

# LATROBE CITY EVENTS AND TOURISM STRATEGY 2018 – 2022





# PURPOSE

**The purpose of this strategy is to strengthen Latrobe City Council's profile and position in events and tourism, creating a higher return on investment for the community and industry in Latrobe City.**

The strategy provides a strategic approach for the development and promotion of major events and tourism. It has the long-term objectives of extending the profile of Latrobe City to be known as an event destination and of developing greater synergies between events and the wider tourism industry.

Increasing the destination's profile as a regional events hub will sit alongside the development of

distinct destination experiences for visitors to our region, and ultimately lead to converting our day-trippers into overnight stays. This will increase visitation, length of stay, visitor spend and visitor dispersal throughout Latrobe City for the economic and social benefit of the community.

Latrobe City is Victoria's only eastern regional city and recognised as the fourth largest major regional centre in Victoria, along with Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong. Located in southeast Victoria's Gippsland region, Latrobe City is approximately a two-hour drive from the key source market, Melbourne, and is

strategically located to harness the population growth of Melbourne's outer southeast, which experienced the most substantial population growth in Australia during 2016-17.

The strategy provides a cohesive framework aligning with Latrobe 2026: The Community Vision for Latrobe Valley; Latrobe City Council's Plan; Latrobe City Council Economic Development Strategy, and the Latrobe City Council Arts Strategy.


To provide a long-term competitive advantage and coordinated approach, the strategy is also aligned with event strategies for Latrobe Valley Authority, Destination Gippsland and Visit Victoria.







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*within 2 hours by car, train or bus from Melbourne*

 = approx 160km, 1hr 50min

 = 2hr 8min from Flinders St departing hourly

 = 2hr, 4 services per day



## LATROBE CITY VISITOR ECONOMY

<p><b>ATTRACTS</b></p> <p><b>1.1m</b></p> <p>visitors annually<sup>1</sup></p> <p>(representing 18% of Gippsland's visitors)</p>	<p><b>GENERATES</b></p> <p><b>677k</b></p> <p>visitor nights<sup>1</sup></p> <p>(representing 18.9% of Gippsland's total visitor nights)</p>	<p><b>IT'S WORTH</b></p> <p><b>1,614</b> JOBS</p> <p><b>CONTRIBUTING</b></p> <p><b>\$123m</b></p> <p>Representing 5% of total employment<sup>2</sup></p>
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## VISITOR PROFILE

<p><b>WHY VISITORS COME TO LATROBE!</b></p> <p>Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) <b>44%</b></p> <p>Holiday <b>27%</b></p> <p>Business <b>24%</b></p>	<p><b>MAJOR SOURCE MARKETS</b></p> <p>Melbourne (approx. <b>44%</b>)</p> <p>Regional Victoria (approx. <b>42%</b>)</p> <p>NSW (approx. <b>7%</b>)</p>	<p><b>VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES<sup>3</sup></b></p> <p><b>17,716</b></p> <p>visitor enquiries</p>	<p><b>ATTRACTS</b></p> <p><b>872k</b></p> <p>day trippers<sup>1</sup></p> <p>(representing <b>77.5%</b> of visitation and nearly a quarter of day trip visitors to Greater Gippsland Region)</p>
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## EVENTS PROFILE

<p><b>512</b></p> <p><b>COMMUNITY EVENTS<sup>4</sup></b></p> <p>Facilitation, equipment &amp; permit services</p>	<p><b>18 MAJOR EVENTS<sup>4</sup></b></p> <p>Sourced from</p> <p><b>13 LCC</b></p> <p><b>5 SPORTS MGT AUSTRALIA</b></p> <p><b>ATTRACTION FEES \$200,000</b></p>	<p><b>LCC MAJOR EVENT ECONOMIC IMPACT 2017/18<sup>4</sup></b></p> <p>Direct spend <b>\$8.2m</b></p> <p>Indirect spend <b>\$4.1m</b></p> <p>Total economic impact <b>\$12.3m</b></p>	<p><b>LCC EVENTS RETURN ON INVESTMENT<sup>4</sup></b></p> <p><b>\$41</b></p> <p><b>\$1</b></p>
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## LATROBE VALLEY SPORTS & COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

<p><b>\$85m</b></p>	<p>Investment by VIC Govt. Administered by Latrobe Valley Authority</p>	<p><b>Upgrade key local infrastructure</b></p>	<p><b>Attract major sporting events and programs</b></p>
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# VISION



