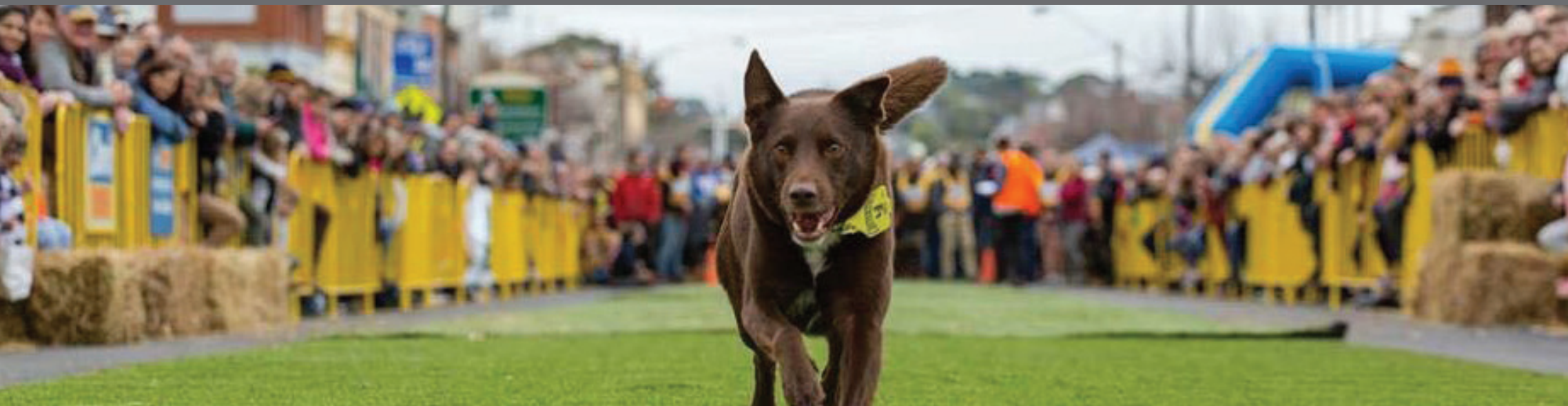


CASTERTON

Destination Action Plan 2018–2021

March 2018



GREAT OCEAN ROAD
REGIONAL TOURISM LIMITED

Acknowledgments

The development of the Casterton Destination Action Plan has been facilitated by Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism (GORRT).

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

Specifically, we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the two workshops that underpinned the Plan's development process:

Facilitator

Liz Price

Casterton Destination Action Plan Reference Group

Karen Stephens	Owen Stephens	Ian Esmore	Kylie Walford
Stephen Coad	Isobel Esmore	Sarah OGradey	Melanie Heinicke
Kerrie Lansdown	Sarah Thompson	Julie Kent	Heather Mullen
Leisa Gibbs	Tanya Lambert	Brian Murrell	Frank Ford
Anita Rank	Sue Cooper	Julie Crowle	Emma Van Smale
Linda Cleary	Adam Robertson	Mary Camilleri	
Collin Tienney	Allen Elijah	Greg Burgoyne	
Julie Phillips	Liz McKinnon	Sharon Bridgewater	

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Introduction

The Strategic focus of Great Ocean Road Regional Tourism Board (GORRTB) recognises that visitors to the Great Ocean Road region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences within the region. To drive this approach, GORRTB has facilitated the development of Destination Action Plans to provide a strategic, unifying framework to identify and prioritise the development, marketing and management strategies and actions for key destinations which is pivotal to the success of the whole region.

This Destination Action Plan identifies the priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance the competitiveness of Casterton. These strategies will also be reflected in the Strategic Master Plan for the Visitor Economy of the Great Ocean Road Region 2015-2025 to facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

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

The visitor economy of the Great Ocean Road

Visitors are major contributors to the strength of the local economy. Visitors may be leisure travelers (domestic and international), visitors to friends and relatives, holiday residents, business visitors, students, day trippers and through traffic. Their expenditure is new money contributed to the local economy which supports jobs, real estate value, provision of services, facilities and activities in the community.

