

LORNE



Destination Action Plan 2015-2017

November 2014



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



Image: Andrew Paoli



Acknowledgments

The development of the Lorne Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd.

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

Specifically we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

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Introduction

Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd is undertaking the preparation of a Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region which extends from Torquay in the east to the South Australian border in the west.

A core strategy is to recognise that visitors to the region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences. Therefore the development, marketing and management of the regions destinations is pivotal to the success of the whole region.

This Destination Action Plan for Lorne identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance the competitiveness of Lorne as a primary visitor destination of the region. These strategies will also be reflected in the Tourism Strategic Master Plan for the region to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Plan has been prepared by a facilitated workshop process involving business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities and challenges. The group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Lorne visitor economy and experience.



The visitor economy

Visitors to Lorne are major contributors to the strength of the local economy. The visitors may be leisure travellers (domestic and international), visitors to friends and relatives, holiday residents, business visitors, students or day-trippers.

Their expenditure is 'new money' contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value and the provision of services, facilities and activities in the community.

In 2013 Surf Coast Shire attracted a total of 1,677,833 visitors spending \$410,631,653

- 902,000 domestic day visitors spending \$92,906,000
- 750,000 domestic overnight visitors spending \$303,750,000
- 25,833 international visitors spending \$13,975,653

SOURCE: National Visitor Survey, YE Dec 2013, Tourism Research Australia and REMPLAN analysis.

Direct GRP

- \$26 million domestic day trip visitors
- \$19 million domestic overnight visitors
- \$11 million international overnight visitors
- Total of \$178 million visitor direct segment spending of the Western region (37% of the total Western region GRP)

Direct and indirect GRP

- Total of \$417 million estimated total of the direct and indirect GRP for the Surf Coast Shire
- 2,687 jobs in the Surf Coast Shire due to direct impact of tourist spending (21.5% of the region)

SOURCE: Decisive Consulting October 2014 report on FY2011-12 to Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board)

Lorne/Anglesea attracted

- Domestic overnight visitors – 457,000 (increase by over 23% since 2010)
- Day visitors – 494,000 to \$51 million in 2013
- International visitors 38,387 in 2013 – average length of stay 2.5 nights
- International purpose of visit 94% holiday/pleasure, 6% visiting friends and relatives, business, education, employment and other: approximately 26,000-34,000 per annum.

SOURCE: National Visitor Survey YE Dec 2013 & International Visitor Survey Tourism Research Australia).

The five year visitation trends for the region and Surf Coast are relatively flat.

The total tourism contribution to the region is \$1,832 million, 20,000 jobs, 11.1% of Gross Regional Product (GRP) and 11.6% employment share.

SOURCE: Victorian Regional Satellite Accounts 2011-12 produced by Deloitte Access Economics.



Success factors

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 Lorne 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 Lorne.

1. Strong local tourism organisations focussed on their core role of visitor servicing
2. Strong regional tourism organisations focussed on their core role of regional marketing and development
3. Local government support
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals and/or organisations
5. Strategic planning for the economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans
6. Consistent visitor service excellence
7. Research driven cooperative marketing
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, products and events matched to market demand
9. Risk management plans
10. Supportive communities which understand and value tourism.

Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction.

All of these objectives are important for Lorne with particular challenges in maximising visitor expenditure, seasonal dispersal and satisfaction.

The impact of population growth west of Melbourne and Geelong presents significant visitor management challenges, particularly from day visitors in peak periods.



Image: Leon Walker Photography



Our values

Our people

- Strong community pride
- Action oriented
- Collaborative
- Respectful

Lorne's 'personality'

- Sophisticated
- Creative
- Culturally aware

Our environment

- Natural beauty
- Awareness
- Sustainable.

Our collective strengths

- Our stunning natural setting
- We engage, utilise and respect our pool of talented, knowledgeable, resourceful and skilled people
- A breadth and depth of diverse experiences – something for everyone
- Our people have great pride
- Strong volunteerism
- A family friendly destination.

