

# WINCHELSEA



Destination Action Plan 2016-2018

February 2017



GREAT OCEAN ROAD  
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED



## Acknowledgments

The development of the Winchelsea Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd with the support of Growing Winchelsea Inc. and Surf Coast Shire.

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 Winchelsea and to establish achievable affordable priorities that if delivered, would increase Winchelsea's competitiveness.

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

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Images used within this document are supplied courtesy of Ferne Millen, Growing Winchelsea Inc. and Surf Coast Shire.



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# Introduction

Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd recently completed the preparation of a Tourism Master Plan setting the strategic direction for the region for the next 10 years. A key element of the Plan recognises 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 Winchelsea identifies priority strategies and actions which, if implemented over the next three or so years, will enhance the competitiveness of Winchelsea as an important inland visitor destination of the region. These strategic actions will also be reflected in the Tourism Master Plan for the region to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Winchelsea Destination Action 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 along with addressing the challenges. The group has identified and agreed upon the key priorities and actions that will make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the Winchelsea visitor economy and experience.





## The visitor economy

Visitors to Winchelsea are growing in numbers primarily due to ease of accessibility via the Princes Highway upgrade and the central location of the town in relation to major centres such as Geelong, Ballarat and the busy coastal towns of Apollo Bay, Lorne, Anglesea and Torquay. The visitors may be leisure seekers, both domestic and international, stopping or passing through the township, visiting friends and relatives or day trippers and are now becoming key contributors to the strength of the local economy.

Their expenditure is 'new money' contributing to the Winchelsea economy which supports local jobs, real estate values and the provision of additional services, facilities and broader activities for the community.

For the year ending December 2015, the Surf Coast Shire attracted over 1.0 million domestic daytrip visitors, 802,000 domestic overnight visitors (2.6m nights), representing 40.6% of visitors and 41.4% of nights to the region. Domestic overnight visitors spent on average \$133 per night in the region (total \$344m). International overnight travel to the Surf Coast was approximately 39,700 per annum (up by 22%).

**Source:** National Visitor Survey YE December 2015 Tourism Research Australia). Statistics for Winchelsea are not available.

The total tourism contribution to the Great Ocean Road region is \$1,832m, 20,000 jobs, 11.1% of Gross Regional Product and 11.6% employment share.

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

## 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 relevant to Winchelsea with a particular focus on increasing the length of stay and visitor satisfaction.



## 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 Winchelsea 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 Winchelsea.

1. A strong local business and tourism organisation focussed on their core role of visitor servicing and member networking
2. A strong regional tourism organisation 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 experiences, infrastructure, products and events matched to market demand
9. A risk management plan in place
10. Supportive communities which understand and value tourism.

## Vision (CORE VALUES STATEMENT)

Celebrating our rich heritage (architectural, cultural and First Australians), very accessible, our river and majestic red gums, our rich agriculture, our community resilience.



## What we do well

- Diversity of agriculture – a rich food bowl
- Strong community focus
- Country hospitality/service
- Great entrance/natural environment
- Easy access – good road and rail
- Service visitors well as rest break – half way from people heading from the west to the City or the City to the Great Ocean Road – natural stop
- Ease of access from Melbourne
- Innovative industry/local manufacturing – Knuckeys, grain handling
- Gateway to the Otway Harvest Trail
- Excellent medical/health care facilities
- A resilient community that just gets on with what needs to be done
- Our business leadership.



## Our challenges

- Encouraging our new residents (working in Geelong and Colac) to get involved – get younger people involved, having a succession plan, sharing the load so it is not the 'same old, same old'
- We need to create a paradigm shift for Winchelsea – optimising what our town could be (a major vibrant service centre strategically located and with lots of opportunity)
- Momentum has started but there are a lot of locals sitting on the fringes waiting to see 'how it goes' (maybe a lack of confidence/or need to be invited?)
- Considered a forgotten town by Surf Coast Shire, GORRT Ltd, Visit Victoria – lack of inclusion in messaging

## Priorities

1. Creating a new and positive brand for Winchelsea
2. Creating reasons for visitors to stop (and spend)
3. Broadening our leadership group and getting new members involved
4. Ongoing town beautification and enhancing the appeal of Winchelsea.

- Residual stigma from social (socio economic) problems in prior years – historical disconnect – not to be ashamed about the past – accept and move on – convincing people of the great opportunities to be seized
- Raising a positive profile – need to rebrand our town to what it can become if we all get behind it
- Location of Visitor Information Centre and adaption of technology
- Presentation of town – beautification – visual appeal to encourage a break/stop.



## Our opportunities

- Rebrand – Gateway to the Otway hinterland including the Otway Harvest Trail, gateway to the Great Ocean Road
- Presentation of town
- Proximity to coast – opportunity to provide ‘rural’ experience for coastal villages
- Central catchment – accessibility from/to major cities and growing population in Geelong, Western Melbourne
- Popular (and convenient/easy) route to Great Ocean Road
- Growing population in Winchelsea so additional resources for Growing Winchelsea Inc.
- Heritage values promoted and interpreted
- Farmer direct – centralised farmers market/shop – diversity of local producers – important connection to grower

## Priorities

1. Rebranding of Winchelsea – vibrant, major service centre for Western Victoria
2. Heritage – develop stories/content
3. a. Develop a calendar of Events  
b. Central market
4. Strengthening Growing Winchelsea Inc.
5. Walk – Heritage/Indigenous/arts/cultural.