*To be Victoria's leading light in major events and regional experiences.*



# GOALS



Economic Growth

Positive Destination Profile

Community Pride

# OBJECTIVES



Increase Visitation

Increase Length of Stay  
and Visitor Spend

Increase  
Destination Profile

Promote Community  
Connectedness

# STRATEGIES



1  
DEVELOP  
DISTINCT  
DESTINATION  
EXPERIENCES

2  
HALLMARK &  
MAJOR EVENTS  
IN A YEAR-ROUND  
CALENDAR

3  
BRANDING &  
DIGITAL MEDIA

4  
PACKAGING &  
COLLABORATION

5  
RESOURCING &  
GOVERNANCE



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# LATROBE CITY

**Latrobe City lies in the heart of Gippsland in eastern Victoria within a two-hour drive east of Melbourne, along the Princes Highway (M1).** Victoria's fourth largest city, it has a population of over 74,000 with a diversity of heritage and culture.

Latrobe City is a multicultural community and all cultures are encouraged to be actively involved in presenting and participating in the events and experiences we offer. In particular, there is scope for the local Aboriginal community to be involved in events and tourism initiatives. Input and participation from Aboriginal organisations, individuals and businesses, as well as from members of the diverse cultures within our community, will enrich Latrobe's community and the offering for our visitors.

In addition, improving social participation, volunteering and access to the opportunities provided by tourism and events can

be transformative, change lives and enable all of our community to benefit.

Latrobe City consists of four major urban centres of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe/Newborough and Churchill, together with the townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Tyers, Traralgon South, Yallourn North and Yinnar.

In recent years the City has attracted major sporting, arts and cultural events, attracting 1.1 million visitors annually and creating 1,614 jobs, representing 5% of total employment<sup>1</sup>.

Latrobe City is a vibrant and diverse community with the capacity to host major events including international, national and state sporting titles, cultural performances, festivals, expos and meetings.

Visitors can experience emerging food, wine and local arts, and get up close and personal to historic

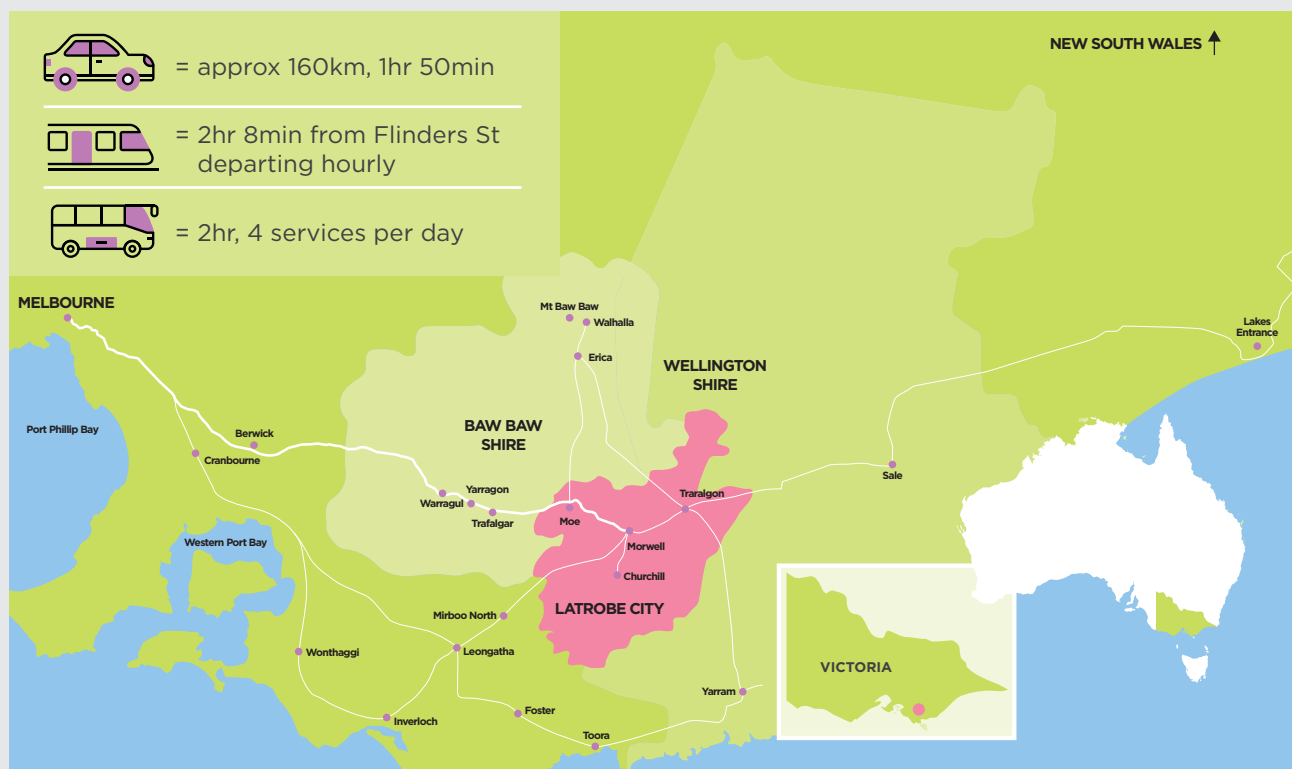
and industrial sites. Nature-based attractions such as Morwell National Park, waterfalls and the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail provide opportunities for cycling, mountain biking, bushwalking and hiking.

