

Prom Country Sustainable Tourism Development and Marketing Plan

Final Draft

February 2006

Prepared for

South Gippsland Shire Council

Prepared by



Urban Planners Tourism Planners Land Economists

389 St Georges Road NORTH FITZROY VIC 3068
Telephone (03) 9482 3888, Facsimile (03) 9482 3933
email: mail@urbanenterprise.com.au
web: www.urbanenterprise.com.au

Authors

Matt Ainsaar MPIA, MAPI

Mike Ruzzene MPIA

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- The advice and assistance provided through Tourism Victoria and Tourism Alliance.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

<i>TRA</i>	Tourism Research Australia
<i>PCT</i>	Prom Country Tourism
<i>DGI</i>	Destination Gippsland Inc
<i>PCRT</i>	Prom Country Regional Tourism
<i>LTA</i>	Local Tourism Association
<i>RTA</i>	Regional Tourism Association
<i>VIC</i>	Visitor Information Centre
<i>EFT</i>	Equivalent Full Time (staff member)
<i>SGS TU</i>	South Gippsland Shire Tourism Unit
<i>Wilson's Prom</i>	Wilson's Promontory National Park
<i>Prom Country region</i>	Equates to the municipal area of South Gippsland
<i>Tourism Yield</i>	The economic/financial benefit derived from tourism through achieving increased expenditure and/or increased length of stay

** For the purposes of this report, Prom Country Tourism, refers to the South Gippsland Shire's Tourism Unit.

Executive Summary

Background

Urban Enterprise, tourism consultants were commissioned by South Gippsland Shire Council to undertake the Sustainable Tourism Development and Marketing Plan for the Prom Country Tourism Region. The time horizon for the Plan is the next 5 years, i.e. 2005-2010.

Objectives of the Plan

The objectives of the Plan, as outlined in the project brief and endorsed through industry consultation, include:

- Increase total visitor nights, spend and dispersal across the whole Shire without trying to maximise mass tourism;
- Grow high yield segments for the Prom Country region and identify opportunities to increase sustainable tourism infrastructure;
- Improve industry skills, co-operation and co-operative marketing funds;
- Build awareness of the Prom Country region as a major tourism destination, locally, interstate, and internationally;
- Diversify and strengthen a range of regional product strengths to negate a reliance on natural attractions.
- Leverage against Destination Gippsland Inc Campaign Committee and other Tourism Victoria projects to promote Prom Country cost effectively to wider audiences;
- Create greater cohesion and business co-operation, with the aim to develop a more unified tourism industry within the Prom Country region;
- Develop a vision or position statement for tourism development in the Prom Country region.
- Increase visitation during off peak season.

Strategic and Policy Context

The strategic and policy framework that is relevant to the Prom Country Sustainable Tourism Plan includes:

Sustainability

- A theme that is reflected in the study objectives, particularly with the emphasis on greater yield from visitors, rather than greater numbers of visitors;

a desire to disperse visitors throughout the Prom Country region to share the economic benefits and to relieve pressure on existing popular locations; and focusing on off-peak visitation;

Representation of Tourism in Local Policy

- There are no specific directions in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) relating to tourism product and infrastructure development. Similarly, the Council Plan contains little specific direction in respect of tourism development;
- The findings and key strategies and objectives as identified in this plan should appear in local policy;
- The data and findings relating to the significance of tourism to the Shire's economy are available for inclusion in the Council MSS and Council Plan;

Data Collection to Support Tourism

- Collecting and analysing relevant data on tourism is identified as a key strategy in a number of the relevant plans at regional, State and National level. Research methodologies for the Shire need to provide meaningful data for the Shire's tourism industry and complement research at the regional and State level;

Visitor Information Services

- Information distribution via Visitor Information Centres has been identified as an area for consideration and development in the Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan as well as Tourism Victoria's Strategic Business Plan. Further investigation of the optimal location and effective operation of the Prom Country Visitor Information Centre is a key objective for this Plan;

Leveraging and Working With Partners

- There are opportunities to leverage off Tourism Victoria, Destination Gippsland and Destination Melbourne marketing initiatives, particularly in targeting interstate and international visitors in Melbourne;
- Through the established regional groups (eg Destination Gippsland Inc, Creative Gippsland, and Gippsland Food and Wine Tourism Group/ Southern Gippsland Wine Inc) there are opportunities to continue to build partnerships with the other municipalities in Gippsland;
- Wilsons Promontory National Park is identified by Tourism Victoria as one of a very few Level 2 destinations in Gippsland. Wilsons Promontory National Park also attracts the largest number of backpackers to Gippsland. There is opportunity for Wilsons Promontory National Park to be marketed by Destination Gippsland Inc as a key destination to attract international and interstate visitors;
- Key opportunities for joint cooperation between Wilsons Promontory National Park and the South Gippsland Shire are:
 - The development of Wilson's Promontory as a daytrip destination;
 - The provision of public transport to Wilsons Promontory National Park;

- Management and provision of private sector businesses which support the parks operations including – public transport businesses, eco-tourism businesses, accommodation businesses and visitor interpretation and information relating to the Park.

Tourism Product Development

The key conclusions relating to tourism product arising from our analysis and industry consultation include:

Product Strengths

- Existing key product strengths of Prom Country region includes – natural attractions, food and wine and nature-based activities.
- Comparative advantages – Untouched landscape, scenic beauty, fertile green hills, high rainfall, large quantity and quality of natural attractions, within two hours of Melbourne.

Product Potential

Much of the product potential is dependent on infrastructure improvements to roads, signage, services etc, however the following have been identified as key areas for potential product development::

- Large-scale resort/ hotel visitor accommodation, which has good access to key product such as Wilson's Promontory;
- Development of meeting and business tourism in association with the large-scale resort/hotel establishment;
- Development of touring routes, which are aligned with key product such as natural attractions, villages, food and wine;
- Development of quality restaurants and cafes, which take advantage of the local food and wine product;
- Tourism events that reinforce existing and emerging tourism product strengths provide increased awareness of the tourism product and encourage repeat visitation. Opportunities exist to further develop and promote the existing events such as the Tastes of Prom Country, Slow Food Festival, Stony Creek Cup and Mossvale Park into "flagship" events for the region.

Tourism Infrastructure Development

Tourism infrastructure remains one of the largest obstacles to the further development of tourism in the South Gippsland Shire. The following are areas of infrastructure which have been identified as requiring improvement:

The Prom Country Visitor Information Centre (Prom Country VIC)

Key issues with the Prom Country VIC are as follows:

- The current VIC is located off the South Gippsland Highway and direct access is not available from the Highway; (Indications of future highway bypass meaning turning off the highway to access the VIC)
- The VIC is totally obscured from passing traffic on the South Gippsland Highway by heavy vegetation planted along the Highway frontage. Despite the presence of the “i” signs, it is likely that many passing visitors are unaware of the existence of the VIC, or are unsure of its exact location and hence are discouraged from diverting from the Highway;
- External signage visible from the South Gippsland Highway gives the impression that the VIC is located within, or is part of, the Coal Creek Historical Village. This could deter visitors who are not interested in visiting Coal Creek;
- The building is relatively small, adding to its lack of visibility;
- The location of the VIC is not central to the tourism product strengths of the region, i.e. natural attractions (Wilson’s Promontory, coast, Strzelecki Ranges).

Accommodation

There is a lack of large-scale, quality accommodation in the Prom Country region that can cater to large groups (including corporate groups). This accommodation “gap” has the following effects;

- Limited potential of the region to attract and hold high yield visitors;
- An inability to cater to corporate groups (meetings, exhibitions, incentive travel, conferences);
- A lack of access to national and international booking networks available to “branded” hotels, together with the exposure that comes from the promotion of these booking networks.

Infrastructure

- Poor road conditions are a major impediment to accessing natural attractions and developing touring routes, including the Grand Ridge Road and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park;
- Water supply and sewerage are impediments to growth in areas such as Yanakie. Infrastructure provision needs to be investigated to determine whether development can be environmentally and financially sustainable;

Signage

Signage issues include the following:

- Obsolete signage (tourism businesses no longer operating or operating under changed circumstances);
- Inconsistent signage (design, siting, size);
- Inadequate tourism signage (directing visitors to tourism businesses);

- Inadequate directional signage (eg directing visitors to Wilsons Promontory from the Monash Freeway, similar to Phillip Island and Mornington Peninsula).

Tourism Markets

- Understanding the significance of the large holiday home sector provides an opportunity to market directly to regular visitors, particularly in respect of events and festivals.
- The value segments of Visible Achievement, Traditional Family Life, Socially Aware and Young Optimism are the key target markets for Prom Country. Opportunity exists to increase the share of Socially Aware market through increased awareness and targeted marketing.
- Recognising that Melbourne is still the regions major market in terms of the number of visitors, efforts are needed to increase the yield from the Melbourne market.
- Continuing to increase the number of overnight visitors, particularly during the week and in off-peak season.

Marketing and Promotion

Key areas for further marketing and promotion identified include the following:

External Marketing

- There is a significant opportunity to further promote the natural attractions, particularly to international and interstate visitors. Further development of tourism infrastructure (in particular accommodation that meets existing “gaps”) is needed to service these markets.
- The Internet is the most widely used information source by visitors in planning their trip, with 32% of visitors using the Internet. The Internet is a cost-effective medium for reaching mass markets and continual improvement to the websites for the Prom Country region should be a priority.
- The development of a “free ink” program on an on-going basis would maximise the opportunities for free publicity. This could include a visiting journalists program (possibly in conjunction with Tourism Victoria and/or DGI) and an expression of interest process to identify tourism businesses willing to participate.

Publicity and promotion

- The recent research into the economic significance of tourism provides valuable and up-to-date data that can be used to promote the importance of the tourism industry to the broader community.
- Recent research indicates the significance of the holiday home sector in attracting visitors to the region (including holiday home owners, visiting friends and relatives and short term visitors) and in generating expenditure in the region. Significant opportunity exists to target holiday home owners specifically in respect of:
 - Promoting upcoming events;

- Promoting new tourism products and activities in the region; and
- Continually reminding holiday home owners (and their guests) of the things to see and do in the region.

Organisational Structures

A number of organisational issues were found through the consultation and research. These include the following:

- There is no formal mechanism to co-ordinate the activities of the Tourism Unit/Economic Development Unit and the Planning Unit within the South Gippsland Shire Council, on an on-going basis. This is reflected by a lack of information and limited direction in Council Plans and the MSS as to the future direction and significance of tourism in the Prom Country region;
- Further appropriate tourism infrastructure development is critical to the continued growth of tourism in Prom Country. This is an impediment to the attraction and development of larger scale tourism infrastructure in the Prom Country region. Strategic planning processes are needed to identify areas for tourism infrastructure and tourism product development;
- The roles of and relationship between the Local Tourism Associations (LTA's), Prom Country Tourism (PCT) and Prom Country Regional Tourism (PCRT) is not defined. The similarity of the names also produces added confusion to participating members. The roles of the respective organisations need to be clarified to avoid duplication and dilution of resources. A logical division of responsibility is for:
 - LTAs to undertake localised marketing and promotion of their respective areas, including attractions and accommodation, as well as servicing the visitor when they arrive (provision of information, provision of visitor amenities, monitoring service standards etc);
 - PCRT to provide industry input to external marketing initiatives; mobilise tourism operators to participate in external marketing; and develop Prom Country region marketing and promotion initiatives for industry participation; develop external marketing campaigns aimed primarily at identified target markets (in Melbourne, Country Victoria, interstate and overseas) focusing on promoting the tourism product strengths of the region;
 - PCT to work with external stakeholders (DGI, Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria, DSE, VicRoads etc) to ensure that the Prom Country region is adequately represented in regional marketing initiatives and shares in available funding for marketing and infrastructure development; and operate the regional visitor information services (website, Level 1 VIC);
- Prom Country Regional Tourism requires active Committee members with skills relevant to its role. The nature of the tourism industry in the region (micro and small businesses) means that attracting people with the appropriate skills and the time to devote to the RTA is difficult;

- Council provides substantial resources to the Regional Tourism Association (Prom Country Regional Tourism Inc) in terms of matching membership funds and providing staff resources. The industry needs to increase ownership of the organisation by working towards reducing the dependence on Council.
- There are a number of issues that are impacting on the sustainability of Prom Country Regional Tourism. These include:
 - Limited growth in membership;
 - Current reliance on Council to provide funding and staff resources
 - Lack of definition of the role of the organisation, vis a vis Prom Country Tourism;
 - Difficulty in attracting experienced people with the relevant skills and time, to join the Executive.
- The relationship between Parks Victoria, South Gippsland Shire Council and Prom Country Regional Tourism is very important having regard to the significance of Wilsons Promontory and other natural attractions in attracting visitors to the region. Mechanisms to ensure a continued close working relationship are needed.

Strategies and Implementation

Strategies have been developed which respond to the issues that effect further development of tourism in Prom Country and take advantage of the opportunities identified. Sections 8 and 9 of this Plan identify the key strategies, actions and implementation priorities for the next 5 years. Key priorities for the development of tourism identified through the consultation process include:

- Integration of tourism and economic development more closely with strategic town planning within the South Gippsland Shire Council;
- Create closer links between the tourism, recreation and arts and culture units at the South Gippsland Shire Council to enhance tourism product based on arts and culture;
- Strengthen the relationship and cooperation between Parks Victoria and the South Gippsland Shire Council;
- Leverage off visitors to Melbourne by promoting Prom Country through marketing self drive day/overnight trips;
- Continually update and improve the Prom Country Regional Tourism website as a key promotional tool, in accordance with consumer needs and preferences;
- Raise the awareness of Wilsons Promontory in key market segments including interstate and international markets;
- Increase Melbourne's awareness of Prom Country's diverse range of outdoor activities;
- Raise awareness of products outside of Wilsons Promontory;
- Review the effectiveness of the current Prom Country Brand;
- Attract appropriate large-scale tourism businesses in selected locations, including quality accommodation and conference facilities;

- Grow food and wine / agri-tourism by supporting and enhancing existing food and wine events and ensuring that planning policy allows for tourism growth in appropriate parts of the rural areas of the Shire;
- Develop a tourism signage strategy;
- Improve tourism and directional signage to and throughout Prom Country region including operator signage;
- Improve road infrastructure in areas where there is potential to further develop touring including the Grand Ridge Road and access to coastal areas (ie Cape Liptrap);
- Improve the usage of the Visitor Information Centre by (A) increasing its current exposure and landscaping in the immediate term and (B) undertaking an independent study into the VIC location in the short term;
- Develop strategic town plans for South Gippsland Shire's towns to improve the presentation of the towns and provide for improved visitor amenities.

For further details of all strategies and actions see Section 8.

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In late 2005 Urban Enterprise, tourism consultants were commissioned by South Gippsland Shire Council to undertake the Sustainable Tourism Development and Marketing Plan for the Prom Country Tourism Region. The time horizon for the Plan is the next 5 years, i.e. 2005-2010.

