

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2029

TOURISM

**GEELONG  
AND THE BELLARINE**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

### WE ACKNOWLEDGE GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE IS WADAWURRUNG COUNTRY.

We welcome visitors to our region, a place we acknowledge has been cared for by the Wadawurrung people of the Kulin Nation for thousands of years.

The environment is a key reason visitors choose this destination. Traditional Owners sharing the beauty and joy of these lands and waterways is a privilege, one we repay with respect for their country, Elders and people.

## CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction
- 4 Values
- 5 Measures of Success
- 6 Challenges
- 7 Priorities
- 8 Key Action Areas
  - 9 Sustainable Development
  - 10 Industry Strengthening
  - 11 Strategic Engagement
  - 12 Destination Marketing
- 13 A Plan Connected
  - 14 Addressing Challenges
  - 15 Actioning Priorities

## A NOTE FROM THE LEADERSHIP

**This is a new strategy but we didn't begin with a blank canvas, this plan strikes a balance of consolidating existing programs we know are valued and effective while also prioritising opportunities on the horizon. It lays out the steps needed to address the unique challenges of this place and time. It feels optimistic yet realistic and fresh but familiar.**

This plan reaffirms our commitment to established functions like marketing and industry development whilst also making space for the greater role we'll play in supporting growth in the Business Events sector when Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre opens in 2026. It highlights the responsibility we have to source and interpret data for the industry, and emphasises the importance of key infrastructure and precincts as part of the visitor experience in a thriving region.

For each year of this strategy, an Action Plan will underpin the specific projects, activities and budgets to address the objectives and priorities outlined here. Those Action Plans will also document specific Key Performance Indicators, while our corporate website will maintain a Key Measures dashboard to monitor progress and success.

We must acknowledge the work of the Board of Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine in driving our strategic priorities. They are a diverse group of industry and municipal representatives who collaborated and respectfully challenged themselves and each other to establish these strategic priorities.

Similarly, thank you to the team who have been energised by the support of the board and the clarity of this plan. They are passionate about their work in our tourism industry and excited to approach the next four years with renewed purpose.

We are grateful to all our partners – government, industry and regional – for their enduring support of our work and structure. This industry, such a complex ecosystem, is well served by the Team Tourism approach. Our willingness across all stakeholders to work together for shared success will stand us all in good stead for another four years.



**BILL MITHEN**  
Chairperson



**TRACY CARTER**  
Executive Director

## INTRODUCTION

### WHO WE ARE

Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine is the regional tourism organisation spanning from Little River around Meredith and Inverleigh to Armstrong Creek including Geelong, The Bellarine, Queenscliff and the Moorabool Valley.

We are a partnership between the tourism industry and government. Our founding local government partners are the City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe and Golden Plains Shire. We operate as a Visitor Economy Partnership recognised by the Victorian Government.

### VISION FOR THE REGION

Geelong and The Bellarine is a place to do, not simply see. It's an accessible destination that inspires visitors to immerse themselves in authentic experiences, create lasting memories and depart with a desire to return.

### HOW WE WILL GET THERE

We will advocate for and showcase our region by providing exceptional service to our visitors, members, industry and community so they have the knowledge, tools and capability to benefit from a sustainable visitor economy.

### WHAT WE DO

We build strong partnerships that connect our vibrant community, industry, and visitors. We advocate for sustainable and accessible tourism that showcases our region's diverse attractions. Through responsible tourism, we foster community pride, create authentic experiences, and develop a resilient visitor economy we can all be proud of.

### WHY WE DO IT

To build a thriving and sustainable visitor economy that is valued and celebrates our region, creating a community where we are proud to live, work and play.



## VALUES

**A relentless pursuit of better** by embracing diverse perspectives and empowering all contributions to progress.

**Own our actions** and embrace candid feedback to foster trust and drive continuous improvement.

**Operate with zest** to cultivate an environment of enthusiasm, creativity and passion, leaving a lasting impression that reflects our commitment to excellence and care.