Latrobe City is at the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges within a comfortable driving distance of Mt Baw Baw snowfields, whitewater rivers and coastal parks, including Wilson's Promontory National Park and Gippsland Lakes. Nearby is the Tarra Bulga National Park, a spectacular temperate rainforest that is home to giant mountain ash trees, a suspension bridge over a fern-filled gully and the elusive lyrebird.

As part of the Latrobe Valley and in partnership with the neighbouring shires of Baw Baw and Wellington, Latrobe City offers a central location with accommodation ranging from motels and self-contained apartments to b&b's, cabins and family friendly caravan parks.

<sup>1</sup>2016-17 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Tourism Satellite Account

## MELBOURNE TO LATROBE CITY *within 2 hours by car, train or bus*





# STRATEGIC CONTEXT + PARTNERSHIPS

**This strategy provides a cohesive framework to meet visitor and event demands, while providing a long-term, distinctive competitive advantage for Latrobe City through a connected and collaborative approach with strategic tourism, event and regional partners.**

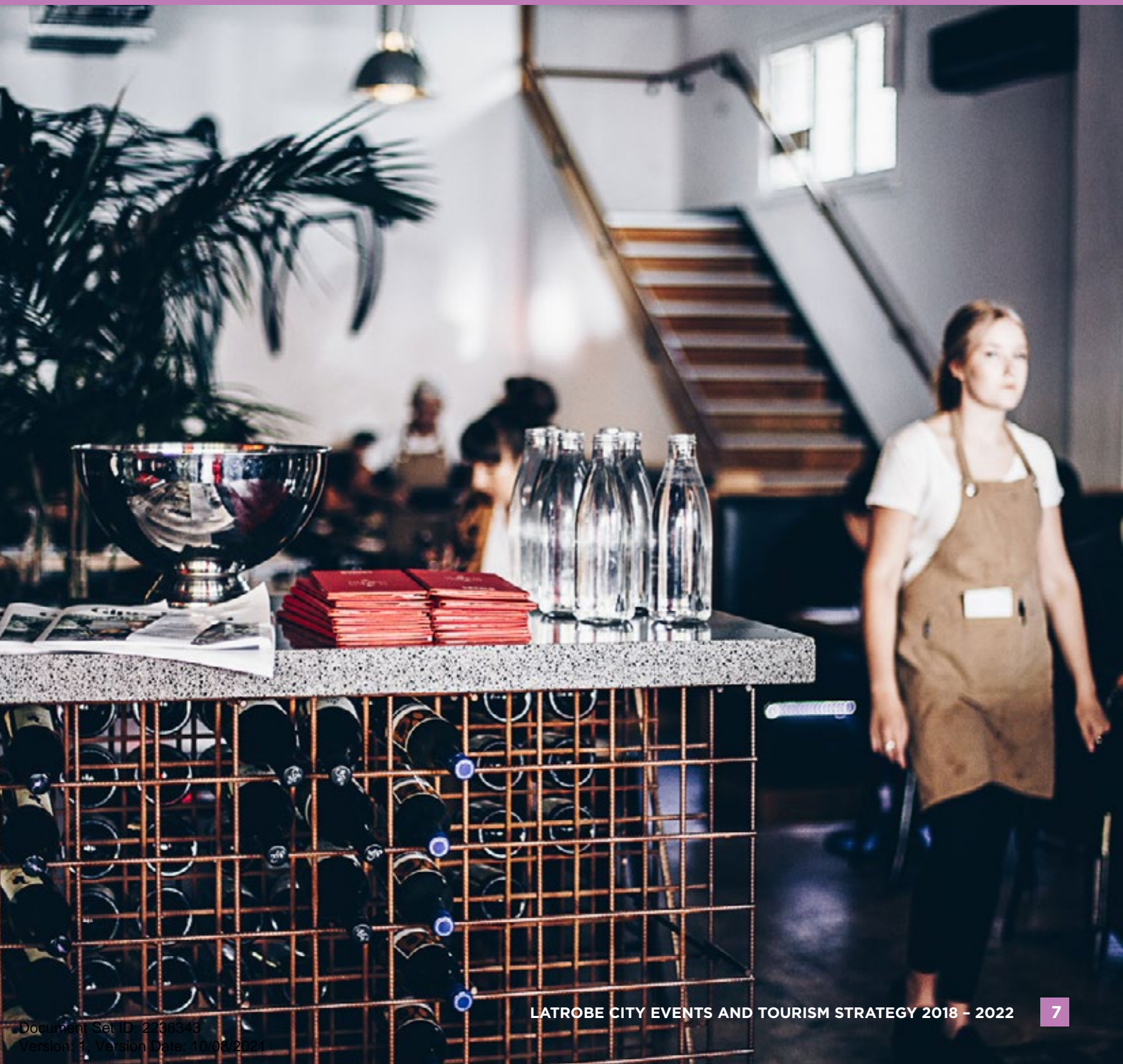
Directly delivering on the objectives outlined in the *Latrobe City Council*