1.2 Plan Objectives

The study brief, together with discussions with the study project manager, and endorsed through industry consultation identified the following objectives for the Plan:

- Increase total visitor nights, spend and dispersal across the whole Shire without trying to maximise mass tourism;
- Grow high yield segments for the Prom Country region and identify opportunities to increase sustainable tourism infrastructure;
- Improve industry skills and co-operative marketing funds;
- Build awareness of the Prom Country region as a major tourism destination, locally, interstate, and internationally;
- Leverage against the Gippsland Campaign Committee and other Tourism Victoria projects to promote Prom Country cost effectively to wider audiences;
- Create greater cohesion and business co-operation, with the aim to develop a more unified tourism industry within the Prom Country region;
- Develop a vision or position statement for tourism development in the Prom Country region.

1.3 Study Approach

The study approach has included:

- Consultation with key stakeholders including Parks Victoria, South Gippsland Shire Council officers, Prom Country Tourism and representatives from key tourism industry sectors in the region, including a workshop of key stakeholders to identify key issues and opportunities;
- Consultation with tourism operators through a workshop to test preliminary strategies;

- Analysis of the strategic policy framework related to tourism development in the Prom Country region at the National, State and local level;
- Review of relevant tourism data relating to visitation, visitor markets, niche product markets and tourism business performance;
- Research into profiling visitors to the Prom Country region to identify market segments and assist in guiding marketing strategies;
- Review of tourism product and tourism infrastructure in the Prom Country region;
- Review of organisational arrangements for the tourism industry in the Shire.

2 Strategic Policy Framework

2.1 Introduction

There are a number of policies and strategies at the local, State and National level relevant to the development of the Plan. These include:

Local Policy

- Municipal Strategic Statement within the South Gippsland Planning Scheme;
- South Gippsland Community and Corporate Plan 2003 – 2006;
- South Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2004 –2007;
- Prom Country Regional Tourism Plan 2004 –2007 (draft);
- Visitor Information Centre Business Plan 2004 – 2006 (draft);

Regional Policy

- Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004 – 2006, prepared by Tourism Victoria.

State Policy

- Victoria's Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2002-2006;
- Victoria's Food and Wine Strategic Plan 2004 – 2007.
- Other policies/ plans need to be included Eg Nature based tourism

National Context

- A Medium to Long Term Strategy for Tourism, Australian Government White Paper.

2.2 Local Policy Framework

2.2.1 Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement sets in place the Shire Council's position in terms of development, the environment and the community.

The Municipal Strategic Statement for the South Gippsland Shire Council identifies the following key influences that relate to tourism development:

- The need to continue to promote the region as a major tourism destination through its natural beauty and the lifestyle opportunities that it offers;
- The strong contribution of the tourism industry to the local and state economies;
- The steady increase in the number of tourists visiting the area;
- The significance of natural and cultural environment and natural based activities for tourism;
- The lack of a large tourist accommodation facility in the area, particularly in the vicinity of Wilsons Promontory.

The Municipal Strategic Statement also outlines the vision for the Shire's economy, with relevance to the tourism industry, as follows:

- Encourage investment and development to facilitate population growth and employment;
- Encourage ingenuity and innovation in both private and public sector development;
- Encourage diversity in the region's agricultural base to enhance our status as one of the key agricultural regions in Australia;
- Encourage service and value-adding industries relevant to the rural sector;
- Promote the region as a food bowl supplying clean, high quality food;
- Promote tourism, by building on the Shire's heritage assets, coastline, environmental qualities, rural landscape and agricultural produce;
- Capitalise on the Shire's proximity to Melbourne;

Apart from these references, the tourism industry is not discussed in detail in the Municipal Strategic Statement. For example, there are no specific directions in the MSS relating to tourism infrastructure development. The MSS needs to be updated in the first instance, in terms of including the data and findings relating to the significance of tourism to the Shire' economy¹. The MSS should also be updated to include the vision for tourism and key objectives and strategies for tourism as identified by this Plan.

2.2.2 South Gippsland Shire Council Plan 2004 -2008

The Shire Council Plan identifies the key directions in order to pursue the desired future for all who live and work in, or visit the municipality. The Council Plan outlines its strategic objectives within four environments – Social, Built, Economic and Natural.

Strategic objectives for the four environments outlined in the Council plan are identified below:

¹ Data and references should be taken from the recent comprehensive study, *Economic Impact of Tourism for the Prom Country Region, Urban Enterprise, 2004*

Social Environment:

Facilitate, plan and provide services that increase the viability of our communities.

Built Environment

Develop and guide sustainable urban design and infrastructure that will endeavour to meet the long-term aspirations and needs of our communities.

Economic Environment

Encourage investment, development and services that facilitate a planned and sustained growth for the Shire.

Natural Environment

Protect our unique environment by promoting and engaging in responsible practices and initiatives.

Key Strategies

Key strategies for these four environments outlined in the Council Plan that have relevance to tourism include:

- Facilitation of partnerships that will strengthen communities;
- Facilitation of policies and programs that protect cultural, heritage and indigenous assets;
- Development of land use policies that reflect the aspirations of the community and provide for the use and development of land resources;
- Lobbying for the provision of improved wastewater, telecommunications, transport, water, power and gas;
- Nurturing, supporting and engaging our existing industries;
- Lobbying for and facilitating new or expanded business and investment opportunities where appropriate within the Shire;
- Developing and implementing responsible environmental policies, practices and initiatives.

The South Gippsland Shire Council Plan does not contain any specific directions for tourism in the Shire. There is no reference to the economic significance of tourism for the Shire or the desired directions for tourism development.

2.2.3 Prom Country Tourism Business Plan 2003 –2005

The Prom Country Tourism Business Plan 2003 – 2005 is a three year plan which provides strategic direction for the Council's tourism unit by linking the vision with actions, shaping economic development through leadership and direction and providing effective decision-making and an understanding of the competitive environment and stakeholder needs.

The vision for tourism outlined in the plan is “to build and nurture a sustainable tourism industry which co-exists and complements the Shire’s unique natural environment and draws upon the culture of the region.”

The mission statement for Prom Country Tourism is “to facilitate economic growth in the Prom Country region through the development of a competitive tourism industry.”

The role of local government identified in the Business Plan includes:

- Facilitating industry development initiatives;
- Supporting destination marketing programs;
- Providing Visitor Information Centres and staffing;
- Providing public infrastructure and services;
- Supporting increased professionalism and customer service programs;
- Assisting with product development, for example town planning issues;
- Linking tourism with economic development and job creation programs;
- Providing strategic direction and assistance;
- Providing financial assistance to the regional tourism association.

Key objectives relating to the development of the tourism industry areas follows:

Strategic Development:

- To develop a comprehensive 3 year rolling Business Plan for tourism in Prom Country (this will be facilitated by the completion of this Plan)
- To ensure integration of the Prom Country Tourism Business Plan with the marketing and development plans of the Phillip Island & Gippsland Discovery (now replaced by Destination Gippsland Inc), Prom Country Regional Tourism (PCRT) and the Sydney - Melbourne Coastal Drive (SMCD) (structures are in place to achieve this)
- To ensure integration of the Prom Country Tourism Business Plan with Tourism Victoria’s Strategic Plan 2002-2006 (the Plan takes into account the objectives and strategies of Tourism Victoria’s Strategic Plan)
- To ensure that Council’s Tourism Policy is kept up to date and relevant (the Plan will provide directions to achieve this).

Product Development

- To attract external funding to assist with the undertaking of a tourism economic impact study (this has now been completed)
- To establish a comprehensive system for gathering ongoing statistical information on the economic impact of tourism (this is now in place)
- Develop an ongoing monitoring framework to specifically address visitor numbers, occupancy rates, visitor spending and visitor satisfaction in the region (this is now in place)

- To develop a communication system for the statistics gathered from the Prom Country Visitor Information Centre (this is underway).

Industry Development

- To continue to develop foster and grow a sustainable and professional tourism industry in South Gippsland (this is an on-going activity)
- To ensure effective communication and consultation with the tourism industry in Prom Country (this is an on-going activity).

Infrastructure Development

- To encourage new and expanding tourism development within Prom Country
- To attract external funding to attract tourism infrastructure in Prom Country
- To develop a Tourism Investment Kit to attract prospective investors to encourage new business development within Prom Country
- To take an active leadership role in improvement and rationalisation of signs within Prom Country.

Regional Promotion Development

- To ensure continual financial support of Prom Country Regional Tourism on an annual basis (on-going)
- To ensure a co-ordinated industry approach to external marketing in conjunction with Prom Country Regional Tourism (on-going)
- To increase awareness of Prom Country as a visitor destination through a comprehensive public relations and marketing program in conjunction with Prom Country Regional Tourism (on-going)
- To work in conjunction with Prom Country Regional Tourism, Destination Gippsland Inc and the Sydney - Melbourne Coastal Drive committees to promote the region as a competitive visitor destination by carrying out the actions of the respective marketing plans (on-going).

Clearly, this Plan will provide new objectives, strategies and actions for Prom Country Tourism for the next 5 years, upon which its rolling Business Plan can be based.

2.2.4 Prom Country Regional Tourism Association Inc Business Plan 2004 –2007 (draft)

Prom Country Regional Tourism is the industry organisation covering Prom Country region. Its primary role is to facilitate external marketing initiatives. The vision for Prom Country Regional Tourism is a “driven destination-marketing body that demonstrates strong leadership and enjoys ongoing local government support and long-term financial commitments.”

The mission statement from the Plan is outlined below:

“Through strong and effective leadership deliver a dynamic co-operative marketing & development program underpinned by the capacity to monitor progress and measure results. The program will complement the activities of local tourism associations, Destination Gippsland Inc, State and Federal marketing programs”.

The key strategic goals for Prom Country Regional Tourism are identified in the Plan as follows:

- To develop a successful regional tourism organisation that represents the needs and expectations of its members;
- To develop marketing collateral that is effective, cost efficient, relevant, current and professionally produced;
- To develop and promote Prom Country as a premier visitor destination and externally promote the Prom Country Region through ongoing strategic marketing;
- To continue to develop, foster and grow a sustainable and professional tourism industry in Prom Country;
- To communicate to Prom Country Regional Tourism (PCRT) developments and activities to all members, the community and affiliated stakeholders a clear understanding of the role, activities and successes of Prom Country Regional Tourism.

The Plan outlines a range of strategies under each of those goals. However, the Plan is in draft form only.

This Prom Country Sustainable Tourism Development Plan takes into account the suggested strategies, together with available research and the consultation undertaken as part of the Plan process and incorporates them into recommended strategies and actions for the next 5 years.

2.2.5 Visitor Information Centre Business Plan 2004 –2006 (draft)

The draft Visitor Information Centre Business Plan outlines core aims, strategies and objectives for the years 2004 – 2006. The aims for the Centre are outlined below:

Information provision

- Improve the online central booking service;
- Streamline the provision and distribution of local, regional and interstate brochures;
- Develop the Foster Information Centre;
- Improve the Satellite outlets.

Statistic collection & correlation

- Maintain a range of statistical information relating to Prom Country Visitor Information Centre activity;

- Develop a program to monitor visitor satisfaction with Prom Country Visitor Information Centre services.

Marketing Goal

- Increase website marketing;
- Increase merchandise sales;
- Increase advertising potential between the information centre & Prom Country Tourism;
- Develop & maintain a program of familiarisation tours for operators, staff the media & tourism industry partners.

Industry Support

- Increase the opportunity for tourism business promotion through the Centre;
- Increase merchandise sales.

2.2.6 Wilsons Promontory National Park Management Plan 2002

Wilsons Promontory National Park Management Plan focuses on strategies for improving the Parks conservation, cultural and heritage management as well as visitor amenities and experience. Key strategies for the improvement of the Parks visitor amenities and services include:

Information Interpretation and Education

- Provide appropriate motivational and tour planning information to visitors before they undertake their park visit.
- Establish the Park Entrance 4 as a key location for visitor orientation and information.
- Orient visitors in relation to park features.
- Inform visitors of appropriate behaviour during their park visit.
- Provide high-quality interpretation and education opportunities to promote understanding and appreciation of the values and proper use and conservation of the park.
- Operate a high-quality education service to meet the needs of schools visiting the park.

Access

- Encourage improved public transport to the park.
- Reduce traffic congestion in the park while maintaining appropriate public access.
- Maintain public access to the Wilsons Promontory Lightstation.

Visitor Amenity

- Manage the Recreation Zones in an effective, resource-efficient and environmentally sustainable manner in harmony with the national park setting.
- Enhance the visitor's 'sense of arrival' to the park.
- Base the visitor experience on exploration, enjoyment and appreciation of the natural values of the park.
- Design and develop unified and efficient visitor facilities and amenities within Tidal River Recreation Zone, in harmony with the natural setting and environment.
- Provide a level of service and quality of visitor facilities consistent with Tidal River's profile as the major overnight visitor destination in the Victorian national parks system.
- Keep operational support facilities in the Tidal River Recreation Zone to a minimum.
- Retain and reuse existing infrastructure in the Tidal River Recreation Zone, wherever possible.
- Provide day visitor facilities that enhance visitors' enjoyment of the park and are consistent with protecting park values.
- Provide a range of accommodation for visitors to the park. Manage Tidal River Recreation Zone primarily as a day visitor destination, and as an overnight accommodation destination, principally for camping.
- Maintain current area of, and access to, campsites at Tidal River and ensure they are managed in an environmentally sensitive manner.
- Provide opportunities for boating, at the same time minimising the environmental impact of the activity on park values and conflict with other visitors.
- Encourage the provision of appropriate visitor services to improve the quality and range of recreational experiences in the park.
- Establish an appropriate balance between general public and commercial operator use of the park.

Visitor Activities

- Provide a variety of bushwalking experiences on tracks maintained to appropriate standards depending on the setting, at the same time minimising impacts on park values.
- Provide a variety of long-distance walking experiences for independent and guided walkers.
- Provide opportunity for recreational fishing, at the same time minimising impacts on native fish populations and habitats.

2.2.7 Cape Liptrap Coastal Management Plan 2003

Cape Liptrap was identified by a number of stakeholders as a significant natural attraction with great tourism development potential. The Cape Liptrap Coastal Management Plan was developed in order to improve the Park's conservation management and visitor amenities.

Of importance for this plan are those strategies which improve the tourism product and amenity in Cape Liptrap. The following are a summary of the key strategies that are relevant for tourism:

- Master Plan will be prepared for visitor facilities at Venus Bay Beaches to provide high-quality day visitor facilities, upgraded carparking and the separation of vehicle and pedestrian access.
- A variety of walking opportunities will be provided within the park, from short nature trails to extended walks along remote sections of coastline.
- Horse riding will be provided for on the ocean beach between Arch Rock and the outfall pipeline.
- Dogs on leads will be allowed at three high-use beach areas at Waratah Bay, Walkerville and Venus Bay but prohibited in all other areas of the park.
- Information shelters and interpretative signs will be established at key visitor destinations within the park.

2.3 Regional Policy Framework

2.3.1 Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004 - 2007

The Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan, developed by Tourism Victoria covers the Gippsland Zone. Gippsland encompasses 6 municipalities including South Gippsland. South Gippsland has one of the major tourism drawcards in the Gippsland region - Wilsons Promontory, a Level 2 destination.