The total tourism contribution to the Great Ocean Road region is:

- \$1.2b, 6,730 direct jobs
- 7.5% direct impact on Gross Regional Product; *and*
- 9.7% of total employment.



Objectives

Primary objectives:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction plus
6. Retain and leverage iconic status of Great Ocean Road from both a national and international aspect.

Secondary objectives:

This Plan also identified the importance of building the visitor economy for Casterton to ensure a sustainable and vibrant town. This would aid in delivering:

7. New jobs
8. Attracting new tourism businesses
9. Attracting increased population – especially families; *and*
10. Driving greater cooperation/cohesion.



Our vision

Casterton is a town where visitors are embraced and encouraged to share with the vibrant community in celebrating the living culture, natural assets and rich heritage.



Our collective strengths

- a. Kelpie Festival
- b. Geographic features
- c. Food experiences – pubs
- d. People
- e. Art
- f. Geographic location – between Coonawarra and Grampians.



Our challenges

The leadership group workshop identified the following as the priority challenges that needed to be addressed to achieve objectives:

- Resource constraints – funding – lack of paid resource
- Lack of networking/communication between groups
- Lack of commercial tourism product – especially accommodation
- Grow events – we need to be more than a single event, leverage existing events, coordinate event integration

Other challenges identified and discussed at the workshop:

- Planning approvals
- Quality of the road network
- Building sustainable businesses
- Lack of attractions/social activity/jobs to retain young people
- Increased competitiveness of tourism market
- Job/population creation
- Aging volunteer population
- Reliance on select few/volunteer army
- Availability/open hours for businesses
- Attracting and retaining staff.



Our opportunities

The leadership group workshop identified the following as the priority opportunities:

- Visitor centricity – not local focused
- Celebrate/leverage what we have now
- Develop new tourism product
- Build and leverage Casterton town pride
- Celebrate our natural attractions
- Leverage the beauty – quintessential Australian town

Other opportunities identified and discussed at the workshop:

- Kelpie Centre – usage, events, markets
- Sporting facilities – participation, polo cross, rodeo, race course, drags, cross country, B&S – authentic country events
- Grow accommodation – farmstay, glamping
- Sustainable agriculture
- Town driven eatery – co-op
- History of the town
- Health and wellbeing – connection to land, 'country town', farming
- Day spa/health retreat
- Market days/community events
- Natural attractions
 - Kanawinka
 - Glenelg River
 - Ess Lagoon
 - Baileys Rocks
- Walks
- Kelpie trail
- Relocation opportunities – liveability
- Natural attractions
- Warrock Homestead
- Rail Trail – Casterton to Merino
- Racecourse
- New product development
- Genealogy
- Create outdoor spaces
- Make more of existing events <-> 'town' celebration
- Nursery – co-op ownership opportunity, green space – community space
- History and heritage story
 - Railway station
 - Ghost tours
- Adelaide – Melbourne route – shopping point, social
- Major Mitchell Trail.



DIAGNOSTIC RATING

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

Success factors

CHARACTERISTICS	RATING	COMMENTS
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	6.2	
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	4.72	
3. Local Government support	6.6	
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	7.3	
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	N/A	
6. Consistent visitor service excellence	7.4	
7. Research driven cooperative marketing	N/A	
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	4.6	
9. Risk management plans in place	N/A	
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	6.7	



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for all stakeholders, to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan. To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Implementation Leadership Group will consider and review this progressively. One key consideration will be the availability and securing of resources to progress the implementation of the Plan in a timely manner. It may also be appropriate and necessary to involve other organisations and to seek funding for specific projects.

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

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

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

This Plan is dynamic and always evolving. Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by the Implementation Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan and/or re-prioritisation of actions. A full review and development of a new plan should be undertaken in three years.



