

Visitor Economy Strategy Actions 2023/2024



Visitor Economy Strategy

Annual
Implementation
July 2024

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THEME 1 - Increasing marketing and promotion

Strengthen South Gippsland's appeal as a visitor destination through increased brand awareness, whilst highlighting the regional brand characteristics.
Raise the profile of South Gippsland's visitor offering by facilitating and undertaking a range of destination marketing activities to increase visitation.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
1.1 Develop and promote the South Gippsland tourism brand.	1.1.1	Develop the South Gippsland brand identity.	Finalised in October 2022.
	1.1.2	Undertake research to identify market segments.	Incorporated in the SG Brand Identity project.
	1.1.3	Develop and implement localised South Gippsland branding consistent with the Gippsland brand developed by Destination Gippsland (DGL).	Ongoing implementation with a specific campaign scheduled for Spring 2024.
	1.1.4	Increase South Gippsland's digital promotional assets (photography, video, drone footage).	'Visit South Gippsland' marketing video launched in December 2023 which has been viewed 25k and shared 224 times.
1.2 Develop and strengthen South Gippsland's appeal as a visitor destination through a range of coordinated marketing initiatives.	1.2.1	Develop a promotional website to attract visitors to South Gippsland.	Website live January 2022. Website continuously monitored and updated.
	1.2.2	Encourage visitors to use the new website via an online and print advertising campaign.	Visit South Gippsland website included in all South Gippsland promotional material. Commenced installation of new signage on public infrastructure, the initial site at the Port Welshpool Public Toilets.
	1.2.3	Develop an annual marketing campaign for the South Gippsland region drawing on support from government partners where needed.	Promotional material developed for regional publications. Regional promotion through major South Gippsland events including Winterfest, Fishy Stories, Italian Festa, Fish Creek Tea Cosy Festival and Loch Food and Wine. Advert & editorial in Gippsland Lifestyle magazine. GAWK billboards- 3-week brand promotion in Bairnsdale and Torquay

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	1.2.4	Review existing marketing publications on an annual basis to determine if they are still required and if reprints are necessary.	Ongoing Project Is dependent on annual budget allocations.
1.3 Encourage new residents to South Gippsland via promotion of its people and places.	1.3.1	Implement a series of podcasts featuring local residents to promote the value of living in South Gippsland.	Completed in 2021/22
1.4 Raise the awareness of the region, to encourage visitation and increase length of stay.	1.4.1	Partner and collaborate with Gippsland councils to develop cross-regional marketing ideas.	Gippsland Walks and Rides Brochure renewed. Supported development of Eat.Drink Gippsland and Gippsland Walks Rides Brochure.
	1.4.2	Develop marketing initiatives to promote Gippsland drives.	Completed in 2022/23
	1.4.3	Develop a Grand Ridge Road map and promote it as a key Gippsland touring route.	Completed in 2022/23
1.5 Increase awareness of and visitation to the Great Southern Rail Trail.	1.5.1	Develop and deliver a strategic and marketing plan for the Great Southern Rail Trail.	Completed in 2022/23
1.6 Increase awareness of and visitation to South Gippsland's villages and eateries.	1.6.1	Coordinate a marketing campaign with a focus on villages and local eateries.	Marketing campaign focused this year on Tarwin Lower/Venus, Toora, Mirboo North and Korumburra. Campaign will be extended to the development of impetrative signage for the GSRT.
1.7 Support local business growth through a range of marketing initiatives		Develop Shop South Gippsland campaign to encourage support for local retail business	Completed in year one of this strategy.

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Theme 2 - Supporting visitor economy infrastructure

Advocate for and support development of South Gippsland infrastructure that encourages new and existing visitors.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
2.1 Support the development of key tourism assets and infrastructure.	2.1.1	Advocate to Federal and State Government for key tourism projects supported by Council.	Provided letters of support for external applications from Waratah Hills Winery, Wandilla Estate, South Gippsland Gin Co. Nanjet, Kongwak Butter Factory , to various State Government funding programs.
	2.1.2	Partner with Destination Gippsland to undertake a strategic product review aimed at delivering improvements to products and experiences.	Development of the Visitor Services Strategy underway.
2.2 Identify and support the development of complementary products and experiences to capitalise on and enhance the Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT).	2.2.1	Develop public art along the Great Southern Rail Trail	Two new large public arts projects (murals) undertaken at Leongatha and Korumburra. Future projects will be dependent on available budget.
	2.2.2	Identify additional supporting rail trail infrastructure requirements (such as additional trail connections, horse mounting yards, repair stations, shelters, toilets, car parks, interpretive signage, seat and bike racks etc). Support implementation if required.	Identified as a priority in the GSRT Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan. The Great Southern Rail Trail Management Plan is under review by Infrastructure Planning department for investigation of renewal costings and infrastructure requests.
	2.2.3	Investigate the viability of improvement works on the rail trail that would enhance the visitor experience (e.g. removal of dangerous road crossings or unsightly cattle crossings).	Commenced as part of GSRT Management and Marketing Plans. Further work required.
	2.2.4	Install wayfinding signage for the GSRT from key locations off the South Gippsland Highway and main arterial roads.	Locations identified and contractor appointed to install way finding signage for the entire trail.
2.3 Investigate sustainable infrastructure for South Gippsland to enhance the visitor experience.	2.3.1	Identify and then seek funding opportunities to implement actions from the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Study.	Funding approved for 6 locations across the Shire.