Key strategies for tourism development specific to the Prom Country or relevant to the region include:

Significance of Tourism

- Raise awareness of the value of tourism and engagement and participation among businesses and consumers;
- Educate local government representatives on the importance and value of tourism.

Industry Development

- Build a strong and cohesive industry structure of regional tourism associations and local tourism associations supported by local government and industry participation;
- Continue to progress regional tourism industry development issues;

- Encourage and support industry leadership in the Gippsland region;
- Secure increased contributions to cooperative marketing initiatives;
- Form strategic alliances with relevant campaign committees, product groups and destinations;
- Maintain a high standard of visitor services at key locations and foster improvements at supporting locations.

Professionalism and Excellence

- Conduct region-wide visitor satisfaction audits to benchmark performance;
- Encourage continuing education for existing tourism businesses.

Product Development

- Increase the number of internationally-ready product in the region;
- Integrate the promotion of Victoria's leading natural attractions in regional, national and international marketing programs;
- Upgrade visitor service facilities and interpretation of key natural attractions;
- Encourage the development of regional tourism groups with the skills to provide leadership and integrate marketing strategies at the local and regional levels;
- Integrate food and wine as an emerging product strength in marketing strategies;
- Develop touring itineraries linking key destinations and villages;
- Encourage backpacker product suppliers to participate in cooperative marketing campaigns and to undertake product development to meet consumer demands.

Infrastructure

- Assist in the facilitation of priority projects identified in the Victorian Tourism Infrastructure Development Strategy;
- Capitalise on shorter travel times to the Gippsland region through short break product development and touring opportunities.

Marketing

- Strengthen and develop appropriate strategic marketing alliances.

Events

- Maximise the tourism benefits from existing events;
- Identify and attract potential one-off/or annual events for Gippsland;
- Effectively leverage off the Commonwealth Games.

Information Provision

- Further strengthen the visitor information centre network;
- Investigate the introduction of a statewide visitor information centre booking system;
- Complete a statewide review of tourism signage.

2.4 State Policy Framework

2.4.1 Victoria's Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2002-2006

The strategic plan provides the key directions for Victoria's tourism industry to 2006. The strategies that are relevant to the Prom Country Region include the following.

(a) Marketing

Victoria's Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2002-2006 outlines some key shifts in approach to developing regional tourism including:

- Marketing of the key motivators for travel – including destinations and attractions, special interest themes and touring routes;
- Focusing on developing and marketing touring;
- Continuing to focus on increasing yield (visitation x length of stay x expenditure);
- Planning, development and marketing for special interest segments.

(b) Industry Leadership

Strong, well-managed and professional local and regional tourism associations are critical for the tourism industry. These associations should be driven by the private sector with local government support. The associations need to be professionally managed and accountable.

(c) Professionalism and Standards

Peak industry bodies, industry sector organisations and regional tourism associations have a responsibility in business development through leadership, industry training, education and networking. Strategies include the revision and consolidation of advisory services to tourism businesses to improve their viability and sustainability, and to systematically identify and action professional development needs.

Businesses tend to view professional development as an investment rather than an expense.

Accreditation is about ensuring the delivery of an experience in a reliable manner that is consistent with promoted expectations. It should not be confused with star ratings that define the level of facilities and services.

Strategies include the marketing of accreditation programs to both operators and consumers, investigating mechanisms to streamline accreditation processes, work with Australian Tourism Accreditation Association to encourage national criteria and consumer branding for accreditation schemes and investigating the use of a star rating system similar to the one used for accommodation providers for other sectors of the industry eg attractions, wineries, museums.

2.4.2 Victoria's Food and Wine Tourism Plan 2004 – 2007

The objectives of the Victorian Food and Wine Tourism Plan are relevant for the Prom Country region, as an emerging food and wine tourism region, and include the following:

- Increase yield (visitor numbers, length of stay and expenditure) from food and wine tourism.
- Increase visitor satisfaction of Victoria's food and wine tourism experiences.
- Increase interstate and intrastate awareness of the quality, diversity and accessibility of Victoria's wine regions and food and wine tourism experiences.
- Further develop the natural synergy between food and wine and achieve the consistent integration of food as part of the winery tourism experience.
- Achieve wider regional and seasonal dispersal of food and winery tourism.
- Encourage ongoing training, education and accreditation of operators and employees to deliver outstanding hospitality experiences.
- Increase and strengthen co-operative alliances between key stakeholders.
- Increase and strengthen cooperative alliances between wineries and other local and regional tourism products and services.
- Raise the international profile and recognition of Melbourne's culinary experiences.

A number of the actions in the Food and Wine Tourism Plan can be implemented at the local level. These include:

- Continue to integrate food and wine as a core product strength in all marketing strategies.
- Encourage and support resourcing by Regional Tourism Organisations of regional food and wine tourism groups to implement regional Food and Wine Tourism Plans.
- Encourage restaurants to feature Victorian wines on their wine lists to help raise awareness of the wine regions.
- Develop and implement a public relations campaign that includes the use of regional signature dishes, produce, personalities and events to hero the distinctive style and character of each region and encourage an associated food/wine brand identity. Incorporate better utilisation of visitor information centres.

- Build on the food and wine legends program (associated with the Melbourne Food & Wine Festival) to create culinary 'ambassadors' for Melbourne and each region linked to the food and wine public relations strategy.
- Encourage training and educational opportunities for the regional food and wine tourism sector that meet the needs of small business eg. workplace based training.
- Encourage food and wine businesses to adopt sustainability principles.
- Develop a consumer awards program focused on the best food and wine experiences linked to the PR strategy.
- Encourage food and wine tourism product to continue to enter regional awards and the Victorian Tourism Awards.
- Encourage strategic alliances and cooperation between regional food and wine groups and local and regional tourism organisations.
- Encourage food and wine groups to develop alliances with regional primary producers, markets, cafes and restaurants.
- Investigate opportunities for agri-tourism development.
- Identify opportunities for further development of food and wine tourism product eg. quality restaurants in key regional destinations. This may be facilitated through regional and/or destination planning.

These objectives and actions are further developed at a regional level through the Gippsland Food and Wine Tourism Group Strategy.

2.5 National Policy Framework

2.5.1 A Medium to Long Term Strategy for Tourism

This Australian Government White Paper provides a structural base for strategic objectives to grow both international and domestic tourism in Australia.

The long-term objectives are for a tourism industry which:

- Offers tourists uniquely Australian experiences of such high quality that they will want to re-experience them and encourage friends and family to do so;
- Welcomes more Australians to undertake travel in their own country;
- Supports a diversity of sustainable and profitable enterprises that share this vision and strive for high level achievement in satisfying customer needs;
- Develops and grows high-yielding products and markets through development of innovative business strategies and high-yield niche markets;
- Embraces innovation and ongoing improvement and adopts appropriate technology;
- Attracts appropriate investment to support growth and development of a Platinum Plus destination;

- Supports a highly skilled workforce motivated to provide tourists with the highest levels of quality and professional service, and is an integral part of our social and economic fabric, indicated by a widespread community desire to welcome visitors and share the Australian experience.

In terms of achieving these objectives the White Paper discusses opportunities which would encourage growth. These include:

- Internet usage;
- Industry accreditation (Provide better quality tourism products);
- Building niche markets – appropriate to the strengths in a region;
- Marketing initiatives such as Brand Australia;
- Tourism ambassadors program;
- International study market;
- Better research;
- Attracting major events – using these for marketing;
- Promotion of domestic tourism;
- Links between tourism and film making;
- Skilled tourism workforce – cooks, language;
- Improved infrastructure;
- Growing sustainable tourism;
- Strategic land transport.

2.6 Policy/Strategy Issues and Opportunities

2.6.1 Issues

- The local policy framework (ie at Shire level) for tourism is weak, although there are sound tourism policy frameworks in place particularly at the regional and State level that have relevance for the Prom Country region.
- The Council's MSS lacks detail in describing the direction of the tourism industry. For example, there are no specific directions in the MSS relating to tourism infrastructure development. Similarly, the Council Plan contains little specific direction in respect of tourism development.
- This Plan needs to integrate the existing tourism policy framework into recommended strategies and actions.
- Collecting and analysing relevant data on tourism is identified as a key strategy in a number of the relevant plans at regional, State and National level. Research methodologies for the Shire need to provide meaningful data for the Shire's tourism industry and complement research at the regional and State level.

- Information distribution via Visitor Information Centres has been identified as an area for consideration and development in the Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan as well as Tourism Victoria's Strategic Business Plan. Further investigation of the optimal location and effective operation of the Visitor Information Centre should be a key objective for this Plan.

2.6.2 Opportunities

- The data and findings relating to the significance of tourism to the Shire's economy² are available for inclusion in the Council MSS and Council Plan. The vision for tourism and key objectives and strategies for tourism as identified by this Plan, could also be included in Council's MSS and Council Plan.
- The Gippsland Regional Tourism Development Plan 2004 – 2007 outlines the importance of undertaking relevant research into the significance of tourism and the satisfaction of tourists. The Shire is fortunate to have undertaken extensive baseline research in this area in 2004. The opportunity exists to continue to use and distribute this information as widely as possible to encourage support for the tourism industry amongst the local community, business and funding bodies;
- Tourism strategies at the regional and State level have relevance for the Prom Country region. The Shire can closely align with these regional and State strategies to continually develop the professionalism and quality of the tourism industry and attract funding for infrastructure and marketing initiatives;
- There are opportunities to leverage off Tourism Victoria, Destination Gippsland and Destination Melbourne marketing initiatives, particularly in targeting interstate and international visitors in Melbourne;
- Through the established regional groups (eg Destination Gippsland Inc, Gippsland Food, Wine Tourism Group and Creative Gippsland) there are opportunities to continue to build partnerships with the other municipalities in Gippsland;
- Wilsons Promontory is identified by Tourism Victoria as one of a very few Level 2 destinations in Gippsland. Wilsons Promontory also attracts the largest number of backpackers to Gippsland. There is opportunity for Wilsons Promontory to be marketed by Destination Gippsland Inc as a key destination to attract international and interstate visitors. This is in line with recommendations in the Wilsons Promontory National Park Management Plan, which seeks to promote Wilsons Promontory as one of a range of places to visit and stay in the Gippsland region.
- Key opportunities for joint cooperation between Wilsons Promontory National Park and the South Gippsland Shire are:
 - The development of Wilson's Promontory as a daytrip destination;

² Data and references should be taken from the recent comprehensive study, *Economic Impact of Tourism for the Prom Country Region, Urban Enterprise, 2004*

- The provision of public transport to Wilsons Promontory National Park;
- Management and provision of private sector businesses which support the parks operations including – public transport businesses, eco-tourism businesses, accommodation businesses and visitor interpretation and information relating to the Park.
- A key feature of the Cape Liptrap management plan is to improve and provide visitor amenities such as walking trails, visitor information and interpretation throughout the Park. This will improve the functionality of the Park and its ability to attract higher levels of visitation without compromising the natural environment. In addition to this, the need for a Masterplan has been identified for Venus Bay foreshore including upgrade and expansion of parking facilities as well as water access. Improvement of the foreshore at Venus Bay long term is likely to increase usage and visitation. It is important that the Shire supports Parks Victoria in these processes.

3 Tourism Product

3.1 Key Product Features

Parks and Reserves

Wilson's Promontory National Park

Wilson's Promontory NP is the most southerly point on the Australian mainland and has been reserved as a National Park since 1898. The natural beauty and undeveloped nature of the Prom has attracted large numbers of visitors for many years. The Prom has a very diverse landscape that lends itself to many outdoor activities including bushwalking/coastal walking, bird watching, guided walks and tours, kayaking/canoeing, diving, fishing, snorkelling, surfing and boat tours.

Strzelecki Ranges

The Strzelecki Ranges are a relatively undeveloped tourism product, however are an exceptional natural resource at the northern boundary of the Prom Country region. The Ranges are comprised mainly of private landholdings and State Forest. The Ranges have been a source of hardwood Mountain Ash for many years and large tracts are still set aside for logging purposes. The Strzelecki Ranges are linked by the Grand Ridge Road which is mostly unsealed, however as a touring route provides outstanding views south to Bass Strait and the Great Dividing Range to the north. The Ranges provide a backdrop for exploration of the rainforest for mountain bikers and hikers. There is great potential for the Grand Ridge Road to become one of the great touring routes in Victoria, however substantial upgrading of the road, signage and product audit would be required.

Beaches

Prom Country region is exposed on its southern boundary to Bass Strait, where there are many popular ocean beaches for activities such as swimming, surfing and sunbathing. Ocean beach tourism product also includes the coastal villages of Venus Bay, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point, as well as the beaches within the Wilson's Promontory National Park.

Corner Inlet, Shallow Inlet and Andersons Inlet provide sheltered water bodies with beaches that are more appealing to families.

Villages

The Prom Country region has a number of villages each with their own cultural heritage and point of difference. Villages in the region vary from inland dairy and former coal towns to coastal and beach destinations. Villages in the Prom Country region that have developed some tourism product and have potential for further development include Korumburra, Leongatha, Meeniyan, Foster, Fish Creek, Mirboo North, and Port Welshpool, Toora, Yanakie, Sandy Point, Waratah Bay, Venus Bay and Koonwarra. These villages offer various themed and cultural experiences and including arts and crafts, heritage, cafes and restaurants, events and activities.

Food and Wine - Farming and Agriculture

Farming and Agriculture

Prom Country region has some of the highest quality soils in Victoria suitable for a range of agricultural uses. Dairy and beef production has long been one of the key agricultural products in the region, however fruit and vegetable production are growing industries.

Food and Wine/Boutique Beer

There are a number notable wineries in South Gippsland that are open for wine tasting and sales. In addition, the Grand Ridge Brewery (boutique beer) is rapidly becoming a reputable export product of Prom Country region and is open for tastings and dinner.

There are only a small number of notable cafes and restaurants in Prom Country region.

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets and produce markets are found in Koonwarra, Nyora and Mirboo North and operate on a monthly basis. Product sold at the markets includes blueberries, eggs, Gippsland Beef, goats' cheese, organic fruit, bakery products, preserves and flowers.

There are a number of food-related festivals that also reinforce the emerging food and wine tourism product in the region and these are described below.

Events

There are a number of events and festivals held throughout the year in Prom Country region. Many of these focus on the food and wine product in the region and other events are developing an associated food and wine component.

Some key festivals and events include:

- The Slow Food Festival;
- South Gippsland Farmers Markets;
- Tastes of Prom Country;

- Summer Starter – Southern Gippsland Wine Trail
- Port Welshpool Sea Days Festival;
- Stony Creek Cup
- Gourmet Gallop
- Quilt Hanging Festival at Loch;
- South Gippsland Golf Classic;
- Inverloch Jazz Festival;
- Mossvale Park music events.

3.2 Tourism Product Strengths

Recent data collected and analysed by Urban Enterprise³ indicates that natural attractions are the primary tourism product in the Prom Country region with 72% of visitors visiting a National Park, 56% of visitors going to the beach and 43% of visitors bushwalking. This data also highlights the importance of Wilsons Promontory National Park as the key destination in Prom Country, given that Wilsons Promontory is the only National Park in the Prom Country region.