What we do well

- A strong brand – 'Love Lorne'
- Industry leadership
- High level of awareness of the destination
- Ability to attract people, a resonance with Lorne
- A balanced, well run and supported events program
- An excellent Visitor Information Centre and staff
- Weddings, business conferences and meetings
- Capacity to accommodate with volume and variety
- Capacity to manage high visitation particularly in peak periods.



Our challenges

- Seasonality – very busy Summer, quiet Winters
- Developing and maintaining a strong service culture
- Businesses remaining open during winter periods
- Education of business owners and staff
- Skill (staff) shortages
- Lack of accommodation options, including:
 - Affordable accommodation for local workers and families
 - Long term rental accommodation
 - Seasonal accommodation for the increase in temporary workforce over summer
- Statutory planning policies
- Perception of distance from Melbourne
- Low occupancy of holiday homes
- Acknowledgement of business and community needs by State Government agencies (VicRoads, Parks Victoria)
- Maximising existing opportunities e.g. building other activities around Amy's Gran Fondo
- Utilisation of alternate route via Deans Marsh
- Visual amenity of foreshore and streetscape.



Image: Robert Blackburn

Opportunities

- Develop Lorne as a destination of all seasons:
 - Growing business in shoulder and off peak periods
 - Experience development and enhancement to attract visitors and to increase their length of stay and fulfilment
 - Create a reason for through traffic to stop in Lorne
 - Town infrastructure and visual amenity – parking, streetscape, foreshore
 - Visiting Friends & Relatives Strategy – educate local community, utilise assets, familiarise with experiences on offer
- Continue to build the ‘Love Lorne’ brand:
 - Deliver the promise – strive for service excellence
 - Develop a strong service culture – the ‘Lorne way’
 - Educate business operators and develop clear communication to educate their staff
 - Greater penetration into the Melbourne market
 - Further develop the trip pre- planner collateral
- Events
 - Cultural and sporting events:
 - Create a balanced events calendar
 - Ensure professional coordination and management of events
 - Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd coordinate a business events focus (Lorne is a premier business events destination with national recognition)
- Manage and protect the natural environment
- Government collaboration and understanding – synergy of vision and proactive responses
- Lorne to be a trend setter – out of the box lateral thinking – do it differently – the ‘Lorne way’
- Embed the plan direction into a succession plan within the township
- Funding equity – contributions from holiday home owners.

Diagnostic rating

Characteristics		Rating	Comments
1.	Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	6	Not core focus of Local Tourism Association
2.	Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5	Jury is out
3.	Local government support	7	State government agencies 5
4.	Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	9	Need succession plan to avoid burnout
5.	Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	5	
6.	Consistent visitor service excellence	5	
7.	Research driven cooperative marketing	5	
8.	A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	6	Events 9
9.	Risk management plans in place	3.5	Plans in place but low awareness across industry
10.	Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	5	



Image: Andrew Paoli



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Lorne Business & Tourism Association and the Surf Coast Shire to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Implementation Leadership Group will consider and review this 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 organisations and to seek funding for specific projects.

The Plan does not commit any organisation to the actions proposed but is a guide to pursuing priorities and actions which will make a positive difference to the achievement of the tourism objectives noted above.

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

- HIGH within the first year
- MEDIUM within one to two years
- LOW within three years.

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd in consultation with the Implementation Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in three years.

The Destination Action Plan will provide input to the preparation of a Strategic Master Plan for the Great Ocean Road region.