*Plan 2017 - 2021*, the strategy supports job creation and industry diversification to enable economic growth in Latrobe City, improve livability and governance, and grow civic pride through Latrobe City's image as a key regional city.

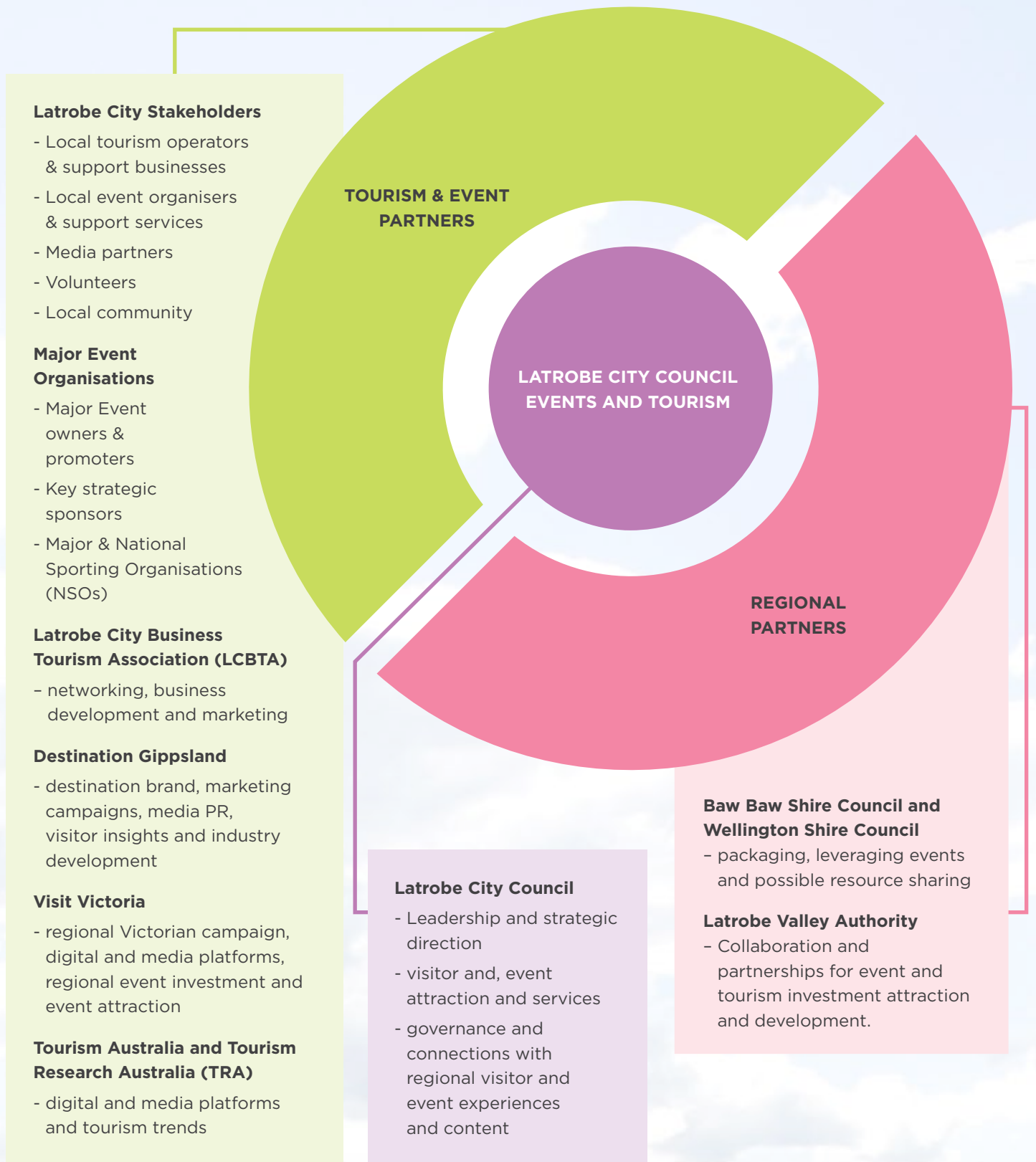
The strategy aligns with *Latrobe 2026: The Community Vision for Latrobe Valley*, *Latrobe City Council's Plan 2017 - 2021*,

*Latrobe City Council Economic Development Strategy 2016-2020* and *Latrobe City Council Arts Strategy 2016-2021*.