A secondary and emerging tourism product strength in the region, as indicated by visitor activities, is food and wine tourism, with 35% of visitors eating out, 21% visiting food producers, 19% of visitors having a picnic and 15% visiting wineries.

The third ranked tourism product in South Gippsland is outdoor adventure/activities with 43% of visitors bushwalking, 12% of visitors fishing and 11% participating in other outdoor activities.

The tourism product strengths of the region are illustrated in the following Figure 1.

³ Economic Impact of Tourism in the Prom Country Region, Urban Enterprise, 2004

Figure 1 Tourism Product Strengths in Prom Country

	Product Segments	Strength of Product
Nature Based	National Parks and Natural Features	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Coast/beach	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Passive outdoor activity	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Wildlife – Marine life	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Parks and Gardens	Existing Secondary Product Strength
Adventure	Cycling	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Water-based	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Bushwalking	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Boating/ sailing	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Fishing	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Golf	Existing Secondary Product Strength
Food and Wine	Wineries	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Gourmet/ fine dining	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Farm gate/local gourmet produce	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Café culture	Existing Secondary Product Strength
Accommodation	Backpacker	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Boutique / B&B	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Camping/ caravan	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Self contained - Cabins	Existing Primary Product Strength
	Country Guesthouse- Farmstay	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Hotel – Motel Resort	Existing Secondary Product Strength
Other	Car Touring	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Spa –Health	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Arts craft galleries /culture	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	European Heritage	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Aboriginal Culture	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Village Life	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Events and Festivals	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Shopping / markets / antiques	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Conference conventions	Existing Secondary Product Strength
	Family destination	Existing Secondary Product Strength

Existing Primary Product Strength	Existing Primary Product Strength
Existing Secondary Product Strength	Existing Secondary Product Strength

Emerging Product Strength	Emerging Product Strength
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3.3 Tourism Product Issues and Opportunities

Tourism product issues and opportunities identified throughout the consultation process and background research are outlined as follows;

3.3.1 Issues

- The reliance on natural attractions as a tourism product strength means that appropriate infrastructure is needed (accommodation, physical access, tours/interpretive product) in order to leverage yield from the natural product.
- With a reliance on natural attractions as a tourism product strength it is also imperative that tourism infrastructure development is environmentally and ecologically sustainable to ensure sustainability of the natural attractions.
- Further tourism infrastructure development needs to be appropriately planned and managed through master planning and structure planning processes.
- There is a lack of large-scale tourism businesses in the Prom Country region. Currently the tourism industry is dominated by micro and small businesses.
- Prom Country region to date has been unable to attract the large-scale tourism developments and large, quality tourism businesses as seen in other coastal municipalities such as Bass Coast (Phillip Island), Mornington Peninsula and Surf Coast Shire. These larger businesses provide critical mass in terms of tourism infrastructure, raise awareness amongst consumers of the region and bring substantial expertise and financial resources in respect of tourism promotion and marketing.
- Tourism events held in the region need to be co-ordinated to minimise competing events at the same time, to ensure that visitation is spread throughout the year and to ensure that events reinforce the region's tourism product strengths.
- Tourism product strengths based on natural attractions and outdoor activities means that peaks and troughs can occur in visitation throughout the year – high visitation in summer and much lower visitation in winter.
- Recent fires have highlighted the regions reliance on natural attractions, in particular, Wilsons Promontory National Park. The fires substantially impacted on tourist visitation to the region and the financial viability of some tourism businesses.
- Transport- no public/private transport available for visitors without their own mode of transport to access Wilsons Promontory National Park
- Parks Victoria – Tour operators – Relationships – The relationship between Parks Victoria and nature based tourism businesses should be strengthened to co-ordinate the development and promotion of nature based product.

3.3.2 Opportunities

- Much of the natural attraction product is underdeveloped from a tourism point of view. In other words, further infrastructure development is needed to take advantage of the natural product in the Prom Country region. This includes additional visitor accommodation at the gateway to Wilsons Promontory, road improvements to facilitate touring through the Strzelecki Ranges and improved access to the coastline and beaches;
- Touring through the region is a product that can be further developed and promoted. However, touring requires good road infrastructure, well-located visitor amenities (viewing points, toilets, picnic areas, interpretive information) and unambiguous, consistent directional signage. Touring can be promoted according to product “themes” such as food and wine, natural attractions and villages. The advantages of touring include:
 - Providing a wet/poor weather activity for existing visitors;
 - Facilitating dispersal of visitors throughout the region and hence spreading the benefits of tourism across the region;
 - Raising awareness of the various activities and tourism products that are available in the region, with the potential to encourage repeat visitation and/or increased length of stay.
- The fertile soil and high rainfall throughout the Prom Country region is ideal for horticulture. There is potential to further develop agri-tourism in the region to build on the emerging strength of food and wine tourism. The Shire’s planning policies need to provide for tourism-related development (farm-gate sales, visitor accommodation, cafes/restaurants) related to and in conjunction with agricultural enterprises;
- Tourism events that reinforce existing and emerging tourism product strengths provide increased awareness of the tourism product and encourage repeat visitation. Opportunities exist to further develop and promote the existing events such as the Tastes of Prom Country, Slow Food Festival and Mossvale Park into “flagship” events for the region.
- The region has a number of products that compliment, yet provide diversity from Wilsons Promontory National Park. Opportunities exist to further develop and market these complimentary products to enhance visitation to Wilsons Prom and to increase the perception of alternative product existing in the region.

4 Tourism Infrastructure

4.1 Introduction

This section examines the tourism infrastructure in the Prom Country region, which is vital in supporting the tourism product. Tourism infrastructure includes:

- accommodation (hotels, motels, guest houses, self-contained cottages, holiday homes, resorts);
- visitor information services (Visitor Information Centre, information bays);
- visitor amenities (viewing areas, toilets, picnic facilities);
- road access (including road condition);
- signage (including tourism signage and directional signage);
- pedestrian and cycling trails (including rail trails and footpath network);
- public transport (including bus, rail, coach tours, taxis, rental cars); and
- water access (including boating infrastructure).

4.2 Access

Prom Country region is located at the most southern point of Victoria approximately two hour's drive from Melbourne. Melbourne Airport is approximately 2.5 to 3 hour's drive via the South Gippsland Highway, Monash Freeway, Citylink and Tullamarine Freeway.

There are three main access points to the Prom Country region. These are via the South Gippsland Highway from the east and west, the Bass Highway from the West and the Strzelecki Highway from the north.

4.3 Visitor Information

A Level 1 Visitor Information Centre is located on the South Gippsland Highway adjacent to the Coal Creek Historical Village in Korumburra.

The Visitor Information Centre provides the following services:

- Accommodation booking service;
- Display of promotional material including product brochures;
- Display of local arts and crafts;
- Sale of maps and postcards;

- Visitor enquiries.

There are 2.6 EFT (equivalent full time) staff at the Korumburra VIC, as well as a number of volunteer staff.

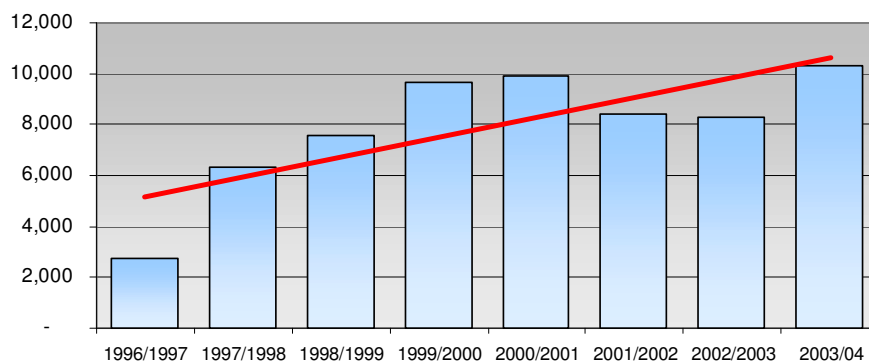
4.3.1 Usage

Telephone enquiries and accommodation bookings have progressively increased since 1996. However, walk-in visitation has remained flat.

Telephone Enquires

Figure 2 below indicates a steady increase in the number of telephone enquiries in the VIC since 1996. The number of telephone enquiries has increased from around 2,500 per annum in 1996 to around 10,000 per annum in 2004.

Figure 2 Number of Telephone Enquiries - Korumburra VIC, 1996 - 2004

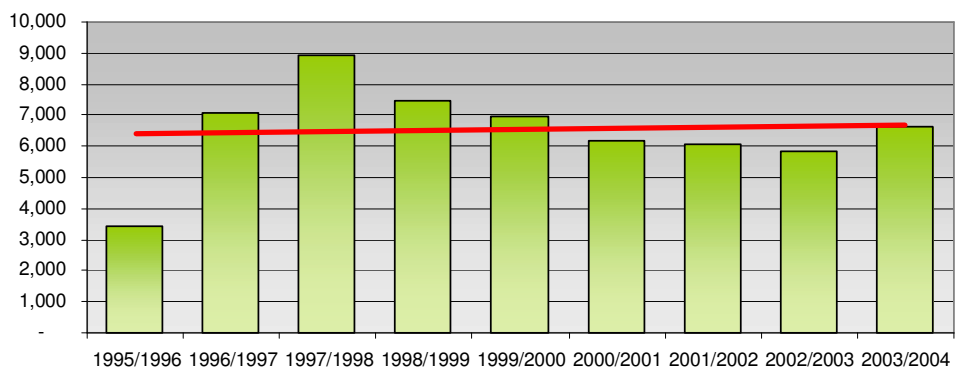


Source: Prom Country Visitor Information Centre

Walk-In Visitors

Figure 3 below indicates that there has generally been no increase in walk-in visitors to the VIC since 1996. Walk-in visitors to the VIC were around 7,000 in 1996 and around 6,500 in 2004.

Figure 3 Number of Walk in Visitors - Korumburra VIC, 1996-2004

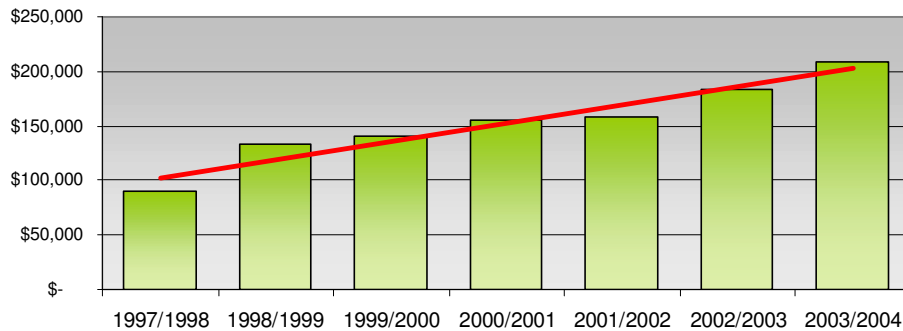


Source: Prom Country Visitor Information Centre

Accommodation Bookings

Figure 4 below shows that the gross value of accommodation bookings through the VIC has increased steadily since 1996. The value of bookings has increased from around \$90,000 in 1996 to around \$210,000 in 2004.

Figure 4 Gross Value of Accommodation Bookings - Korumburra VIC, 1996-2004



Source: Prom Country Visitor Information Centre

Temporary VIC in Foster

A temporary VIC is run by the Prom Country VIC, Prom Coast Tourism and Stockyard Gallery volunteers in Foster during the peak summer period. Walk-in visitor statistics indicate higher visitation to the temporary VIC in Foster than the permanent Level 1 VIC at Coal Creek near Korumburra.

Comparison With Bass Coast VICs

Table 1 below compares the level of walk-in visitors to Visitor Information Centres in other Visitor Information Centres in Gippsland.

The Level 1 VIC in Newhaven, Phillip Island attracts around 150,000 visitors per annum – 2,300% more than the Level 1 VIC at Korumburra (6,500 visitors per annum). Phillip Island receives approximately 25% more visitors than Prom Country region so this does not account for the difference in VIC usage.

Both the VICs at Wonthaggi and Inverloch attract more than double the current usage of the Korumburra VIC.

Table 1 Walk-In Visitors to Gippsland Visitor Information Centres

Visitor Information Centre	Estimated Visitor Numbers (2004)
Phillip Island Visitor Information Centre	150,000
Wonthaggi Visitor Information Centre	15,000
Inverloch Visitor Information Centre	15,000 - 18,000

Source: Bass Coast Shire Council

Note: Also need to add figures for Latrobe and Gippsland VIC's.

4.4 Signage

More than 90% of visitors to the Prom Country region travel by car.⁴

Appropriate road-based signage is critical to support the tourism industry in terms of: -

- Directing car-based tourists to the Prom Country region from Melbourne and Gippsland;
- Highlighting the entry points to the Prom Country region;
- Reinforcing the Prom Country “brand”;
- Directing car-based tourists around the Prom Country region (ie to the various destinations within Prom Country and in support of car-based touring);
- Promoting touring linking Prom Country’s natural attractions, food and wine product and villages;
- Ensuring visitors can readily find the attractions and accommodation establishments in the Prom Country region;
- Promote emerging strengths/reinforce the product strengths.

4.5 Transport

4.5.1 Road Infrastructure

In addition to the three highways that traverse the Prom Country region, there is a network of sealed roads providing access to the key destinations in the region. However, unsealed roads service two key areas of significant natural attraction, namely the Strzelecki Ranges (Grand Ridge Road) and Cape Liptrap.

There is also poor road access along the coast, south of Venus Bay and Waratah Bay.

Viewing areas are limited in the region and visitor amenities are generally confined to the larger townships and are variable in condition and quality.

4.5.2 Public Transport

V/LINE

Prom Country region has no rail service.

There is a V/LINE coach service that stops at Nyora, Loch, Korumburra, Leongatha, Meeniyah, Buffalo, Fish Creek, Foster, Toora, Welshpool and Yarram.

This service provides access, albeit infrequent, to many areas of the Shire, although there is no service to the major tourist attraction of Wilsons Promontory.

⁴ Tourism Research Australia, National Visitor Survey, 2003

The V/LINE coach service operates 7 days a week, with regular services from Spencer Street, Melbourne from 9:25am through to 6:40pm. The service takes approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes to reach Leongatha. Ordinary adult full fare to Leongatha costs \$37.20.

There are a small number of tour operators that provide coach transport to Wilsons Promontory, although this operate as organised tours rather than just transportation. The tours operate infrequently and can be dependent on numbers.

4.5.3 Taxis

There are a number of taxi companies which operate in the Prom Country region including:

- South Gippsland Regional Taxis, Leongatha
- Foster-Welshpool Taxis
- Inverloch Taxis
-

Although the cost of getting from Foster to Wilsons Promontory National Park is a barrier.

4.6 Water Access

Toora

Boat ramps need upgrading and would require ongoing maintenance costs.

Port Welshpool

This is a popular fishing and boating destination with all-weather/all-tide boat ramps, as well as a number of jetties.

Port Franklin

Port Franklin is a fishing village on the banks of the Franklin River. The river is lined with boat moorings for the local professional fishermen and recreational fishing enthusiasts.