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2.4 Support upgrades to existing tourism infrastructure to enhance the visitor experience.	2.4.1	Complete a tourism infrastructure audit to identify redundant signage and opportunities for potential infrastructure upgrades (lookouts, tourism signage etc).	A desktop audit has commenced however new signage is subject to future budget allocations.
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Theme 3 - Diversifying and expanding products and experiences

Further develop South Gippsland's visitor products and experiences to encourage new and existing markets to visit, stay and spend.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
3.1 Attract and grow investment to the Shire through the implementation of a targeted Investment Attraction Program	3.1.1	Include tourism investment attraction as a key component of the South Gippsland Investment Attraction Strategy.	Collaborated with Economic Development team to update the Investment Attraction program with further works to develop collateral including a prospectus to be that incorporates the new South Gippsland Brand.
3.2 Identify opportunities to support events in South Gippsland	3.2.1	Determine a policy position on events and develop an event framework.	Not yet commenced – Events Policy to be developed in 2024/25
	3.2.2	Leverage from DGL's Gippsland Regional Events Strategy and Events Gippsland.	Member of the Gippsland Events Network. Supported five events through the Gippsland Events Acquisition Fund, being the Fish Creek Stories, Mirboo North Italian Festa, Mirboo North Winterfest, Fish Creek Tea Cosy and Loch Food and Wine. Supported the Bicycle Network in December 2023 for the Great Victorian Bike Ride, with overnight stay at Fish Creek.
3.3 Leverage South Gippsland's cultural assets for tourism purposes	3.3.1	Develop a South Gippsland Cultural Tourism Plan.	Forms part of the Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy (AC&CI) adopted by Council in July 2022.
	3.3.2	Position Coal Creek as a key Cultural Tourism asset for South Gippsland.	The Coal Creek Strategic Plan is a Council budget initiative for 2023/24 with development well underway

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3.4 Identify South Gippsland's accessible tourism products and experiences	3.4.1	Undertake a stock take of accessible tourism assets in South Gippsland.	Not yet commenced.
3.5 Identify opportunities to support cycling in South Gippsland	3.5.1	Support the Bicycle Network 'Riding for Recovery Hub and Spoke' weekend event.	Due to limited ticket sales unfortunately Bicycle Network had to withdraw the event.
	3.5.2	Investigate opportunities for safe cycling paths and routes.	Not yet commenced. Subject to future budget allocations.
3.6 Continue to support Art, Culture and Creative Industries in South Gippsland	3.6.1	Update the South Gippsland Art, Culture and Creative Industry Strategy.	Adopted by Council July 2022.
3.7 Develop niche products aligned to brand	3.7.1	Develop touring routes that promote the visitor experiences.	Developed the Hinterland Discovery and Strzelecki Views tours.

Theme 4 - Enhancing visitor servicing

Enhance the visitor experience by providing high quality engagement assets, which create a positive image of our region. Invest in research to understand the market and identify the gaps.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
4.1 Improve the visitor experience	4.1.1	Broaden the tourism knowledge of local businesses and create tourism ambassadors via an online training program.	Platform developed, engaged business, community and volunteers in 2022/23.
	4.1.2	Investigate the feasibility and cost of digital technology in key locations.	Not yet commenced – Long term plan, and will be subject to future budget allocations.
	4.1.3	Investigate programs that help better understand the travel patterns of visitors.	Not yet commenced – Long term plan, and will be subject to future budget allocations.
	4.1.4	Continue the operation of the Visitor Information Centre in Foster.	Operates 7 days a week except Christmas Day.
	4.1.5	Develop plans to transition the Visitor Information Centres to an experience centre.	Not yet commenced Anticipated action as an outcome of the Towards 2030: Visitors Services Strategy being undertaken by Destination Gippsland in partnership with the six Councils. Implementation will be subject to future budget allocations