Regionally and state-wide, the strategy aligns with Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA), Destination Gippsland (DG) and Visit Victoria's strategic directions, destination management plans and tourism and event strategies.



# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS + COLLABORATION





# THE VISITOR ECONOMY

## in Latrobe City

The visitor economy does not occur in isolation as visitor activities contribute to investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors. It combines visitor services including accommodation, transport, tours and attractions with intermediaries and indirect industries such as retail and food production.

ATTRACTS

1.1m

visitors annually<sup>1</sup>

(representing 18% of Gippsland's visitors)

ATTRACTS

872k

day-trippers<sup>1</sup>

(representing 77.5% of visitation and nearly a quarter of day trip visitors to Greater Gippsland Region)

ATTRACTS

246k

overnight visitors<sup>1</sup>

(representing 10% of Gippsland's overnight visitors)

TOURISM IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

For every visitor dollar spent:

Accommodation & Food 34¢

Transport 19¢

Retail 16¢

Manufacturing 7¢

Education/Training 6¢

Arts & Recreation 4¢

Rental/Hire 2¢

ATTRACTS

8,000

international visitors<sup>1</sup>

(representing 11% of Gippsland's international visitors)

GENERATES

677k

visitor nights<sup>1</sup>

(representing 18.9% of Gippsland's total visitor nights)

IT'S WORTH

1,614 JOBS CONTRIBUTING TOURISM VALUE ADDED

\$123m

Representing 5% of total employment<sup>2</sup>

Source:

<sup>1</sup> National and International Visitor Survey, YE Dec 17, Tourism Research Australia

<sup>2</sup> 2016-17, Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Tourism Satellite Account (REMPAN)



# THE VISITOR PROFILE

## in Latrobe City

### WHY VISITORS COME TO LATROBE<sup>1</sup>

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) **44%**

Holiday **27%**

Business **24%**

### DAY TRIPPERS<sup>1</sup>

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) **48%**

Holiday **36%**

Business **15%**

### OVERNIGHT VISITORS<sup>1</sup>

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) **41%**

Holiday **34%**

Business **20%**

### VISITORS SPEND<sup>2</sup>

**\$89 per day**  
day-tripper

**\$259 per trip**  
**\$109 per night**

### MAJOR SOURCE MARKETS

Melbourne (approx. **44%**)

Regional Victoria  
(approx. **42%**)

NSW (approx. **7%**)

### VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES<sup>3</sup>

**17,716**  
visitor enquiries

### ACCOMMODATION<sup>4</sup>

**35**

motels, apartments,  
b&b's, caravan parks

**2,000**  
capacity

#### Source:

<sup>1</sup> National and International Visitor Survey, YE Dec 17, Tourism Research Australia

<sup>2</sup> Tourism Research Australia (TRA), Tourism in Local Government Areas 2016; Latrobe

<sup>3</sup> Visitor Information Centre, Latrobe City Council 2016/17

<sup>4</sup> Latrobe City Council Capacity, Capability & Gaps Assessment, Sports Management Australia



# EVENTS PROFILE

## *in Latrobe City*

### 512 COMMUNITY EVENTS

Facilitation, equipment & permit services

### 18 MAJOR EVENTS STAGED IN 2017/18

Sourced from

**13 LCC**

**5 Sports Mgt Australia**

Attraction fees  
**\$200,000**

### LCC MAJOR EVENT ECONOMIC IMPACT 2017/18

Direct spend **\$8.2m**

Indirect spend **\$4.1m**

Total economic impact  
**\$12.3m**

### LCC EVENTS RETURN ON INVESTMENT

**\$41**  
/  
**\$1**

### TYPE OF EVENTS

Sports **61%**

Community **35%**

Arts/Cultural **3%**

### SPORTS EVENTS

International **3%**

National **32%**

State **50%**

Community **15%**

### POPULAR EVENT DATES

**March**

Followed by Sept, Oct & Nov

### VENUES

**1** Latrobe Regional Gallery - international standard, regional

**1** Latrobe Performing Arts Centre

**40** conference/function venues

### SPORTING FACILITIES

**2** international standard

**4** national standard

**3** state standard

#### Source:

<sup>1</sup> Latrobe City Council, July 2018

<sup>2</sup> Latrobe City Council Capacity, Capability and Gaps Assessment, Sports Marketing Australia



# TARGET MARKETS

## GEOGRAPHIC SOURCE MARKETS

The primary source markets for the entire Gippsland region are Melbourne (approximately 44%), regional Victoria (42%), and interstate (13% with half from NSW) travelling by car.