Tidal River

There is a boat-launching ramp in Norman Bay at Tidal River. However, the ramp can only be used at high tide.

Sandy Point

There is a boat ramp at Sandy Point with access into Waratah Bay and Shallow Inlet.

4.7 Accommodation

Visitor accommodation establishments include hotels, motels, B&Bs, self-contained cabins, guest houses, hostels, caravan parks and camping grounds.

Recent research into the accommodation sector⁵ indicates that:

- There are 187 commercial accommodation establishments in the Prom Country region, with over half of these being self-contained cottages. Cabin accommodation comprises the second highest number of rooms in the region and the second highest takings overall;
- There are an average of 6 guest rooms per accommodation establishment;
- The average occupancy rate for self-contained accommodation is relatively low but takings from these businesses are higher than any other accommodation type due to higher tariffs;
- Accommodation establishments are generally evenly spread throughout the region, although there are higher concentrations of accommodation establishments in Foster and Yanakie;
- The 18 caravan parks and cabin accommodation establishments in the Prom Country region contain around 1400 camping sites. One third of these camping sites are located in Wilsons Promontory;
- 44% of overnight visitors pay for accommodation. Of these 40% stay in caravan parks or are camping;
- Holiday homes contribute extensively to the built infrastructure, in particular in the coastal towns. There are almost 2,500 holiday homes in the Prom Country region - around one quarter of all dwellings. The majority of holiday homes in the Prom Country region are located in Venus Bay (40% of all holiday homes) and Sandy Point (18%).

4.8 Tourism Infrastructure Issues and Opportunities

4.8.1 Prom Country VIC Issues

- The Visitor Information Centre experiences very low levels of usage by walk-in visitors. This is a major impediment to increasing tourism yield. Research indicates that 13% of VIC users stayed additional nights because of VIC information, 21% took additional tours and 56% visited additional attractions.⁶ Prom Country is missing out on increased yield due to the low levels of usage of the VIC. The distribution of visitor information is crucial for dispersal of visitors throughout the region.
- Some key issues with the current VIC include:

⁵ Economic Impact of Tourism in the Prom Country Region, Urban Enterprise, 2004

⁶ Deery, M. Jago, L. Daughery, S. Carson, D. Adams, K. 2003, *Improving the Yield of Tourism in Regional Areas: The Role of Visitor Information Centres*, Australia CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd, Southern Cross University & Victoria University, Australia

- The current VIC is located off the South Gippsland Highway and direct access is not available from the Highway;
 - The VIC is totally obscured from passing traffic on the South Gippsland Highway by heavy vegetation planted along the Highway frontage. Despite the presence of the “i” signs, it is likely that many passing visitors are unaware of the existence of the VIC, or are unsure of its exact location and hence are discouraged from diverting from the Highway;
 - External signage visible from the South Gippsland Highway gives the impression that the VIC is located within, or is part of, the Coal Creek Historical Village. This could deter visitors who are not interested in visiting Coal Creek;
 - The building is relatively small, adding to its lack of visibility;
 - The location of the VIC is not central to the tourism product strengths of the region, i.e. natural attractions (Wilson's Promontory, coast, Strzelecki Ranges).
- Location, visibility and ease of access are critical factors influencing VIC usage⁷.
 - There have been a number of suggestions regarding relocation of the existing VIC. Most of these suggested locations are parochially-based, rather than being derived from a rational analysis of the optimal location, ie having regard to visitor needs and visitation patterns.

⁷ Location Study for Ballarat Visitor Information Centre, Urban Enterprise, 2005

4.8.2 Accommodation

- There is a lack of large-scale, quality accommodation in the Prom Country region that can cater to large groups (including corporate groups, conference & tour groups). This accommodation “gap” has the following effects;
 - Limited potential of the region to attract and hold high yield visitors;
 - An inability to cater to corporate groups (meetings, exhibitions, incentive travel, conferences);
 - A lack of access to national and international booking networks available to “branded” hotels, together with the exposure that comes from the promotion of these booking networks.

4.8.3 Infrastructure

- Poor road conditions are a major impediment to accessing natural attractions and developing touring routes, including the Grand Ridge Road and Cape Liptrap Coastal Park;
- Lack of public transport inhibits many travellers, in particular backpacker markets. Restricted timetables also make travelling between locations difficult.
- Water supply and sewerage are impediments to growth in areas such as Yanakie. Infrastructure provision needs to be investigated to determine whether development can be environmentally and financially sustainable;

4.8.4 Signage

- Signage issues include the following:
 - Obsolete signage (tourism businesses no longer operating or operating under changed circumstances);
 - Inconsistent signage (design, siting, size);
 - Inadequate tourism signage (directing visitors to tourism businesses);
 - Inadequate directional signage (eg directing visitors to Wilsons Promontory from the Monash Freeway, similar to Phillip Island and Mornington Peninsula).

4.8.5 Opportunities

Prom Country Visitor Information Centre

- Improving the visibility and access to the existing VIC is likely to increase the usage of the VIC;
- Given the existing low level of walk-in visitors to the VIC, there is significant potential to increase tourism yield for the Prom Country region through a more effective location of the VIC;

Infrastructure

- Recent research undertaken for the Prom Country region can be used to promote the tourism infrastructure opportunities, including accommodation;
- Backpackers have the propensity to be an important market to the Prom Country Region but limitations in public transport are inhibitive to market development. Through consultation with transport providers, new, increased or extended services could alleviate limitations.
- The development of quality, larger-scale visitor accommodation establishments will address existing accommodation “gaps”. This would:
 - Create a tourist attraction in its own right, through appropriate theming and/or resort facilities;
 - Cater to large groups (more than 40 people), which cannot currently be accommodated in a single establishment;
 - Attract highly skilled business operators that have expertise and financial resources that could assist with tourism industry development in the region (mentoring, skills transfer, marketing/promotion initiatives).
- Potential exists to develop a cluster of accommodation facilities at the gateway to Wilsons Promontory. This would provide:
 - Accommodation within close proximity and easy access of the National Park, without increasing the development footprint within the Park;
 - The potential to incorporate a range of supporting facilities catering to guests of the accommodation establishments, as well as other people visiting the Park. This would include cafes/restaurants, entertainment, recreation facilities, tour facilities.

4.9 Conclusions

Signage

- Developing a strategy for establishing quality directional and tourism signage, in appropriate locations and in a consistent format;
- Seeking funding for progressive implementation of the signage strategy;
- Removing obsolete and damaged signage;

Visitor Information Services

- Providing a basic upgrade of the existing Level 1 VIC in the short term;

Accommodation

- Developing a prospectus aimed at attracting investment in quality accommodation (world class standard) as well as investment in accommodation that can cater for large groups (conferences, coach groups) and families (moderately priced).

5 Tourism Markets

5.1 Introduction

The following section provides an overview of existing research relating to visitation, visitor profile and niche markets for the Prom Country region. The data below indicates that Melbourne is largest market, and in particular the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. The Prom Country region only attracts a small number of interstate (11%) and international visitors (3%).

5.2 Visitor Profile – Domestic Market

Number of Visitors

- Prom Country region attracts an estimated 1.1 million visitors annually. Of these 577,000 are overnight visitors and 573,000 are daytrip visitors.

Reason for Visiting

- 68% of visitors to the South Gippsland are visiting for “holiday or leisure”.
- 28% of visitors to Prom Country region are regular visitors and a further 20% were recommended to visit.

Visitor Origin

- 73% of visitors to the Prom Country region come from Melbourne, 14% come from country Victoria, 11% are from interstate and a further 3% are from overseas.
- The majority of Melbourne visitors are from the eastern suburbs.

Overnight Stays

- The average length of stay for overnight visitors is 3.7 nights.

Visitor Activities

- 76% of visitors to the Prom Country region are sightseeing, 72% visit a national park, and a further 56% of visitors go to the beach.

Visitor Expenditure

- Daytrip visitors to the Prom Country region spend an estimated \$38 million annually. Overnight visitors to the Prom Country region (excluding visitors staying in holiday homes) spend an estimated \$103 million annually.
- Daytrip visitors spend an estimated \$66 per person per visit. Overnight visitors (excluding visitors staying holiday homes) spend an estimated \$322 per person per visit.

Visitor Perception

- 52% of visitors perceive the Prom Country region as being “relaxing and peaceful”. 43% of visitors to the Prom Country region associate it with Wilsons Promontory.

Characteristics of Holiday Home Ownership

- The vast majority of holiday homeowners (89%) live in Melbourne, in particular the eastern suburbs.
- The main reason for purchasing a holiday home in the Prom Country region was the natural beauty and tranquillity of the area.
- Almost half of all holiday homeowners have owned their holiday home for more than 11 years.
- An estimated 257,000 visitors stay in holiday homes in the Prom Country region each year.
- The average number of visits per holiday home is 27 days per year.
- Visitation and length of stay is higher in the summer months. The actual visits made to holiday homes are generally steady through the rest of the year.

5.3 Emerging Markets

Emerging markets include food & wine, outdoor/eco-tourism. These markets are particularly suited to Roy Morgan Value Segments, “Young Optimism”, “Socially Aware” and “visible Achievement”.

5.4 Key Value Segments

Table 2 below indicates that the key value segments that visit the Phillip Island and Gippsland Discovery region (which includes Prom Country) are 'Traditional Family Life' (23.9%), 'Look at Me' (16.0%) and 'Visible Achievement' (14.8%).

Table 2 Roy Morgan Value Segments for Phillip Island and Gippsland Discovery

Value Segment	Proportion of visitors
Traditional Family Life	23.9%
'Look At Me'	16.0%
Visible Achievement	14.8%
Conventional Family Life	12.3%
Socially Aware	7.7%
Something Better	5.9%
Fairer Deal	5.8%
Real Conservatism	5.2%
Basic Needs	4.5%
Young Optimism	3.8%

Source: Roy Morgan Holiday Tracking Survey

Table 3 below shows the key characteristics and holiday style for each of these key market segments.

Table 3 Profile of Value Segments

Segment	Look at Me	Visible Achievement	Traditional Family Life
Characteristics	fashion and trend conscious conforming to their peer group Sport, leisure and fun	Success & career driven Traditional values about home & work Seek quality and value for money Wealth creators 35-49 years	Motivated by security, reliability Generally empty nesters Cautious of new things 50+
Holiday Style	Caravan Park, Visiting friends and relatives Outdoor activities Adventurous activities Pubs, Club, Discos	Indulgent/boutique destinations Meet & mix with people	Discovery, nostalgia Visiting Friends and Relatives Package trips Touring

Source: Based on Roy Morgan Research – Value Segments

Table 4 below shows the value segments that best match the tourism product in the Prom Country region. There is potential to further target the value segments 'Socially Aware' and 'Young Optimism' to increase yield and visitation.

Table 4 Preferred Activities of Value Segments Matched to Prom Country Product

Activities -	Socially Aware	Visible Achievement	Traditional Family Life	Young Optimism
Nature Based	Wilderness Bush walking National Parks Country/wildlife	Bush walking National Parks Country/wildlife	Country/wildlife Coastal National Parks	Wilderness Bush walking National Parks
Active Outdoor	Swimming Sailing/boating Golf Bike riding Horse riding Adventure activities	Swimming Sailing/boating Golf Horse riding Fishing	Fishing Go to the Beach Swimming	Surfing / Body boarding Swimming Go to the beach Sailing/boating Golf Bike riding Horse riding Adventure activities
Other Activities	Visit Museums Visit friends and relatives General sightseeing Picnics and BBQs Markets Visit history or heritage sites	Visit galleries Visit friends and relatives General sightseeing Go shopping for pleasure Markets	Visit friends and relatives Picnics and BBQs Visit aquarium	Pubs/clubs disco Visit friends and relatives Go Shopping for pleasure
Food & Wine	Special events Wineries Restaurants Farm Gate Shopping	Wineries Restaurants Farm Gate Shopping	Wineries Farm Gate	Special events Wineries Restaurants Shopping

There is high level of intrastate awareness of the PIGD region across most Roy Morgan Value Segments, with all segments having higher than 50% prompted awareness. 'Visible Achievement' and 'Conventional Family Life' have the highest prompted awareness of Phillip Island and Gippsland Discovery (84%).

Table 5 Prompted Awareness of Phillip Island and Gippsland Discovery– Intrastate visitors

Value Segments	
Visible Achievement	84.6%
Conventional Family Life	84.4%
Socially Aware	80.8%
Traditional Family Life	80.4%
Basic Needs	75.3%
Young Optimism	73.8%
Something Better	73.4%
Look-At-Me	67.6%
Real Conservatism	62.6%
A Fairer Deal	58.8%
Total All Segments	78.3%

Source: Holiday Tracking Study, Roy Morgan Research 2003

5.5 Market Issues and Opportunities

5.5.1 Issues

- Daytrip visitors are relatively low yield visitors. Overnight visitors spend considerably more than daytrippers, but make up only half of all visitors.
- Interstate and overseas visitation is relatively low in the Prom Country region, despite the iconic nature of Wilsons Promontory as a natural attraction destination. It is likely that the restricted range of accommodation options is an important factor in low levels of interstate and overseas visitation.
- Visitor yield in Prom Country is restricted by the limited availability of quality accommodation and dining opportunities.

5.5.2 Opportunities

- The large holiday home sector provides an opportunity to market directly to regular visitors, particularly in respect of events and festivals.
- The value segments of Visible Achievement, Traditional Family Life, Socially Aware and Young Optimism are the key target markets for Prom Country. Opportunity exists to increase the share of Socially Aware market through increased awareness.

- Wilsons Promontory was the product most associated with Prom Country region. This coupled with the high visitation to the Prom indicates that it is the key destination in the Prom Country region.
- The eastern suburbs should be the primary target area for marketing to Melbourne-based visitors.

5.6 Conclusion

The key conclusions relating to tourism markets include:

Awareness

- Increasing the awareness of the Prom Country Brand and the awareness and desirability of the region as a holiday destination;
- Understanding the significance of the holiday home market and how to grow yield from this market.

Overnight Visitation

- Continuing to increase the number of overnight visitors, particularly during the week and in off-peak seasons;

Melbourne Market

- Recognising that Melbourne is still Prom Country's major market in terms of numbers of visitors, although efforts are needed to increase yield from the Melbourne market.

Intrastate Interstate and International Markets

- Continuing to grow intrastate and interstate visitation;
- Targeting the NSW and ACT market as the primary interstate markets;
- Targeting the intrastate state market ????? – need to highlight the intrastate regions as mentioned in the PC Eco Impact Study
- Continuing to target key international markets (United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Singapore) in conjunction with Sydney – Melbourne Coastal Drive

Emerging Markets

Increase focus on emerging markets (food and wine, eco-tourism etc and growing visitation by these markets by targeting promotion to “Socially Aware, Visible Achievement and Young Optimism value segments”.

6 Marketing and Promotion

6.1 Background

The following is an analysis of the marketing and promotion undertaken by Prom Country Regional Tourism as well as identifying issues and opportunities for future promotional activities.

