support promotion and marketing of Colac.	COS, CVET, GORRT	Medium
3. Grow industry participation and engagement in the promotion and marketing of Colac.	COS, CVET, GORRT, Colac Chamber of Commerce	Medium
4. Collaborate with GORRT to encourage business participation 'buy in' of marketing services and to leverage regional marketing programs.	GORRT – support from all organisations	High



# THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Visitation to the Great Ocean Road  
year ending June 2019

## TOTAL VISITATION

VISITORS	VISITOR NIGHTS	VISITOR EXPENDITURE	DAY TRIP VISITORS
7.4m*	8.0m	\$1.5b	4.5m

\* Includes International Day Trips

## DOMESTIC VISITATION

OVERNIGHT TRAVEL			DAYTRIP TRAVEL	
VISITORS	VISITOR NIGHTS	TOURISM CONSUMPTION	DAY TRIPS	TOURISM CONSUMPTION
2.6m	7.0m	\$987m	3.7m	\$362m

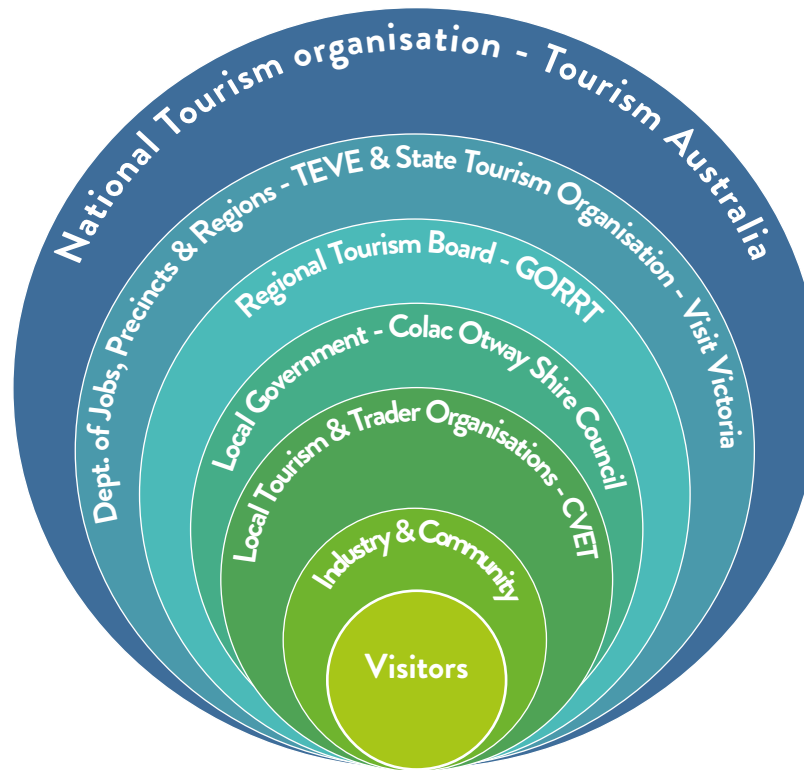
## INTERNATIONAL VISITATION

OVERNIGHT TRAVEL		DAYTRIP TRAVEL	
VISITORS	VISITOR NIGHTS	DAY TRIPS	TOURISM CONSUMPTION
251.4k	976.6k	785k	\$109m

Source: National Visitor Survey & International Visitor Survey, YE June 2019, TRA.

# The Great Ocean Road Visitor Economy Landscape

<b>Tourism Australia</b>
Market Australia to the world
Destination Management for the GOR region – Development, Management, Marketing, Advocacy
<b>LTO Local tourism organisation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocates for or providers of visitor information services</li> <li>Promotes the value of tourism to the local community</li> <li>Encourages excellence in visitor servicing</li> <li>Cooperates with regional tourism organisation for destination marketing and development</li> <li>Has an annual business/operational plan, linked to regional strategies.</li> </ul>



<b>DJPR – TEVE – State Strategy, research &amp; policy</b>
Visit Victoria – market Melbourne & Victoria, Nationally & Internationally
<b>Local Government</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports tourism sector in policies &amp; strategic plans</li> <li>Provides visitor infrastructure, services &amp; facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Industry &amp; Community</b>
Visitor servicing

<b>VISITORS</b>
Leisure visitors, business visitors, corporate visitors, visiting friends & family, events visitors