**Build strong partnerships** with open communication and mutual respect to drive collective success.

**Embody a strong sense of 'why'** where every action is driven by clear intent and a dedication to meaningful impact.

**Champion our region and sector** by embracing our leadership responsibility, actively advocating for progress, driving innovation, and forging strategic partnerships that elevate our collective impact and create lasting value.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Destination success is not as simple as visitor numbers trending ever upward. Our sector is complex and the way we measure and report our success must be nuanced. Throughout the life of this plan, a range of indicators will be gauged to understand the results we're delivering, the trends we're shaping, and the important factors we're considering.



### MANAGE

#### OUTCOMES WE DIRECTLY IMPACT:

- Marketing results, including digital traffic, engagement
- Business Events results, including lead generation and conversion
- Campaign results and effectiveness
- Advocacy output
- Industry engagement and communications
- Member numbers, results and satisfaction
- Distribution of research and data
- Media results



### MEASURE

#### OUTCOMES WE INFLUENCE THROUGH OUR WORK:

- Visitation, spend and employment trends
- Destination preference and sentiment
- Tourism infrastructure pipeline
- Community attitudes toward the visitor economy



### MONITOR

#### OUTCOMES OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL:

- Macro economic factors
- Development and maintenance of infrastructure
- Direct delivery of visitor experiences
- State and Federal tourism initiatives
- Regulatory framework

## CHALLENGES



### WORKFORCE AND TRAINING

Challenges related to cost, expertise, availability, and adaptability impact the customer experience, leading to missed opportunities.



### SOCIAL LICENSE

Building community support for tourism and supporting their role in sustainable growth.



### FUNDING

Investment in infrastructure and programs is limited by a constrained funding environment. This becomes particularly challenging when competing with destinations that have greater resources.



### DOING BUSINESS

The operating environment is dynamic and can be challenging for the sector. Issues like rising business costs and red tape can create barriers that hinder the ability to start, improve and grow businesses.



### MARKETING AND BRAND

Generating awareness, desire, seasonal visitation and dispersal in a crowded marketplace, with limited resources.



### CONSUMER

Times of economic and political volatility will impact confidence and consumer behaviour.



### TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

The region benefits from multi-mode access and proximity, but further investment is required to maximise these advantages. Within the region, car-dependent transport limits options for both visitors and the workforce.

## PRIORITIES



### 1 BUSINESS EVENTS AND LEISURE EVENTS

Strengthen our focus on business events and driving visitor engagement, dispersal, and business opportunities by leveraging the wider events calendar.

### 2 BRAND AND AWARENESS

Use brand tactics to build consumer destination awareness and increase corporate brand engagement among industry and stakeholders.

### 3 INDUSTRY STRENGTHENING

Support members to maximise the value of their membership by offering a well-planned and scheduled suite of programs while also facilitating industry collaboration.

### 4 VIBRANT AND SAFE CBD

Advocate for key CBD precincts and programs to ensure visitor sense of arrival, welcome and wayfinding that leaves a positive impression.

### 5 DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Invest in innovative data platforms that deliver deep localised insights to support informed decision making by our team and tourism businesses in our region.

### 6 ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate with partners to prioritise advocacy for regional liveability priorities and the tourism sector in local, state and federal spaces.

### 7 INTERSTATE MARKETING

Prioritise interstate marketing to support tourism operators with destination storytelling and coordination to achieve a level of reach and scale they can't generate alone.

### 8 INVESTMENT PIPELINE

Use the Sustainable Destination Master Plan as the basis to better attract and advocate for investment, while providing timely updates on the development pipeline.

# KEY ACTION AREAS



## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT **SD**

**Understand, prioritise and advocate for tourism development that makes a positive contribution to the region – its identity, its prosperity, its places and its people.**

- 1** Collaborate with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation in ways that support self determination to help realise tourism potential that positions culture as an intrinsic and meaningful part of the destination story and experience.
- 2** Elevate the Sustainable Destination Master Plan as an aspiration for industry and community, and as an invitation to invest.
- 3** Encourage growth and enrichment within existing businesses and provide support for development of their infrastructure, workforce and experiences.
- 4** Advocate for improving the visitor experience in the Geelong CBD.