Trends for Latrobe City as sourced from enquiries through the Latrobe Visitor Information Centre in

2017/18, with Melbourne (32%), other Victoria (17%), and NSW (7%) being major source markets, with local enquiries (44%).

**Latrobe is strategically located to harness the population growth of Melbourne's outer south-east as a key source market, within less than a two-hour drive.**

### MAJOR VISITOR SOURCE MARKETS FOR LATROBE

1. Melbourne
2. Regional Victoria
3. NSW

## MARKET SEGMENTATION

### PRIMARY MARKETS

Primary market segmentations for Latrobe City are identified as:

#### Drive Market

- **short-break** - Melbourne and regional Victoria - particularly leveraging Visit Victoria regional campaigns targeting Melbourne residents.
- **touring** - as part of 1-2 week touring market to Lakes Entrance/snow fields.
- **long-haul** - as part of the Recreational vehicle (RV)/caravan market touring the east coast of Australia.

#### Events Market

- event enthusiasts for specific sports and cultural events.

#### Visiting Friends and Relatives

### EMERGING MARKETS

The following emerging markets have been identified:

#### Soft Adventure

- for example cycling, mountain biking.

#### Education Market

- international students and their visiting friends and relatives.

#### Meetings Incentives Conferences Events (MICE)

- small group conferences and business meetings.



### International Market

- Asia as a major market identified for Victoria and Australia, with potential based on future development of distinct destination experiences and hallmark events in Latrobe City.

The identification of Latrobe City's primary and emerging markets (e.g. RV long-haul touring market, conference and education markets) and their potential warrant further investigation.



## SEASONALITY

Traditionally, the Visitor Information Centre records the highest level of enquiries in January and March, with peaks in July, August and October. The off-peak months are May, June and November.

The majority of major events are staged in March and August, followed by September, October and November. Winter is generally a low season for events, with few outdoor events and markets staged during winter.

## OCCUPANCY

Due to the discontinuation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics small area occupancy survey, it is challenging to portray accurate occupancy for Latrobe City.

Based on historical data and anecdotal feedback collected during the consultation, occupancy lies somewhere

between 40 - 50%, which is below the state average. Most commercial motels were found to service predominately corporate markets mid-week.

Many accommodation providers experience higher occupancy during school holidays and major events, especially during March.



# ATTRACTIONS

Latrobe has limited purpose-built attractions; however, food, wine and arts experiences are emerging. Nature-based attractions provide opportunities to further attract cycling, mountain biking, Adventure Races (e.g. mountain biking/canoeing), bushwalking and hiking markets.

Visitor attractions within the wider region of the Latrobe Valley, such as the Tarra Bulga National Park, the Grand Strzelecki Track, Walhalla, Mt Baw Baw snowfields, the Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park and Lakes Entrance, highlight the need to continue strengthening partnerships and collaboration.

Collaboration in marketing and media profiling, industry networking and packaging with neighbouring shires will result in result in growth across the industry.

*Latrobe City has the opportunity to develop experiences that are distinct from those of other cities and locations: which are not easily replicated and provide a long term competitive edge.*

# EVENTS

**Latrobe City's unique selling point for sporting events is its ability to host a diverse range of events from AFL to swimming, from water skiing to roller-blading and archery, with national and international standard sporting facilities.**

As depicted in the Events Profile, Latrobe City in partnership with Latrobe Valley Authority attracted major sporting events in 2017-18 with further event attraction potential being identified in the emerging arts and cultural event space.