6.2 Marketing Brochures

Since the establishment of Prom Country Regional Tourism a number of tourism brochures have been developed to market the Prom Country region externally to the Melbourne and interstate. This includes:

Prom Country Official Visitors Guide

The Prom Country Official Visitors Guide was first developed in 2004 and has been published on an annual basis according to the Tourism Victoria template. The Guide is a 38 page publication and contains comprehensive visitor information with an emphasis on product strengths.

More than 100 businesses participated in the 2006 Guide. 50,000 copies were produced with 60% being distributed within the region, Melbourne (including Federation Square VIC), intra and interstate.

Prom Country Official Touring Map

The Prom Country Official Touring Map was first developed in 2003 according to the Tourism Victoria template.

25,000 copies of the Touring Map were printed, this was doubled to 50,000 in 2004. Anecdotal feedback from consumers indicates that it was well received.

6.3 Web Sites

Tourism Victoria Website

The Tourism Victoria website has a web page specifically for Prom Country. It markets the key product in Prom Country and overviews the villages spread throughout the region.

There is a link to the Prom Country Tourism website.

Prom Country Tourism Website

The Prom Country Tourism website provides comprehensive information regarding the tourism industry and what activities and product is available in the Prom Country region.

The website contains listings of all tourism businesses that are members of Prom Country Regional Tourism.

6.4 Consumer Shows

Prom Country Regional Tourism currently participates in a number of local, regional and interstate consumer shows in conjunction with Destination Gippsland each year that target country Victoria and interstate markets. These travel shows represent the largest shows and target the most important markets for the Gippsland Region.

Consumer shows attended include:

- Sydney Caravan and Camping Show;
- Melbourne Caravan and Camping Show;
- Tastes of Prom Country.

6.5 Advertising in Publications

Prom Country Regional Tourism has placed advertisements to target markets in a number of publications in Victoria and Australia. These include:

- Weekly newspaper advertising in both the Herald Sun and The Age travel sections;
- Monthly advertising in the RACV Royal Auto magazine;
- Advertising in AAA Accommodation Guide;
- Full page advertisement in the Phillip Island Gippsland Discovery brochure;
- Advertising in Victorian Lifestyle magazine;
- Advertising in Get Up and Go magazine;
- Advertising in Sydney to Melbourne Coastal Explorer;
- Advertising in local newspapers.

6.6 Television Promotion

Prom Country has been showcased on a number of lifestyle and holiday programs on commercial television. Programs include:

- Getaway;
- Discover;
- Postcards;

- The Great Outdoors.

6.7 Marketing Issues and Opportunities

6.7.1 Issues

- Prom Country Regional Tourism has limited financial resources for marketing and promotion. In addition, the majority of tourism businesses in the region are micro and small businesses with limited resources (both human resources and financial resources) for marketing and promotion.
- Limited financial resources means that it is most important to:
 - Carefully target marketing and promotion efforts to those markets that are likely to have the greatest propensity to visit Prom Country;
 - Focus the marketing effort of Prom Country on promoting the product strengths and emerging products of the region;
 - Measure the success of marketing and promotion initiatives to ensure cost-effectiveness; and
 - Maximise the amount of “free ink” (media articles, television coverage such as lifestyle shows, radio interviews etc) to promote the region.
- The focus of the website is more on marketing individual tourism businesses, rather than on promoting the tourism product strengths of the region, ie the motivation to visit.
- Natural attractions are the primary product strength of the region, with a substantial proportion of these natural attractions under the management control of Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Promoting the natural attractions within a region is not a core function of these agencies.
- Support for tourism tends to be restricted to those residents and businesses who are directly involved in the tourism industry. It is unclear whether local residents and the general business sector are aware of the benefits of tourism to them.

6.7.2 Opportunities

- Given the diversity and quality of the natural attractions in Prom Country, there is a significant opportunity to further promote these natural attractions, particularly to international and interstate visitors. Further development of tourism infrastructure (in particular accommodation that meets existing “gaps”) is needed to service these markets.
- The Internet is the most widely used information source by visitors in planning their trip, with 32% of visitors using the Internet. The Internet is a cost-effective medium for reaching mass markets and continual improvement to the websites for the Prom Country region should be a priority.

- The development of a “free ink” program on an on-going basis would maximise the opportunities for free publicity. This could include a visiting journalists program (possibly in conjunction with Tourism Victoria and/or DGI) and an expression of interest process to identify tourism businesses willing to participate.
- The recent research into the economic significance of tourism provides valuable and up-to-date data that can be used to promote the importance of the tourism industry to the broader community.
- Recent research indicates the significance of the holiday home sector in attracting visitors to the region (including holiday home owners, visiting friends and relatives and short term visitors) and in generating expenditure in the region. Significant opportunity exists to target holiday home owners specifically in respect of:
 - promoting upcoming events;
 - promoting new tourism products and activities in the region; and
 - continually reminding holiday home owners (and their guests) of the things to see and do in the region.
- The emerging food and wine sector provides the opportunity to link with external food and wine promotion being undertaken by Southern Gippsland Wine Inc, Gippsland Grape Growers Association, Destination Gippsland and Tourism Victoria. This will further strengthen the Key value segments of “Socially Aware”, “Visible Achievement” and Young Optimism”.

6.8 Conclusion

External Marketing

- Utilising Destination Gippsland for additional co-operative external marketing effort;
- Continuing the marketing strategies aimed at the interstate and intrastate markets;
- Increasing the marketing effort aimed at emerging markets (food and wine, arts/culture, water based).

Publicity and Promotion

- Seeking increased opportunities for free publicity particularly for the Melbourne market and niche markets;
- Targeting the holiday home market;
- Focusing publicity and promotion effort on the off-peak seasons and mid week.

7 Organisational Structures and Funding

7.1 South Gippsland Shire Council Tourism Unit–

South Gippsland Shire Council has a registered Tourism Unit under the name Prom Country Tourism. The Tourism Co-ordinator, who reports to the Manager Development, manages the Tourism Unit.

Working under the direction of the Tourism Co-ordinator is the Visitor Services Coordinator and two part time Tourism Information Officers as well as volunteers.

The Tourism Unit provides a range of services both internal and external to the Shire. It is broken down into three main areas: Tourism Strategic Services, Tourism Marketing & Promotion and Visitor Services.

Tourism Services

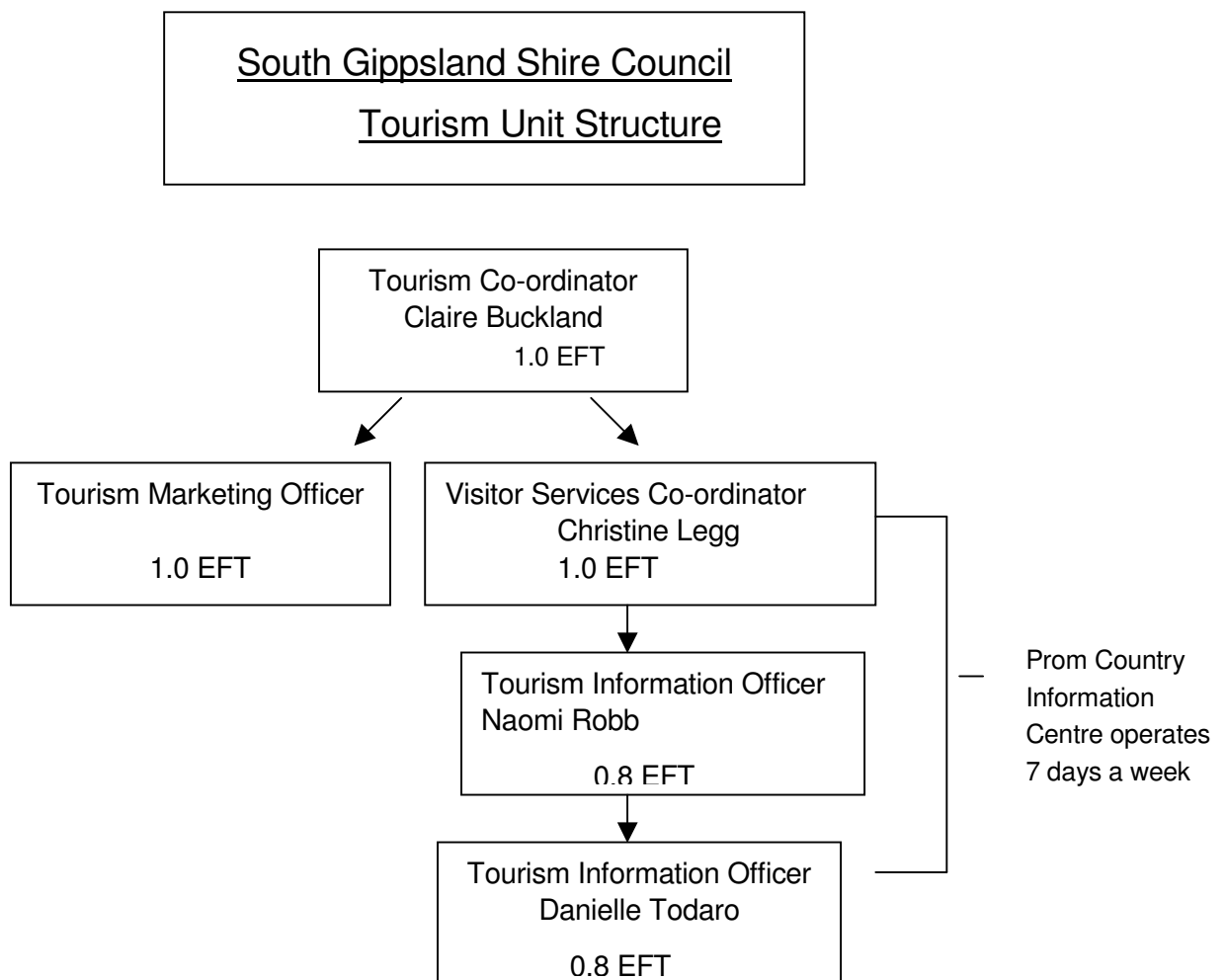
- Encourage infrastructure investment in direct tourism businesses within the Shire
- Work with regional, state and national industry bodies to market and promote the region as a competitive visitor destination
- Facilitate industry education and development within Prom Country
- Represent Council and Shire at industry forums
- Attraction of additional funding and opportunities for Council
- Communicate with and support tourism operators to ensure a competitive visitor destination

Tourism Marketing and Promotion (in conjunction with Prom Country Regional Tourism)

- External marketing of the region
 - Production and distribution of Marketing collateral Eg touring Map & Visitor Guide
 - Implementation of Shire based tourism website
 - Promote the region at local and interstate consumer shows
 - Maintenance and expansion of membership base
-
- Increase visitor numbers, length of stay and yield
 - Facilitate industry co-operation

Visitor Information Services

- Provision of tourism information
- Operation of Central Booking Service (free accommodation booking service)
- Manage display of tourism brochures – local, regional and interstate
- Maintenance of Satellite Information outlets
- Statistic collection and correlation
- Provision of communication to operators



#Note: Resources for the Tourism Marketing Officer have been reallocated to an administration support officer for the Economic Development and Tourism Units.

7.2 External Tourism Structures

There are a number of tourism organisations that operate throughout South Gippsland. The following is a brief overview of each of these.

7.2.1 Regional Tourism Association - Prom Country Regional Tourism

Prom Country Regional Tourism is a partnership between Council and the tourism industry. Council matches income raised from industry membership. Prom Country Regional Tourism is an incorporated body.

Prom Country Regional Tourism is governed by an Executive, which consists of:

- Shire Councillor;
- Shire's Tourism Co-ordinator;
- Parks Victoria;
- Industry representatives nominated by Prom County Regional Tourism members.

There is no formal connection between Prom Country Regional Tourism and the Local Tourism Associations (LTA) although a number of the LTAs have representatives on the Prom Country Regional Tourism Committee.

Membership to Prom Country Regional Tourism starts at \$55 for Not for Profit organisations, i.e. – museums, LTA etc and \$200 for other businesses such as accommodation, attractions, cafes etc. There are currently 160 members.

7.2.2 Local Tourism Associations

Prom Coast Tourism (PCT)

Prom Coast Tourism geographically covers the area in the most southern tip of the Shire. This includes towns of Walkerville, Waratah Bay, Sandy Point, Yanakie, Foster, Fish Creek, Toora, Port Franklin, Welshpool and Port Welshpool. Natural attractions including the National Park, ocean beaches, inlets and bushland are key features of this area.

Prom Coast Tourism has developed a local visitor guide, which outlines all the activities and businesses related to tourism in and around their area. The brochure is distributed throughout the region and local businesses in the area.

Leongatha Area Tourism (LAT)

Leongatha Area Tourism geographically covers the immediate area surrounding Leongatha and stretches from Meeniyan to the south and Korumburra to the north. The key tourism product in this area is centred on food and wine. The role of Leongatha Area Tourism is to provide visitors with information about things to see and do in the area when they arrive.

Leongatha Area Tourism has developed a local visitor guide, which outlines all the activities and businesses related to tourism in and around the township of Leongatha. The brochure is distributed throughout the region and local businesses in the area.

Membership to Leongatha Area Tourism is \$30. There are 32 members of the LTA.

Mirboo Country Development

Mirboo Country is concentrated in the area immediately surrounding the town of Mirboo North. The area is abutted by the Strzelecki Ranges and is rich in heritage, culture and charm. Key tourism product includes the Grand Ridge Road, which traverses the town, the rail trail, the Grand Ridge Brewery and the town murals.

One of the key roles for Mirboo Country's is to promote the area's tourism product throughout the region and Gippsland and to distribute information to the visitor when they arrive.

Southern Gippsland Wineries

South Gippsland Wineries includes membership of wineries throughout South Gippsland Shire and Bass Coast Shire. There are 13 wineries with cellar doors throughout South Gippsland and Bass Coast Shires.

7.2.3 Destination Gippsland Inc

Destination Gippsland is the newly formed Tourism Board that represents the five municipalities of Gippsland including South Gippsland, Wellington, East Gippsland, Latrobe and Baw Baw and Tourism Victoria.

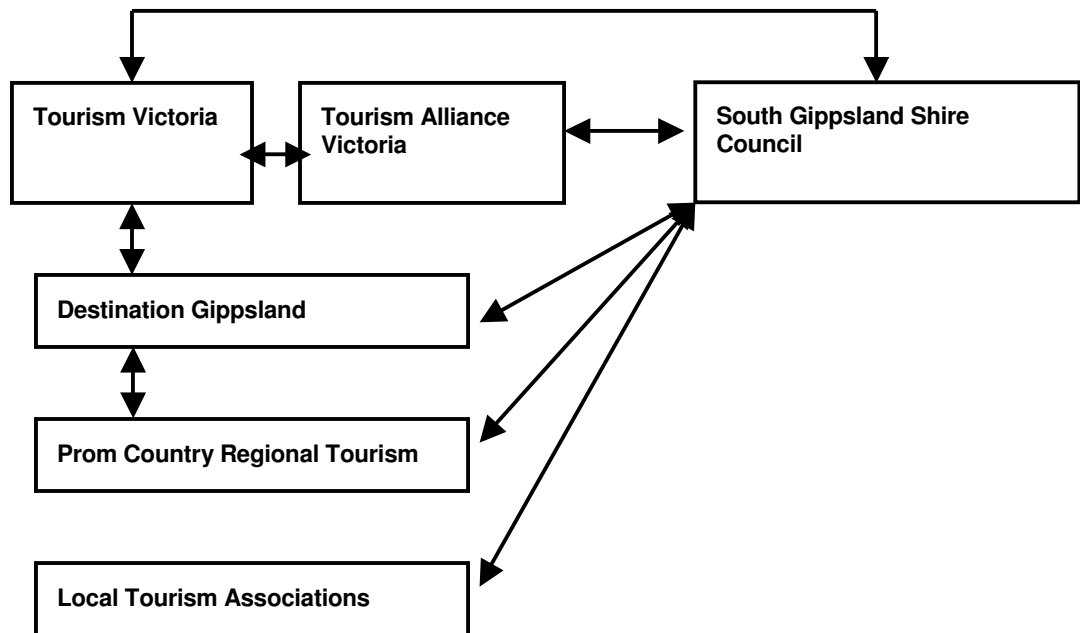
Destination Gippsland's key role is for external marketing and promotion of the Gippsland Region.