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	4.1.6	Undertake updated visitor research to better understand customer needs and expectations.	Developed as part of GSRT Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan and Brand Identity projects.
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Theme 5 - Building partnerships

To develop partnerships with stakeholders to support the development of the visitor economy in South Gippsland.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
5.1 Maintain collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to further progress the visitor economy in South Gippsland	5.1.1	Maintain and nurture partnerships with key agencies at Shire, regional and state level.	Ongoing collaboration with agencies including Destination Gippsland, Parks Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, One Gippsland and Gippsland LGAs.
	5.1.2	Actively participate in industry specific groups, forums and expos as appropriate.	Participation in Gippsland Tourism Managers meetings, Quarterly Gippsland Tourism Forums, Regional Development Victoria and Parks Victoria meetings. Attended Australia Tourism Exchange Forum held in Melbourne May 2024.
	5.1.3	Work collaboratively with Destination Gippsland under the terms of the partnership contract to ensure the best outcomes for South Gippsland.	Continued support and partnership with Destination Gippsland.
	5.1.4	Work with local business and community groups to promote opportunities for local operators.	Information disseminated through Business/Tourism associations, monthly newsletter and Visitor Information Centre updates.
	5.1.5	Engage with local artists via Council's Arts Development Officer.	Provide relevant content to the Arts Newsletter distributed fortnightly
	5.1.6	Collaborate with Parks Victoria on South Gippsland projects and marketing where opportunities exist or a need is identified.	Ongoing collaboration and meeting with Parks Victoria team including feedback to the development of the new Visitor Centre at Tidal River.
	5.1.7	Support the Visitor Economy Strategy Advisory Group to be a key adviser to Council on Visitor Economy issues.	Collaboration with VESAG to implement year one Action Plan. VESAG has not been reported.

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	5.1.8	Support the development of the State Government's Local Tourism Action Plans.	A local area tourism action plan completed for Foster, Toora and surrounds
	5.1.9	Provide community groups interested in establishing free or low-cost camping with information and advice.	Ongoing project in providing information to interested community groups.
	5.1.10	Support local communities to work with relevant authorities to establish dump points if appropriate.	Ongoing project in providing to interested community groups.

Theme 6 - Providing business development and support

Support the continued growth and development of the tourism sector that delivers high quality visitor experiences.
Building the skills, training and knowledge of the business community.

STRATEGY	#	ACTION	UPDATES
6.1 Facilitate the establishment of new tourism businesses in South Gippsland	6.1.1	Continue the Better Business Approvals process to assist small/medium businesses to establish in South Gippsland.	As at 06 June, 239 business enquiries received through the Better Approvals Program.
	6.1.2	Provide strategic input into the review of Council's Municipal Statement to ensure the Visitor Economy and its importance to South Gippsland is recognised.	Visitor Economy recognised in the Council Municipal Planning Statement
	6.1.3	Continue to provide the Business Concierge service within Council.	Permanent ongoing resource allocation.
6.2 Provide opportunities for local businesses to increase their knowledge and skills	6.2.1	Promote targeted training and skills programs to local businesses.	Small Business Victoria, SBMS, education providers and independent trainers.
	6.2.2	Deliver tourism information to local businesses via communication tools such as the Business e-newsletter and associated business web pages.	12 business newsletters circulated.
	6.2.3	Support Destination Gippsland Ltd to deliver the Gippsland Digital Maze Program to South Gippsland businesses.	Completed 2022/23
	6.2.4	Establish a business auditing program with a focus on customer service.	Not yet commenced – Long term plan and subject to future budget allocations.

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6.3 Encourage local businesses to invest and implement sustainable activities and technologies	6.3.1	Provide information to local business on sustainable technologies (for example electric vehicle charging).	Not yet commenced – Long term plan and subject to future budget allocations.
6.4 Developing Business Resilience and Recovery	6.4.1	Continue and enhance Council's Business Resilience and Recovery Programs.	Supported impacted businesses in Welshpool and Mirboo North from Storm Events. Businesses included in RediCommunities sessions in Foster and Mirboo North to improve understanding of emergency risks in these locations.
6.5 Enabling/supporting industry to access a skilled and job ready workforces.	6.5.1	Work with educational and training institutions to increase opportunities for locals to be job ready and assist retention of young people.	Jobs Expo conducted in Leongatha May 2024 with 36 employers attending.
	6.5.2	Work with businesses to understand skills requirements and plan appropriately.	Discussions held with businesses as part of scheduled business visits.