PRIORITY 1

Develop a seamless visitor service excellence culture, capacity and capability.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities	When
1.	<p>Create a service culture for Lorne – the ‘Lorne way’</p> <p>a. Develop and implement a ‘visitor service excellence’ program for Lorne businesses – Dave & Chris to lead the development of an action plan re list of values, staff incentives, use ‘Love Lorne’ brand, engage guest to be hero, etc. (Mantra and Cumberland have programs in place – build on)</p> <p>b. Survey and benchmark visitor satisfaction including a mystery shopper program (will be assisted via a Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd process)</p> <p>c. Promote the importance of visitors to the community and the need for service excellence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare and regularly communicate, via multiple mediums, including Ian’s weekly news page, the importance of visitors to Lorne by telling positive and ‘feel good’ stories. - Utilise Council and Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd data, including visitor numbers. - Stories to tell such as importance of tourism to our tradies, etc. - Talk up Lorne experiences as ‘year round’ activities, not just peak season - Discuss the impact of less visitors 	<p>Lorne Business & Tourism Association</p> <p>Lorne Business & Tourism Association, assisted by GORRT</p> <p>Lorne Business & Tourism Association, assisted by GORRT</p>	<p>High, ongoing</p> <p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Process & implementation plan completed by April 2015</p> <p>Commence once (1) is completed (after April)</p>

PRIORITY 2

Develop Lorne as a destination of all seasons.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities	When
1.	<p>Develop new experiences to attract visitors and increase their length of stay. Experiences to be further explored include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adventure/eco tourism opportunities including mountain biking, fishing, other b. Wildlife viewing <p>Comment: List to be generated from bottom up, Committee for Lorne. Aspirations to be fed into. Lorne Business & Tourism Association and Committee for Lorne to develop current list. Split into private and government. Council to regularly communicate listing and priorities.</p>	Lorne Business & Tourism Association, Committee for Lorne, Surf Coast Shire	Ongoing	
2.	<p>Enhance existing experiences through promoting and improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Waterfalls and numerous walking trails, history walks b. Restaurants, harvest trails (seasonal), galleries, theatre, spa/wellbeing c. Golf, mini golf, swing bridge 		Ongoing	
3.	<p>Develop a Visiting Friends & Relatives Strategy for residents, non-residents, non permanents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Familiarise residents on existing experiences utilising local assets and experiences b. Determine effective distribution of information 	Lorne Business & Tourism Association, Visitor Information Centre	Medium	November
4.	<p>Continue to improve town infrastructure and visual amenity through the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review signage both needs and appropriateness of wording b. Ensure signage fits with the 'Love Lorne' branding c. Install interpretative signage at key historical and other points of interest (consistent design/etc) d. Seek approval for banners at key events and other opportunities to promote Lorne 	Lorne Business & Tourism Association	Signage	
5.	Lorne to be a trend setter – out of the box lateral thinking.			