- Reason to stop – well located for rest stop, toilet, children’s play area, art, heritage
- Product/experience development i.e. Indigenous walk, art/sculpture walk – create photo opportunity – ‘Wadawurrung people’
- Major through traffic – so need to know ‘how many, who, what, where?’
- Easy parking – trucks, cars, vans
- Free camping trial underway
- Aged care – quality service and infrastructure – brings visiting friends and relatives
- Events (venues and themes) – Barwon Park Mansion – The Dressmaker (22,000)
- Strengthening Growing Winchelsea Inc. and matching tasks to skills base and interests.

# Diagnostic rating

## CHARACTERISTICS

## RATING 10-1

## COMMENTS

1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing.	7	Focused particularly last two years, maybe needs more networking, bring community together, great group of energetic people, needs improved structure to engage particular areas.
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development.	2-8	Better than previous organisation, this Plan will assist, Winchelsea not on the map, a forgotten town by GORRT Ltd, need new images, we need to ask for help.
3. Local Government support.	2-10	Has improved last five years, great support in recent times from the two local Councillors, supportive of Growing Winchelsea Inc., event funding provided, no tourism support, depending on specifics.
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations.	8	Leadership make things happen, usually the same people, new people starting to break old paradigm.
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans.	–	Happening now, Growing Winchelsea Plan.
6. Consistent visitor service excellence.	6	1-10 ratings so needs to be consistent, difficult to change, needs service to be recognised, can it cater for a crowd such as experienced at the 'Dress maker' event.
7. Research driven cooperative marketing.	4	Not happening, needs more work including networking, happening now,
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and event matched to market demand.	4	Great opportunities if we all collaborated, needs improvement along with new business opportunities, lack of community/business cohesion, create river walks, OHT grown product/experiences, no great depth, Visitor Information Centre needs volunteers, etc.
9. Risk management plans in place.	4	Need developing, in place for emergency responses.
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	5	Most don't recognise importance, transitioning from 'drive thru' to stop and experience town, the event at mansion may have changed minds, service and tourism confused, some do some don't.



## Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd, Growing Winchelsea Inc. and 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
- ONGOING**

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Ltd in consultation with the Growing Winchelsea Inc. 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 and consistently promote a unique market positioning and brand for Winchelsea

### ACTIONS

#### 1. BRAND POSITIONING

- a. In collaboration with GORRT Ltd, undertake a destination positioning process to re-position Winchelsea as a vibrant accessible hub servicing visitors and the broader community.
- b. Build and develop content to support the brand positioning featuring local suppliers/producers, agri-business, heritage, events and the Winchelsea stories to tell.
- c. Integrate key messages into strategic channels i.e. Great Ocean Road regional website, event sites, operator websites, visitvictoria.com, etc.

### RESPONSIBILITY

GORRT Ltd to organise and facilitate the Brand workshop

Growing Winchelsea Inc. with assistance from GORRT Ltd workshop

Growing Winchelsea Inc. with assistance from GORRT Ltd

### PRIORITY & TIMING

Workshop and brand strategy document completed, manifesto and mood board to be finalised – March 2017

High

Ongoing



## PRIORITY 2

Develop and maintain experiences, products and infrastructure to create visitor demand, and to complement the brand positioning

### ACTIONS

### RESPONSIBILITY (‘THE ‘WHO’)

### PRIORITY & TIMING

#### 1. HERITAGE

##### A. Recognition of BARWON PARK as the ‘flagship’ attraction for Winchelsea

The property is regarded as one of regional Australia’s most important in regards to its historical significance and is a showpiece of early settlement and architecture on a grand scale.

- Potential for greater utilisation of the property for staging events – communication and engagement required with the National Trust to better utilise this great community asset
- Lots of history and interesting stories to tell
- Proven capacity to stage large events (portable toilets utilised)
- High volunteerism is the cornerstone to sustainability of effort.

##### Issues to be addressed

- An understanding of National Trust policies and any constraints
- Collaboration required to maximise opportunities for Barwon Park, the National Trust and all stakeholders
- Access/trading hours
- Potential for value adding
- The property requires ongoing funding and events may offer longer term solution for National Trust
- Provision of toilets; currently portables are meeting the need.

##### Actions

- Establish a meeting with Barwon Park and Growing Winchelsea Inc. to explore cross promotional/partnership opportunities to leverage Barwon Park as a flagship attraction for Winchelsea.
- Determine the future opportunities and constraints in regards to Barwon Park as a key events venue for Winchelsea and surrounds.