Destination Gippsland is a partner in the Gippsland Sustainable Regions Project, which is a major tourism development initiative made comprised of three sub-projects, these include:

- Identification of business development opportunities;
- Gippsland wide visitor and tourism business research;
- The establishment of a Gippsland wide touring route.

7.3 Overview - Organisational Relationships

The various tourism industry organisations and their relationship is illustrated diagrammatically below.



7.4 Issues and Opportunities

7.4.1 Issues

- There is no formal mechanism to co-ordinate the activities of the Tourism Unit/Economic Development Unit and the Planning Unit within the South Gippsland Shire Council, on an on-going basis. This is reflected by a lack of information and limited direction in Council Plans and the MSS as to the future direction and significance of tourism in the Prom Country region;
- Further appropriate tourism infrastructure development is critical to the continued growth of tourism in Prom Country. This is an impediment to the attraction and development of larger scale tourism infrastructure in the Prom Country region. Strategic planning processes are needed to identify areas for tourism infrastructure and tourism product development.
- The roles of and relationship between the Local Tourism Associations, the South Gippsland Shire's Tourism Unit and Prom Country Regional Tourism is not defined. The roles of the respective organisations need to be clarified to avoid duplication and dilution of resources. A logical division of responsibility is for:

- LTAs to undertake localised marketing and promotion of their respective areas, including attractions and accommodation, as well as servicing the visitor when they arrive (provision of information, provision of visitor amenities, monitoring service standards etc);
 - PCRT to provide industry input to external marketing initiatives; mobilise tourism operators to participate in external marketing; develop Prom Country marketing and promotion initiatives for industry participation; develop external marketing campaigns aimed primarily at identified target markets (in Melbourne, Country Victoria, interstate and overseas) focusing on promoting the tourism product strengths of the region;
 - South Gippsland Shire Tourism Unit to work with external stakeholders (DGI, Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria, DSE, VicRoads etc) to ensure that the Prom Country region is adequately represented in regional marketing initiatives and shares in available funding for marketing and infrastructure development; and operate the regional visitor information services (website, Level 1 VIC);
- Prom Country Regional Tourism requires active Committee members with skills relevant to its role. The nature of the tourism industry in the region (micro and small businesses) means that attracting people with the appropriate skills and the time to devote to the RTA is difficult;
 - Council provides substantial resources to the Regional Tourism Association (Prom Country Regional Tourism Inc) in terms of matching membership funds and providing staff time. The industry needs to work towards reducing the dependence on Council over time;
 - There are a number of issues that are impacting on the sustainability of Prom Country Regional Tourism. These include:
 - Limited membership;
 - Current reliance on Council to provide funding and staff resources;
 - Lack of definition of the role of the organisation;
 - Difficulty in attracting experienced people with the relevant skills and time, to join the Executive.
 - The relationship between Parks Victoria, the Shire's Tourism Unit and Prom Country Regional Tourism is very important having regard to the significance of Wilsons Promontory and other natural attractions in attracting visitors to the region. Mechanisms to ensure a continued close working relationship are needed;
 - The names of the Shire's Tourism Unit (Prom Country Tourism) and the regional industry organisation (Prom Country Regional Tourism) are very similar and this can cause confusion for tourism operators and other stakeholders., this has been amended throughout the report to be known as the South Gippsland Shire's Tourism Unit.

- The reallocation of funding for the tourism marketing officer to an administration officer in the economic development and tourism units has left a human resource gap in the tourism unit. For implementation of recommended actions in this strategy experienced staff would be required to assist the tourism coordinator.

7.4.2 Opportunities

- Attracting further investment in tourism infrastructure such as quality, larger-scale visitor accommodation, would provide the added benefit of attracting operators and entrepreneurs with expertise and financial resources. This would have the effect of providing added leadership for the industry and greater marketing resources;
- The importance of Council's contribution to tourism should be reflected in regular briefings and familiarisation tours of the region's tourism product strengths and attractions;
- There are opportunities for the RTA and the Shire 's Tourism Unit to leverage off the activities and available funding of existing organisations and programs including:
 - Destination Gippsland Inc;
 - Sustainable Regions Project – Integrating Gippsland Tourism
 - Gippsland Food and Wine Tourism Group (there is future potential with the Gippsland Food and Wine Group provide it develops as intended).
 - Creative Gippsland;
 - Tourism Victoria;
 - Regional Development Victoria;
 - Gippsland Area Consultative Committee.

8 Strategies and Actions

8.1 Introduction

The following section outlines recommended strategies and actions that respond to issues and opportunities identified in this Plan. The strategies and actions are categorised under the following headings:

- Tourism Organisation Structures
- Tourism Product Development
- Tourism Marketing and Promotion
- Tourism Infrastructure Development.

The recommended strategies were presented to and discussed at a tourism industry workshop attended by more than 30 tourism business operators and owners.

In addition, workshop participants were asked to complete a questionnaire, aimed at identifying priority strategies. These results are reported in the next section.

Tourism Organisation Structures

Strategy 1 Integrate tourism and economic development more closely with strategic town planning within the South Gippsland Shire Council

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Action 1 | Establish a regular co-ordinating meeting, at management level, involving the economic development, town planning and tourism units to exchange information and provide input into planning processes when they arise. |
| Action 2 | Establish internal protocols for strategic planning process to ensure that there is input from the economic development and tourism units when proposing any amendments to planning policy that may impact on tourism infrastructure development; |
| Action 3 | Any review of the planning scheme (eg: MSS) should have input from the tourism unit; |
| Action 4 | Ensure that recent tourism data and tourism planning directions are incorporated into local planning policy frameworks in the planning scheme. This includes: |

- The recent research on the economic impact of tourism in the Prom Country region;
 - Tourism plans, as adopted by Council;
- Action 5 Ensure that recent tourism data and tourism planning directions are incorporated into the Council Plan;
- Action 6 As part of any strategic planning processes, identify appropriate areas for further tourist infrastructure development. Strategic planning processes should seek to identify the level of tourism infrastructure development in the Prom Country region that is sustainable;
- Action 7 Ensure that there is on-going communication between the economic development and tourism units and key State Government agencies (including DSE, VicRoads, Parks Victoria, Regional Development Victoria) regarding matters that affect tourism in the Shire.
- Action 8 Ensure that the tourism industry input is provided in respect of Council management decisions eg: the review of the current cost structure for food handlers registration with the Shire.
- Strategy 2 *Create closer links between the tourism, and the Community Strengthening unit at the South Gippsland Shire Council to enhance tourism product based on arts and culture***
- Action 9 Establish a regular co-ordination meeting, at management level, involving tourism, recreation and arts and culture units to exchange information and provide input into arts and culture product and proposed events;
- Action 10 Promote tourism events to local residents, holiday home-owners and the south -eastern suburbs of Melbourne (for short-break overnight visits and daytrips).
- Action 11 Identify a separate funding allocation within the Community Grants Program specifically for tourism events.
- Action 12 Review the Council's funding arrangements for tourism events and develop a funding framework (principles, criteria) to ensure that funding allocated to events that generate tourism benefits to the Shire, can leverage funding from other sources and have potential to grow.
- Action 13 Council should continue to contribute to the food and wine events with the aim of establishing a premier event for the Shire.

Strategy 3 *Strengthen Prom Country Regional Tourism through broadening the membership base and promoting its benefits*

- Action 14 Promote the activities and successes of Prom Country Regional Tourism (PCRT) to existing members and to prospective members. Potential members include businesses that rely on tourism for at least part of their income (eg cafes/restaurants, food retailing and recreational goods retailing). Use the available research to identify these businesses⁸.
- Action 15 Use the available research to demonstrate the economic benefits of tourism to the business sector, to Council and the broader community.

Strategy 4 *Define the roles of Prom Country Regional Tourism, Prom Country Tourism and the LTAs*

- Action 16 The role of the LTAs should be clearly defined. The role should primarily focus on:
- undertaking localised marketing and promotion of their respective areas, including attractions and accommodation. This could include production of brochures and maps;
 - servicing the visitor when they arrive in the local area through provision of information, provision of visitor amenities, monitoring service standards;
 - participating in improvements to local visitor amenities (toilets, rest areas, viewing areas, picnic facilities);
- Action 17 Ensure that the PCRT Executive comprises members who have skills and experience relevant to the role of the association and can devote the necessary time to an executive role;
- Action 18 The role of PCRT should be clearly defined. The role should primarily focus on:
- Identifying external marketing initiatives and providing tourism industry input to these external marketing initiatives;
 - mobilising tourism operators to participate in external marketing (including financial participation and provision of time); and
 - developing Prom Country region marketing and promotion initiatives for industry participation;
 - identifying and developing networking opportunities within the industry;
 - building the relationship with DGI including:

⁸ Economic Impact of Tourism in the Prom Country Region, Urban Enterprise, 2004

- participating in DGI marketing activities where appropriate;
- liaising with DGI as a conduit to Tourism Victoria;
- supporting DGI in leveraging funding from State and Federal Government.

Action 19 PCT should be renamed formally as the South Gippsland Shire Tourism Unit, to remove any confusion between the names PCT and PCRT. The name PCT should be retained by the Council for possible future use.

Action 20 The role of the South Gippsland Shire Tourism Unit should be clearly defined. The role should primarily focus on:

- Overseeing the expenditure of Council funds on tourism;
- Providing a communication conduit between the Council and the tourism industry in the region. This should cover issues affecting the industry that are in the control of Council, eg the structure of Council's food handling charges;
- Working with key external stakeholders (DGI, Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria, DSE, VicRoads etc) to ensure that the Prom Country region is adequately represented in regional marketing initiatives;
- Ensuring that Prom Country shares in available Government funding for marketing and tourism infrastructure development (through grant funding applications, maintaining relevant data etc);
- Monitoring the performance of the tourism industry and the success of marketing initiatives;
- Developing external marketing campaigns aimed primarily at identified target markets (in Melbourne, Country Victoria, interstate and overseas) focusing on promoting the tourism product strengths of the region in conjunction with PCRT; and
- Operating, maintaining and improving the regional visitor information services (website, Level 1 VIC);
- Providing guidance, leadership and mentoring to the tourism industry to assist in its professional development;
- Assisting PCRT with marketing collateral;
- Assisting with investment attraction for tourism;
- Identifying and assisting with product development including emerging markets for tourism;
- Strategic planning for tourism signage;
- Grant funding submissions;

Action 21 Ensure that a close relationship between the South Gippsland Tourism Unit and Parks Victoria, and PCRT is maintained. It is important that Parks Victoria is represented on PCRT to ensure on-going exchange of information;

Strategy 5 *Measure the tourism industry's performance on an on-going (annual) basis, which can be compared and contrasted, to other tourism regions in Victoria.*

Action 22 Continue monitoring the economic impact of tourism in the Prom Country region using the 2004 research study as a baseline. Update the study on an annual basis by undertaking one research module (ie one of the following - accommodation, tourism businesses, other businesses, holiday homeowners and visitor profile) and re-calculating the results for economic impact. Develop time series (trend) data.

Action 23 Progressively adapt the visitor profile research to incorporate the following additional components:

- Visitor satisfaction levels;
- Effectiveness of marketing programs;
- Identification of additional business/ product gaps.

Strategy 6 *Strengthen the relationship and cooperation between Parks Victoria and the South Gippsland Shire Council. Mutual roles include:*

- *Sharing of information on the management decisions that impact on tourism or potentially lead to opportunities.*
- *Input into strategic plans;*
- *Awareness of respective marketing initiatives and potential to participate.*

Action 24 Work collaboratively on joint venture projects which have been identified in management and strategic plans for Council and Parks Victoria which will produce equally beneficial outcomes for both including:

- The development of Wilsons Promontory as a daytrip destination;
- The development of public transport infrastructure to Wilson's Promontory;
- The marketing of Parks Victoria assets including Wilsons Promontory and Cape Liptrap.

Marketing and Promotion

Strategy 7 Target the Melbourne and Regional Victoria markets.

Action 25 Participate in the campaigns conducted by DGI to target country Victoria, interstate and overseas visitors to the region. Investigate the potential to participate in campaigns conducted by Destination Melbourne.

Action 26 Investigate the potential to collaborate with Bass Coast Shire in marketing to the Melbourne market.

Strategy 8 Target the interstate and international markets.

Action 27 Promote self drive touring leveraging off existing and proposed touring routes that traverse South Gippsland Shire. These include Sydney to Melbourne Coastal Drive, the touring route being developed as part of the Gippsland Sustainable Regions Project, and Tri State Touring Route (Currently being developed by Tourism Victoria, Tourism New South Wales and ACT).

Strategy 9 Continually update and improve the Prom Country website as a key promotional tool, in accordance with consumer needs and preferences

Action 28 Evaluate the effectiveness of the website through qualitative research, focusing on:

- Ease of finding the website
- Ease of navigating the website
- Motivation to visit arising from the website
- Relevance and interest relating to the content.

Action 29 Update the website based on the findings of the research.

Action 30 Maintain the website's content on a regular basis to ensure its currency.

Action 31 Increase promotion of the website on Google and other search engines.

Strategy 10 Raise the awareness of Wilsons Promontory in key market segments including interstate and international markets

Action 32 Work with Destination Gippsland Inc to include and promote Wilsons Promontory as one of Gippsland's icons.

Action 33 Increase the appeal of Wilsons Promontory to interstate and international markets by supporting the establishment of quality, large accommodation establishments in close proximity to Wilsons Promontory that can cater to these markets.

Action 34 Work with PCRT and Parks Victoria to develop a daytrip itinerary to promote to tour companies.

Strategy 11 *Increase Melbourne's awareness of Prom Country's diverse range of outdoor activities and food and wine product.*

Action 35 Develop an inventory of all outdoor activities and their corresponding locations throughout the Shire;

Action 36 Develop specific marketing brochures for the key outdoor activities (eg: bushwalking, bike riding, golfing, fishing boating etc) to be used for direct marketing to sporting clubs and organisations such as Bicycle Victoria and Melbourne Walking Clubs. The brochures should include detailed information on the location and difficulty level of walks and hikes.