PRIORITY 1

Destination Development – Grow Casterton’s tourism product offering

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.	Undertake a product audit to detail current product and services and identify opportunities to market and promote product and identify product gaps. Include an audit of current promotional material that is delivered and/or available through Council, community groups or individual businesses		High
2.	Develop an action plan to attract or build products, services and experiences to strengthen and grow the destination positioning and key themes		High
3.	Develop a strategy to engage business and community participation in tourism programs including preparation and integration of a database of visitor economy businesses and community organisations into the GORRT database		High
4.	Undertake an experiences audit to strengthen product		Medium
5.	Develop a plan and seek funding through State and Federal government programs to improve the visitability and sense of arrival into Casterton main street and visitor precincts – opportunity to celebrate the town’s distinctive architecture and quaint and quirky buildings		Medium
6.	Develop a plan identifying and prioritising infrastructure needs – build on work undertaken in Council’s structure plan i.e. extension of railway precinct for events, signage, picnic and BBQ sites, public toilets, playgrounds, skate parks, viewing platforms, walking trails etc.		Medium
7.	Review existing events and develop an events strategy to leverage or grow community events to visitor events – build on work undertaken by Casterton Business and Development Committee		Medium
8.	Develop opportunities to cultivate growing ‘food’ experiences ie. cafes, pubs etc.		Medium
9.	Consider a series of workshops to stimulate product development ie. How to run a B&B, Farmstay? Airbnb is it for me?		Medium



PRIORITY 2

Destination marketing – Celebrate Casterton’s tourism product offering

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.	Support and consistently promote a unique brand positioning for Casterton		In progress
2.	Build the content (stories, images, etc.) to support the destinations positioning and key themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Natural attractions▪ History and heritage (pastoral, indigenous, railway etc.)▪ Touring routes▪ Authentic country events▪ Active experiences – walks, canoeing, fishing, 4WDing, Rail Trail (Casterton to Merino)▪ Arts▪ Genealogy		High
3.	Build a promotional plan to support distribution of content – print and digital		High
4.	Develop a Casterton microsite to be hosted within Portland and/or GOR site		High
5.	Develop a ‘Discover your own backyard’ campaign targeting locals and visiting friends and relatives		High
6.	Identify and build consistency in the promotion of signature product i.e. Kelpie Centre, Warrock Homestead		Medium
7.	Encourage community organisations and business operators to develop their digital presence and integrate the ‘destination’ and ‘regional’ content into their marketing and promotional tools		Medium
8.	Consider opportunity to enter/participate in liveability or best country town type award – mainstream or media/social		Low

PRIORITY 3

Develop leadership and collaboration – Build a connected, engaged and collaborative visitor economy industry for Casterton

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.	Establish a DAP Implementation Steering Committee of all visitor economy stakeholders and collaboratively focus on the implementation of this Plan – including identifying priorities and facilitating integration of these priorities into the plans and activities of Council, tourism and community group plans		High
2.	Consider a formal launch event for the DAP to engage, inform and motivate all stakeholders		High
3.	Consider development of a quarterly networking event to create inter-community group sharing of information and to foster product development and cooperative marketing opportunities		Medium

PRIORITY 4

Visitor servicing

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.	Develop a visitor servicing culture – create a Casterton welcomes you program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to Casterton, I'm xxx, where are you from, how long are you staying, where are you heading... provide 2 or 3 things they must do before they leave town... 		Medium
2.	Develop visitor servicing excellence program – could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of resources, customer service training, awards, information nights to ensure businesses know and can recommend other businesses, annual famil program, promotional materials 		Medium
3.	Ensure all businesses provide visitor information on their websites, in their businesses, through their social media		Medium

PRIORITY 5

Foster strategic partnerships/alliances

ACTIONS		RESPONSIBILITIES	PRIORITIES
1.	Develop strategic partnerships with neighbouring areas to attract visitation en route i.e. Portland, Budge Bim, Grampians, Mt Gambier, Limestone Coast, Melbourne-Adelaide, Adelaide-Melbourne i.e. 'Say Giddy on your way'		High
2.	Look for opportunities to leverage activity/efforts of others or opportunities to engage with potential repeat visitors i.e. Casterton Race meetings, driver revival programs, participatory events etc.		Medium