**Sports event potential has been identified in the following areas:**

	Facility Rating	Event Potential
AFL	National	High
Basketball	National	High
Bocce	National	High
Bowls	International	High
Tennis	National/International	High
Soccer	State	High
Volleyball	National	High
Swimming	National/International	High
Archery	National/International	High

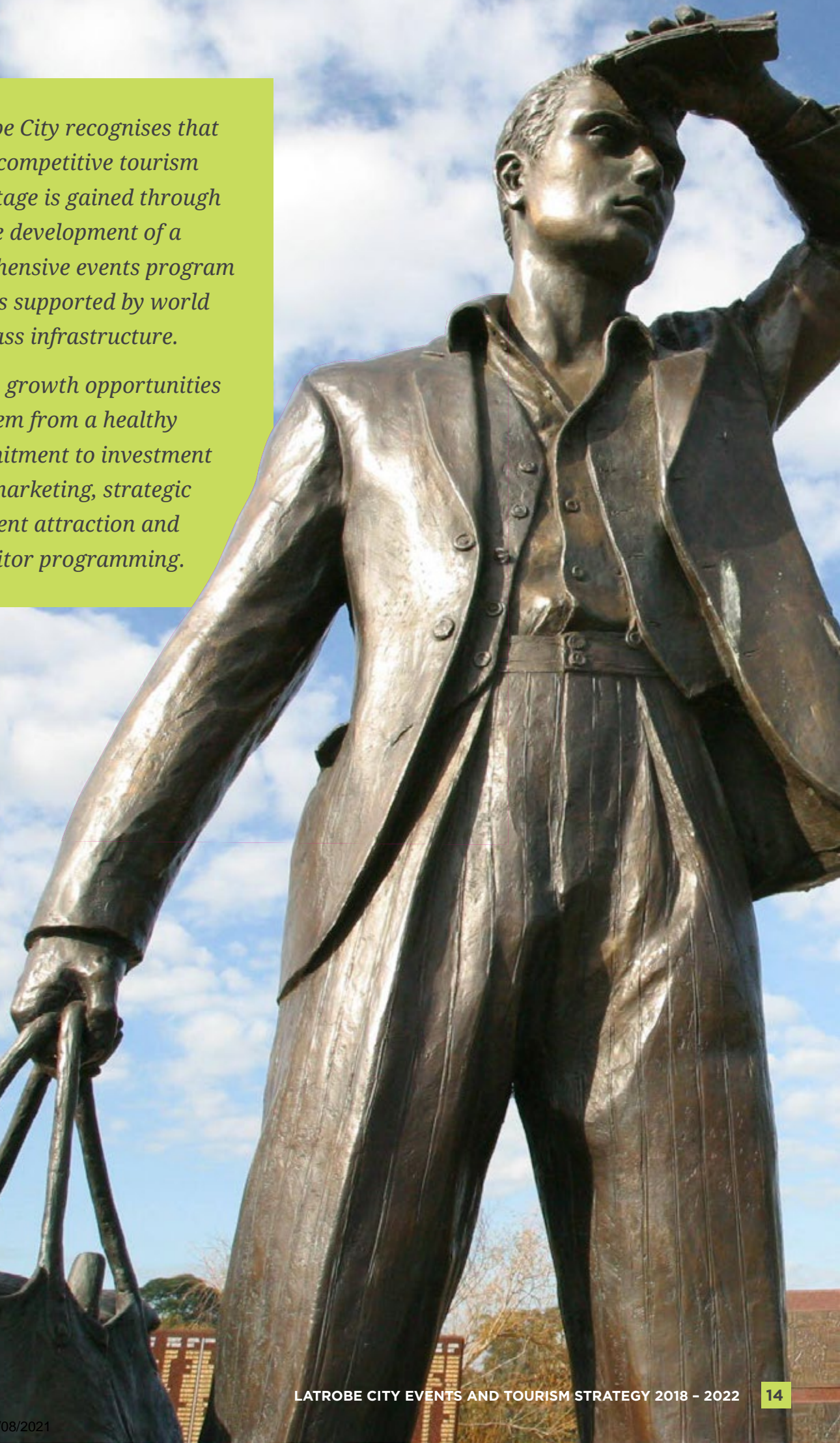
SOURCE: Latrobe City Council Capacity, Capability and Gaps Assessment, Sports Marketing Australia





*Latrobe City recognises that our competitive tourism advantage is gained through the development of a comprehensive events program that is supported by world class infrastructure.*

*Future growth opportunities stem from a healthy commitment to investment in marketing, strategic event attraction and visitor programming.*







# BENCHMARKING

**Latrobe is one of the four regional cities in Victoria. Benchmarking was undertaken with other regional cities; the City of Ballarat, City of Greater Bendigo and City of Greater Geelong. Toowoomba Regional Council was included in the benchmarking to provide an example of a regional interstate non-coastal city within two hours drive of a capital city. Toowoomba has a rich resources and agricultural base.**

**Benchmarking identified the structure, objectives and resourcing of their tourism and event units.**

## TOURISM & EVENT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of events and tourism for each council include:

- Increase visitation to the region.
- Increase length of stay.
- Increase economic benefit.
- Support local event organisers.
- Attract events to the region.
- Provide seed funding and sponsorship.