Action 37 Continue to develop the Slow Food Festival into a signature food and wine for South Gippsland. Initially promote to Melbourne and Regional Victoria, with targeted promotion to holiday home owners.

Strategy 12 *Promote the benefits of tourism to local residents and local businesses on an on-going basis*

Action 38 Educate the broader community (including residents, the general business sector and Councillors) on an on-going basis about the significance of tourism in terms of growing the local economy, increasing training and employment opportunities for local residents and expanding the range of services available to the local community. This could be undertaken through a regular "What's New in Tourism" section on Council's website, the PCRT website and the local newspaper.

Action 39 Use the recent research to provide quantifiable data on the economic significance of tourism for the Shire and promote this in appropriate local promotions (eg product launches, marketing launches, newspaper articles, Council website).

Action 40 Promote tourism businesses by using a 'hero' promotional campaign. This could be combined with the "What's New in Tourism" section. This would provide publicity for individual businesses as well as increasing the awareness of the tourism industry amongst local residents, the business community and other tourism operators.

Action 41 Develop an annual "tourism open day" program highlighting tourism businesses, tourism product (things to see and do) and tourism benefits. This would aim to increase awareness of what is on offer amongst local residents, holiday home-owners and Council/government stakeholders. This could be undertaken as a weekend program across the region, with value-add offers by tourism businesses, or on a town-by-town basis.

Strategy 13 *Promote the Shire's attractions and events directly to holiday homeowners*

Action 42 Promote things to see and do, including events/festivals to the holiday home sector with a mail-out brochure.

Action 43 Obtain email addresses and permission to use email addresses from holiday homes owners through the rates notice and other Council communication avenues to establish a communication conduit between Prom Country Tourism and holiday home owners. This will provide direct and cost effective marketing to the holiday home sector.

Strategy 14 *Maximise promotion of Prom Country through free ink*

Action 44 Develop an on-going program of "famils" (visiting journalist program), possibly in conjunction with Tourism Victoria, to facilitate free publicity (print media, TV lifestyle programs and radio). Create a register of tourism businesses wishing to participate in this initiative by offering their product/service for visiting journalists.

Strategy 15 *Review the effectiveness of the current Prom Country Brand.*

Action 45 Undertake qualitative research in key target markets which identifies:

- The appeal and relevance of the Prom Country Brand
- What consumers associate with the Prom Country Brand
- The preferred positioning for the Brand
- Potential tag lines or imagery that could enhance the Brand.
- Images – key images of the region – primary, secondary

Tourism Product Development

Strategy 16 *Attract appropriate large-scale tourism businesses in selected locations, including quality accommodation and conference facilities*

Action 46 Through strategic town planning processes identify appropriate areas which are capable of supporting larger scale tourism development, including accommodation;

Strategy 17 *Undertake a land use study to identify areas suitable to implement the rural activity zone a*

Action 47 Investigate the area at the gateway of Wilsons Promontory for a range of larger scale accommodation/conference/resort developments;

Strategy 18 *Promote potential development opportunities identified through the development and promotion of an investment prospectus. This should contain information and data relating to existing accommodation gaps, derived from the Economic Impact Study as well as information on tourism product potential.*

Strategy 19 *Grow food and wine / agri-tourism by supporting and enhancing existing food and wine events and ensuring that planning policy allows for tourism growth in appropriate parts of the rural areas of the Shire*

Action 48 Council should support the development of food and wine tourism product such as restaurants, cafes, farm gate and cellar doors in specified locations in the Prom Country region. Uses and locations should be identified through strategic town planning processes.

Tourism Infrastructure

Strategy 20 *Improve tourism and directional signage to and throughout Prom Country region*

Action 49 Develop a coordinated approach to tourism signage in the Prom Country region through the development of an internal signage strategy consistent with Vic-Roads guidelines for directional tourism signage and tourism business signage. Ensure that the assessment of tourism signage proposals and the provision of signage is consistent throughout the Shire.

Action 50 Approach Vic Roads to amend highway signage leaving Melbourne to include Wilsons Promontory in destination signage.

Strategy 21 *Improve road infrastructure in areas where there is potential to further develop touring including the Grand Ridge Road and access to coastal areas (ie Cape Liptrap)*

Action 51 Support the development of the Grand Ridge Road as a touring route.

Action 52 Establish a working group to identify key areas where road improvements would be most beneficial to the development of the tourism industry and tourism product in Prom Country region.

- Strategy 22** *Seek funding for priority road infrastructure improvements, including provision of stopping / scenic view bays, touring signage and information.*
- Strategy 23** *Improve the usage of the Visitor Information Centre by increasing its current exposure and landscaping in the immediate term and undertaking an independent study into the VIC location in the short term*
- Action 53 In the immediate term improve the visibility of the existing VIC from the South Gippsland Highway. This should include:
- Selected thinning of vegetation between the VIC and highway this could include relocating vegetation to the east and north side rather than between the VIC and the highway.
 - Painting the building in Prom Country Tourism colours to make it more attractive and visible to passing visitors.
 - Differentiating the signage for the VIC from the signage for Coal Creek and increasing the prominence of the VIC signage.
 - Proving for long vehicle and trailer parking adjacent to the VIC.
- Action 54 In the short term undertake an independent rigorous assessment of the VIC location. This assessment should consider:
- Key access routes used by visitors to the region
 - The location and concentration of tourism product
 - Visibility to passing traffic;
 - Ease of access;
 - Benchmarking against other Visitor Information Centres;
- Strategy 24** *Explore possible improvements to public transport to and from the region, as well as within the region.*
- Action 55 Initiate discussions with V-line to increase the frequency of services and to explore a service to Wilsons Prom.
- Action 56 Promote a commercial tour bus potential within the region incorporating day tours from Melbourne to Wilsons Promontory including other attractions such as food and wine throughout the region.
- Action 57 Promote the opportunity for hire car companies to establish a satellite outlet in South Gippsland Shire.

Strategy 25 ***Develop strategic town plans for South Gippsland Shire's towns to improve the presentation of the towns and provide for improved visitor amenities.***

Action 58 Seek funding from the Pride of Place Program and other appropriate funding programs to prepare an Urban Design Framework for each township focusing on improvements to streetscape, landscape, gateways and visitor amenities.

Action 59 Prom Country Tourism Unit to provide input to strategic town plans to ensure appropriate visitor amenities are provided including adequate long vehicle and trailer/ caravan parking, visitor information bays, toilet facilities, seating/picnic areas, etc.

Strategy 26 ***Work closely with DSE to ensure the survival of low budget accommodation on foreshore areas as well as improved access to the water for boating and fishing in coastal areas.***

Action 60 Liaise with DSE to identify existing foreshore camping areas that could be improved.

Action 61 Develop a water access program with DSE, which focuses on the development and improvement of boat ramps, moorings and jetties within the South Gippsland Shire.

Strategy 27 ***Support Parks Victoria in the improvement of Cape Liptrap as a tourism destination.***

Action 62 Work cooperatively on road and pedestrian access to Cape Liptrap as identified in the Cape Liptrap Coastal Management Plan, and support Parks Victoria's initiatives to improve day visitor amenities at Venus Bay and other coastal areas.

9 Implementation

9.1 Introduction

The following table summarises the strategies, together with an indication of priority, responsibility for implementation and estimated cost, where relevant.

Immediate priority indicates required action within the first 12 months of the plan's implementation. High priority indicates strategies to be undertaken in a 1-2 year time frame. Medium priority indicates strategies to be undertaken in a 2-5 year time frame.

The detailed actions relating to each strategy can be found in Section 8 of the Plan.

In some cases, actions can be implemented as part of the activities of Prom Country Regional Tourism or the South Gippsland Shire Council without the need for additional funding.

The main priorities for implementation relate to:

- Improving organisational structures and relationships;
- Improving visitor information services;
- Raising awareness of the Shire's tourism product including emerging products, particularly targeting the Melbourne market;
- Improving and increasing the supply of accommodation;
- Developing a tourism signage strategy.

	Priority	Responsibility for Initiation	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
Tourism and Organisational Structure				
S1. Integrate tourism and economic development more closely with strategic town planning within the South Gippsland Shire Council	Immediate	SGSC Tourism Unit & Town Planning Unit at SGSC		
S2. Create closer links between the tourism, recreation and arts and culture units at the South Gippsland Shire Council to enhance tourism product based on arts and culture	Immediate	SGSC Tourism Unit & Community Strengthening Unit SGSC		
S3. Strengthen Prom Country Regional Tourism through broadening the membership base and promoting its benefits	High Priority	PCRT		
S4. Define the roles of Prom Country Regional Tourism, South Gippsland Shire Tourism Unit and the LTAs	Immediate	PCRT, SGSC Tourism Unit		
S5. Measure the tourism industry's performance on an on-going (annual) basis, which can be compared and contrasted, to other tourism regions in Victoria.	On Going	SGSC Tourism Unit	\$10,000 pa	SGSC, PCT
S6. Strengthen the relationship and cooperation between Parks Victoria and the South Gippsland Shire Council.	On Going	SGSC, SGSC Tourism Unit ,Parks Victoria		
Marketing and Promotion				
S7. Leverage off visitors from Melbourne and Regional Victoria, as well as interstate and international visitors by promoting Prom Country through marketing self drive/overnight trips.	High Priority	PCRT		Industry, PCRT
S8. Continually update and improve the Prom Country website as a key promotional tool, in accordance with consumer needs and preferences.	High Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, VIC		Industry, PCRT

	Priority	Responsibility for Initiation	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source
S9. Raise the awareness of Wilsons Promontory in key market segments including interstate and international markets	Medium Priority	PCRT, Parks Victoria, SGSC Tourism Unit		PCRT, Industry, Parks Victoria
S10. Increase Melbourne's awareness of Prom Country's diverse range of outdoor activities and food and wine product.	High Priority	PCRT		Industry, PCRT
S11. Promote the benefits of tourism to local residents and local businesses on an on-going basis	On Going	PCRT, SGSC Tourism Unit		SGSC
S12. Promote the Shire's attractions and events directly to holiday homeowners	Immediate	PCRT, LTAs		Industry, PCRT
S13. Maximise promotion of Prom Country through free ink	Medium Priority	PCRT		
S14. Review the effectiveness of the current Prom Country Brand.	High Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit	\$10,000	SGSC, PCRT
Tourism Product Development				
S15. Attract appropriate large-scale tourism businesses in selected locations, including quality accommodation and conference facilities	High Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, Town Planning and Economic Development SGSC		
S16. Undertake a land use study to identify areas suitable to implement the rural activity zone.	Medium Priority	SGSC – Planning Unit		
S17. Promote potential development opportunities identified through the development and promotion of an investment prospectus. This should contain information and data relating to existing accommodation gaps, derived from the Economic Impact Study as well as information on tourism product potential.	High Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit		DSE
S18. Grow food and wine / agri-tourism by supporting and enhancing existing food and wine events and ensuring that planning policy allows for tourism growth in appropriate parts of the rural areas of the Shire	High Priority	PCRT, LTAs, SGSC Tourism Unit		

Tourism Infrastructure				
S19. Improve tourism and directional signage to and throughout Prom Country region	High Priority	SGSC, Vic roads, PCRT		Grant funding, SGSC
S20. Improve road infrastructure in areas where there is potential to further develop touring including the Grand Ridge Road and access to coastal areas (i.e. Cape Liptrap)	Medium Priority	Vic Roads, SGSC, Parks Victoria, DSE		Grant Funding, Vic Roads, Parks Victoria, DSE
S21. Seek funding for priority road infrastructure improvements, including provision of stopping / scenic view bays, touring signage and information.	Medium Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, SGSC		
S22. Improve the usage of the Visitor Information Centre by (A) increasing its current exposure and landscaping in the immediate term and (B) undertaking an independent study into the VIC location in the short term	High Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, SGSC,	A = \$5,000 B = \$50,000	SGSC Grant funding
S23. Explore possible improvements to public transport to and from the region, as well as within the region.	Medium Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, Parks Victoria, VLINE		
S24. Develop strategic town plans for South Gippsland Shire's towns to improve the presentation of the towns and provide for improved visitor amenities.	Medium Priority	SGSC	\$50,000 - \$100,000 per town	Pride of Place Grant funding
S25. Work closely with DSE to ensure the survival of low budget accommodation on foreshore areas as well as improved access to the water for boating and fishing in coastal areas.	Medium Priority	SGSC Tourism Unit, DSE, SGSC		
S26. Support Parks Victoria in the improvement of Cape Liptrap as a tourism destination.	Medium Priority	Parks Victoria PCRT, SGSC,		Parks Victoria, SGSC

Appendices

Appendix A. Workshop Attendees

Workshop 1

Name	Organisation
Cr Heather Bligh	South Gippsland Shire Council
Claire Buckland	South Gippsland Shire Council
Christie Sullivan	South Gippsland Shire Council
Christine Legg	Visitor Information Centre
Ned Dennis	South Gippsland Shire Council
Liz Rushen	Southern Gippsland Wineries
Chris Howard	South Gippsland Farmers Markets
Owen Schmidt	Lyrebird Hill Winery and Guesthouse
Linda Robins	Prom Country Regional Tourism
Paul Greco	Prom Country Regional Tourism
Ian Wills	Prom Country Regional Tourism
Graham Brown	Prom Country Regional Tourism
Noel Hutchinson	Parks Victoria
Andrew Marshall	Parks Victoria
Glen O'Neil	Leongatha Area Tourism
Liz Morris	Mirboo North LTA
Paul Ahern	Foster Fruit Market
Ed Szwaja	Coal Creek Historical Village

Workshop 2

Name	Organisation
Tony Holmes	Hudspeth House B&B
Judy Holmes	Hudspeth House B&B
Lorraine Hughes	Meeniyan Motel
Sandra Charlton	Koonwarra Cottages
Graeme Wilson	Windy Ridge Winery
Jon Wathen	Larkrise House
Ros Wathen	Larkrise House
Pat Reeves	Kardella Homestead Guesthouse B&B
Ian McDonald	Me 'N' Ian B&B
Amanda Ford	Cypress Hill B&B
Robert Wallen	Cypress Hill B&B
Alan Rittman	Black Cockatoo Cottages
Les Brough	Abington Briars Cottage
Linda Brough	Abington Briars Cottage
Ian Wills	At Ripplebrook by the Prom
Ian Ribbons	Meridian Kayak Adventures
Ted Hattam	Firelight Museum
Geoff Reid	Comfort Inn Foster
Susan Braker	Mornings Light Day Spa & Retreat
Cheryl Lamb	Lamont House
John O'Shea	Vereker House
David Keating	The Cape Accommodation
Glen O'Neil	Prom Country Web Design
Barbara Carpenter	President, Leongatha Area Tourism
Robyn Bull	Tarra Bulga Guesthouse
Nick Goldsmith	Tarra Bulga Guesthouse
Linda Dunlop	Meeniyan Natural Therapies Centre
Liz Rushen	Waratah Hills Vineyard
Wayne Jefferis	Prom Country Scenic Flights
Christie Sullivan	South Gippsland Shire Council
Claire Buckland	South Gippsland Shire Council
Christine Legg	Prom Country Visitor Information Centre
Geoff Hill	South Gippsland Shire Council