## INDUSTRY STRENGTHENING

IS

**Actively encourage greater breadth and depth of product and experiences while uplifting the capacity of the people who deliver them.**

- 5 Build and implement a framework that supports new tourism businesses and the adoption of new ideas that align with destination master plan aspirations.
- 6 Connect the tourism workforce with opportunities to learn from a variety of sources, including each other.
- 7 Engage the industry in market research, opportunity identification and growth strategies.
- 8 Champion high achievers and support collaboration among tourism businesses.

## STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

SE

**Build valuable collaborations that provide meaningful support to the tourism industry and that strengthen our voice as representative of this region and our sector.**

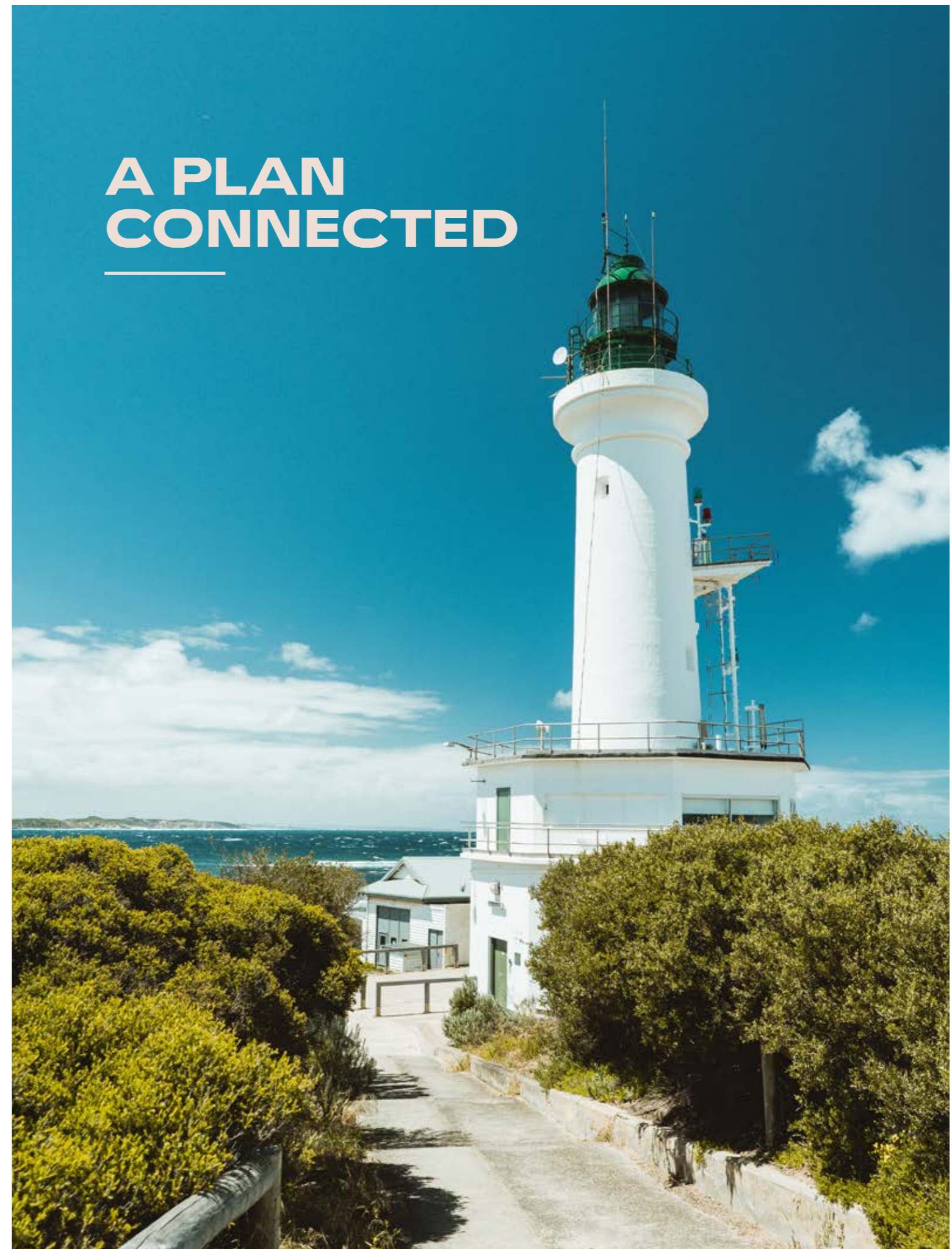
- 9 Build industry connections by growing participation rates through clear value propositions that support business growth in a destination-led context.
- 10 Commit to community engagement to inform activity, celebrate tourism, and foster a sense of destination pride.
- 11 Prioritise collection and sharing of critical insights to support good decision making and better understanding of the realities of the regional visitor economy.
- 12 Ensure our collective industry and destination's best interests are advocated for and progressed through local engagement and external tourism partnerships.