Image: Andrew Paoli



Image: Andrew Paoli



Image: Robert Blackburn

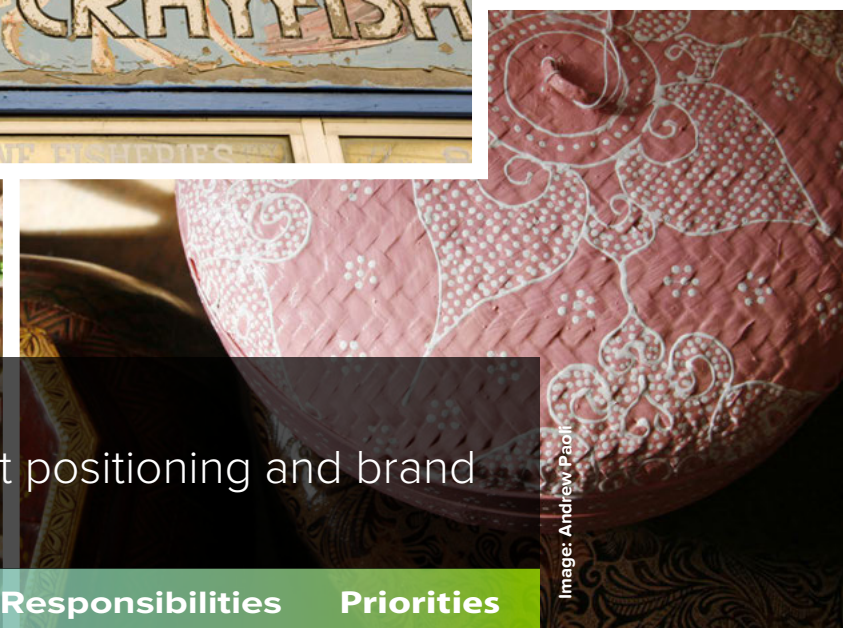


Image: Andrew Paoli

PRIORITY 3

Further develop and promote the 'Love Lorne' market positioning and brand identity.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	Provide a greater focus on the Melbourne market	Lorne Business & Tourism Association, Committee for Lorne	Ongoing
2.	Further develop the trip pre-planner collateral using both digital and print mediums		
3.	Create a reason for tour operators/through traffic to stop in Lorne		
4.	Engage business operators and government agencies to embrace Lorne brand.		



Image: Robert Blackburn

PRIORITY 4

Develop an Events Plan for Lorne.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	Investigate new cultural/sporting/other events <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Create a balanced and comprehensive events calendar for Lorneb. Ensure coordination and professional management of eventsc. Take into account events outside Lorne to avoid clash of dates	Lorne Business & Tourism Association	Ongoing
2.	Enhance existing events to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Where practicable include overnight stays (increase length of stay/yield)b. Enhance 'Love Lorne' brand	Lorne Business & Tourism Association	Ongoing

NOTE: Paper currently before Surf Coast Shire.

PRIORITY 5

Develop a Business Events & Conferencing Plan for Lorne.

Actions

1. Promote Lorne as a premium business events destination by:
 - a. Key venues collaborating to market Lorne as a Australia's premium Business Events and Conferencing destination
 - b. Utilise existing market research to grow the market
 - c. Package pre and post activities with initial sales (allow delegates to plan to stay on)
 - d. Develop a communications plan to ensure that Lorne Business & Tourism Association and operators are engaged and have a knowledge of events both business and leisure (to ensure businesses are open and accommodating of visitor needs including shopping).

Responsibilities

Lorne Business & Tourism Association, venue managers

Priorities

High

To take into account Surf Coast Shire Strategy and Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd Events Strategy.



Images: Mantra Lorne

PRIORITY 6		
Investigate the value of the weddings market for Lorne.		
Actions	Responsibilities	Priorities
1. Investigate the value and importance of growing the weddings market for Lorne by: a. Determine the potential of Lorne as a premium weddings market destination b. Evaluate both the positive and negative aspects of growing this market	Venue managers, Lorne Business & Tourism Association	Medium



Image: Gene Moule

PRIORITY 7

Manage for longer term visitor growth to provide for a sustainable destination.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Parking Plan for Lorne to ensure adequate parking and amenities at key visitor nodes and precincts (e.g. beaches, Point Grey and foreshore areas) 	Great Ocean Road Coast Committee	High
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with VicRoads to ensure Great Ocean Road travellers are aware of the alternate route via Deans Marsh Lorne Business & Tourism Association to convey their views and concerns to Council Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd to advocate on behalf of Lorne Business & Tourism Association to Government 	Lorne Business & Tourism Association, GORRT	High
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage visitors to respect the environment (e.g. take rubbish home) Key issue is the frequency of collection of litter at peak times to prevent overflowing of bins All to lobby Council 	Surf Coast Shire	High
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage partnerships with Government to ensure appropriate support and understanding for and of Lorne: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Parks Victoria b. VicRoads c. Great Ocean Road Coast Committee d. Tourism Victoria e. Department of Planning f. Surf Coast Council g. Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd h. Regional Development Victoria i. Department of Environment & Primary Industries Committee for Lorne to lobby Surf Coast Shire and Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd to support the addressing of issues of regional significance. 	Lorne Business & Tourism Association	Ongoing

PRIORITY 8

Develop and implement a risk management plan.

Actions		Responsibilities	Priorities	When
1.	Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd to develop a plan for this season with input from Tourism Managers	GORRT	High	By end of April
2.	Lorne Business & Tourism Association to provide input to Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd on current operator strategies.			