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

High

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

High



**PRIORITY 2** cont.

**ACTIONS**

**RESPONSIBILITY ('THE 'WHO')**

**PRIORITY & TIMING**

**B. Indigenous**

**Actions**

- Investigate and develop the indigenous product for the area:
  - Undertake an audit of experiences, products and stories
  - Determine how and where stories can be told and interpreted
  - Look for integration with heritage trail and broadening themes.

Lindsay Bennett to undertake background research and liaison  
GORRT Ltd via Aboriginal Tourism Development Plan

Medium Ongoing

**C. Heritage Walking Trail**

**Actions**

- Revisit and renew the Heritage Trail as a key experience via:
  - Undertake an audit of the existing trail and determine possible inclusions
  - Identify product development needs and priorities.

Winchelsea Historical Society

High Priority task

**2. EVENTS**

**Actions**

- Develop a calendar of events for Winchelsea:
  - Assess the current calendar alignment with brand positioning (heritage, agri-bus, etc.)
  - Identify gaps and potential opportunities in calendar and/or type of events
  - Leverage existing events for greater promotion of the town and other events.

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

High Priority task



**PRIORITY 2** cont.

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBILITY (‘THE ‘WHO’)	PRIORITY & TIMING
<p><b>3. AGRI-BUSINESS</b></p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit of agri-products and experiences (both existing and potential)</li> <li>▪ Explore opportunities for inclusion of the agri-product story in brand, story, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Surf Coast Shire For brand workshop</p>	<p>Low Medium</p>
<p><b>4. RIVER WALK</b></p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate for funding for implementation of the River Walk Master Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Growing Winchelsea Inc. Surf Coast Shire</p>	<p>High</p>
<p><b>5. RE-PRESENT TOWN SURROUNDS/ENTRANCES</b></p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advocate for funding for implementation of the completed Winchelsea Beautification Master Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Growing Winchelsea Inc. Surf Coast Shire</p>	<p>High</p>
<p><b>6. INVESTIGATE POTENTIAL TOURING ROUTES</b></p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish opportunity to partner with the Otway Harvest Trail</li> <li>▪ Explore trail opportunities to link heritage properties, agri-businesses, etc.</li> <li>▪ Explore promotion of opportunities to car clubs etc. utilising town assets such as Barwon Park.</li> </ul>	<p>Growing Winchelsea Inc.</p>	<p>Low Low Medium</p>
<p><b>7. ACCOMMODATION</b></p> <p>Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake an audit of existing accommodation</li> <li>▪ Investigate strategic partnerships with surrounding accommodation providers e.g. Birregurra, to support events and the Visiting Friends and Family market</li> <li>▪ Investigate and promote product/accommodation development opportunities.</li> </ul>	<p>Growing Winchelsea Inc.</p>	<p>Low</p>



### PRIORITY 3

Develop a seamless visitor service excellence culture and capacity program

#### ACTIONS

1. Implement a 'visitor service excellence' program for businesses and their staff.
2. Establish a program to recognise and promote business excellence.
3. Develop a signage strategy to improve local signage which includes interpretative and local signage. Signage strategy to incorporate brand positioning.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

Growing Winchelsea Inc.  
 Growing Winchelsea Inc.  
 Surf Coast Shire  
 Growing Winchelsea Inc.

#### PRIORITY & TIMING

High  
 Medium  
 High



**PRIORITY 4**

Promote the value of the visitor economy to the Winchelsea community

**ACTIONS**

1. Prepare and regularly communicate, via multiple mediums, the economic, social/community, cultural and environmental benefits of the visitor economy. Feature good news stories, people and visitor business excellence.
2. Encourage local business and organisations to use Winchelsea branding and merchandise.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

Growing Winchelsea Inc.  
 Growing Winchelsea Inc.

**PRIORITY & TIMING**

Ongoing  
 High (once developed)



**PRIORITY 5**

Increase stakeholder participation and regional partner collaboration and cooperation

**ACTIONS**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

**PRIORITY & TIMING**

1. Develop strategic partnerships with surrounding towns and products i.e. Inverleigh, Birregurra, etc.
2. Growing Winchelsea Inc. to collaborate with GORRT Ltd to facilitate relationships with other Great Ocean Road destination organisations to identify mutually beneficial cooperation and to undertake cooperative projects.
3. Include relevant actions from this Plan in a proposed three-year partnership agreement between GORRT Ltd and the Surf Coast Shire.

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

Low

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

Medium

Growing Winchelsea Inc.

High



## PRIORITY 6

Develop and implement a risk management plan

### ACTIONS

1. Determine if such a plan is required for Winchelsea.

2. If 'yes', prepare a specific visitor industry risk management plan including risk identification, mitigation, impact minimisation and recovery (first check with Surf Coast Shire to determine previous work).

3. Review the Plan annually.

### RESPONSIBILITY

Growing Winchelsea Inc. in consultation with Surf Coast Shire and GORRT Ltd

Growing Winchelsea Inc. in consultation with Surf Coast Shire and GORRT Ltd

Growing Winchelsea Inc. in consultation with Surf Coast Shire and GORRT Ltd

### PRIORITY & TIMING

Low

Low

Low