## DESTINATION MARKETING

DM

**Position the region in the hearts and minds of existing and potential markets as a desirable place to visit and help them make it happen.**

- 13** Build brand Geelong and The Bellarine as a place to do, not simply see.
- 14** Investigate established and emerging markets and invest resources in a balanced way that creates a pathway to purchase.
- 15** Cast the net wide and support tourism operators to reach further markets with destination context and experience-driven content.
- 16** Leverage the Business Events opportunity created by the opening of Nyaal Banyul Geelong Convention and Event Centre.
- 17** Focus on programs that address seasonality and midweek challenges.



## A PLAN CONNECTED

# ADDRESSING CHALLENGES



## KEY ACTIONS



### WORKFORCE AND TRAINING

Challenges related to cost, expertise, availability, and adaptability impact the customer experience, leading to missed opportunities.

IS6 IS8 SE9



### TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY

The region benefits from multi-mode access and proximity, but further investment is required to maximise these advantages. Within the region, car-dependent transport limits options for both visitors and the workforce.

SD2 SD4



### MARKETING AND BRAND

Generating awareness, desire, seasonal visitation and dispersal in a crowded marketplace, with limited resources.

DM13 DM15 DM17



### SOCIAL LICENSE

Building community support for tourism and supporting their role in sustainable growth.

SD4 SE10 SE11  
DM13



### DOING BUSINESS

The operating environment is challenging, with rising costs and red tape creating barriers that hinder the ability to start, improve, and grow businesses.

IS5 IS6 IS7  
IS8



### FUNDING

Investment in infrastructure and programs is limited by a constrained funding environment. This becomes particularly challenging when competing with destinations that have greater resources.

SD2 SD4 SE12  
DM16



### CONSUMER

Economic and political volatility has impacted confidence and consumer behaviour.

SD3 IS7 SE11  
DM14 DM15

# ACTIONING PRIORITIES



## KEY ACTIONS

### 1 BUSINESS EVENTS AND LEISURE EVENTS

Strengthen our focus on business events and driving visitor engagement, dispersal, and business opportunities by leveraging the wider events calendar.

IS7 DM13 DM16  
DM17

### 2 BRAND AND AWARENESS

Use brand tactics to build consumer destination awareness and increase corporate brand engagement among industry and stakeholders.

DM13 DM14 DM15  
DM17

### 3 INDUSTRY STRENGTHENING

Support members to maximise the value of their membership by offering a well-planned and scheduled suite of programs while also facilitating industry collaboration.

IS5 IS6 IS7  
IS8

### 4 VIBRANT AND SAFE CBD

Advocate for key CBD precincts and programs to ensure visitor sense of arrival, welcome and wayfinding that leaves a positive impression

SD2 SD4

### 5 DATA AND MEASUREMENT

Invest in innovative data platforms that deliver deep localised insights to support informed decision making by our team and tourism businesses in our region.

IS7 SE11

### 6 ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

Collaborate with partners to prioritise advocacy for regional liveability priorities and the tourism sector in local, state and federal spaces.

SD1 SD2 SE12

### 7 INTERSTATE MARKETING

Prioritise interstate marketing to support tourism operators with destination storytelling and coordination to a level of reach and scale they can't generate alone.

DM13 DM15 DM16  
DM17

### 8 INVESTMENT PIPELINE

Use the Sustainable Destination Master Plan as the basis to better attract and advocate for investment, while providing timely updates on the development pipeline.

SD3 IS5 IS7  
SE12

TOURISM

# GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE

Wadawurrung Country  
30 Gheringhap St,  
Geelong VIC 3220

P: 03 5244 7100  
[info@tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au](mailto:info@tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au)  
[www.tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au](http://www.tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au)