## TOURISM & EVENT STRUCTURE

Some councils had Tourism & Event units within councils, with some providing tourism services through tourism organisations.

The City of Greater Geelong has the Geelong Major Events Committee.

## EVENT ATTRACTION & SPONSORSHIP

- Councils actively attracted events with significant attraction budgets and dedicated human resources.
- Economic Benefit Calculators are used to assess applications.
- Assessment criteria are aligned to council objectives, and the potential for increased visitation and economic benefit.
- Event acquittal is required for applicants to be eligible for funding the following year.

## DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is important to the success of tourism and events in the regions, with specialist expertise to be responsible for digital marketing and website updates.

Social media provides a platform to reach a wide audience, encouraging visitation and event attendance. It also provides the ability to create a community of followers.

## EVENT TOURISM

Hosting successful events and being known as an event destination has provided an impetus for repeat visitation.

The demonstrated economic benefits of events are often the catalyst to attract funding to build and invest in infrastructure.

Over time the perception of the benchmarked regions has shifted and they are now known as tourism and event destinations.

A united approach from the tourism and events industry has been instrumental through collaboration with council, local tourism bodies, regional tourism boards and Visit Victoria.

## INDUSTRY TRAINING

Industry training has been integral in uniting the tourism and events industry to work together with a common goal.

## EXTERNAL ORGANISATION

Many councils use Sports Marketing Australia to attract events. The diversity of sporting facilities in Latrobe City provides a competitive advantage.

## OUR NEIGHBOURS

Interviews were also conducted with the neighbouring Wellington and Baw Baw Shire Councils, which identified a willingness to partner for future tourism and event initiatives and the potential sharing of resources.



# OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

In developing this strategy, extensive consultation was undertaken to create a shared vision and identify opportunities, challenges and key themes. Details of the consultation process and people who provided their time, input and advice into the making of the strategy are detailed on page 28.

The findings from the consultation are summarised as follows:

## CHALLENGES

- Negative stigma, perceptions, stereotypes and general media coverage of our region.
- Tourism and event competition from other regions.
- Latrobe has limited presence in online tourism sites and searches.
- Economic environment/flat retail.
- Closure of significant industrial sites or businesses damages business sentiment.
- Having enough funds to refurbish and innovate to compete with other attractions/regions.
- Government red tape and systems.
- Event return on investment.
- Attracting funding.
- Attracting skilled staff.
- Obtaining sponsorship and volunteers.

*“Perception needs to change, and this can take years. The challenge is don’t become homogenised and do what everyone else is doing”*

**Charles Deuchrass,**  
Brand Campaign Lead, Visit Victoria.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Stop “passing through” traffic and convert daytrippers into overnight stays.
- Perfectly positioned to attract higher visitation from the growth of the population in south-east Melbourne.
- Increase positive share of voice in the media.
- Branding, marketing and promotion.
- Digital marketing and social media, and featuring tourism, arts and events on the website.
- Packaging events, conferences, accommodation and tourism attractions/experiences with combined ticketing.
- Constantly adapt and evolve event and tourism experiences to changing customer needs and demands.
- Networking with tourism and event operators.
- Year-round calendar of events, including national sporting events to be balanced with touring art exhibitions and cultural events.
- Community events dominate the Annual Events Calendar in numbers and have pride of place within our local communities. Some have potential to develop into significant or major events.
- Creating attractions with a point of difference with a quality of service.
- Activate empty shop fronts with locally produced foods, arts, open studio concept.
- Cutting edge industrial tourism, think Glasgow, Germany and Central Europe.
- Rural tourism experiences based on the dairy and farming industry.
- Incentives to invest in tourism.
- Incentives to create employment in tourism and events for local and young people, including training and career progression.



# LATROBE INTO THE FUTURE

*vision, goals + objectives*



*To be Victoria's leading light in major events and regional experiences.*



## STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Economic Growth.
2. Positive Destination Profile.
3. Community Pride

Economic Growth	Positive Destination Profile	Community Pride
Long-term industry diversification through a sustainable visitor economy, creating investment and employment.	Increase in profile that attracts outside visitation and events, contributing to the city's liveability.	Growth of civic pride and community connectivity through event and tourism development.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Increase Visitation
2. Increase Length of Stay and Visitor Spend
3. Increase Destination Profile
4. Promote Community Connectedness

### Increase Visitation

Through developing major destination attractions, experiences and hallmark events.

By leveraging events as a catalyst for tourism growth through a diverse year-round calendar of events.

### Increase Length of Stay and Visitor Spend

By stopping passing through traffic and convert daytrippers into overnight stays.

Via increased spend through value-adds and the packaging of events and tourism experiences.

### Increase Destination Profile

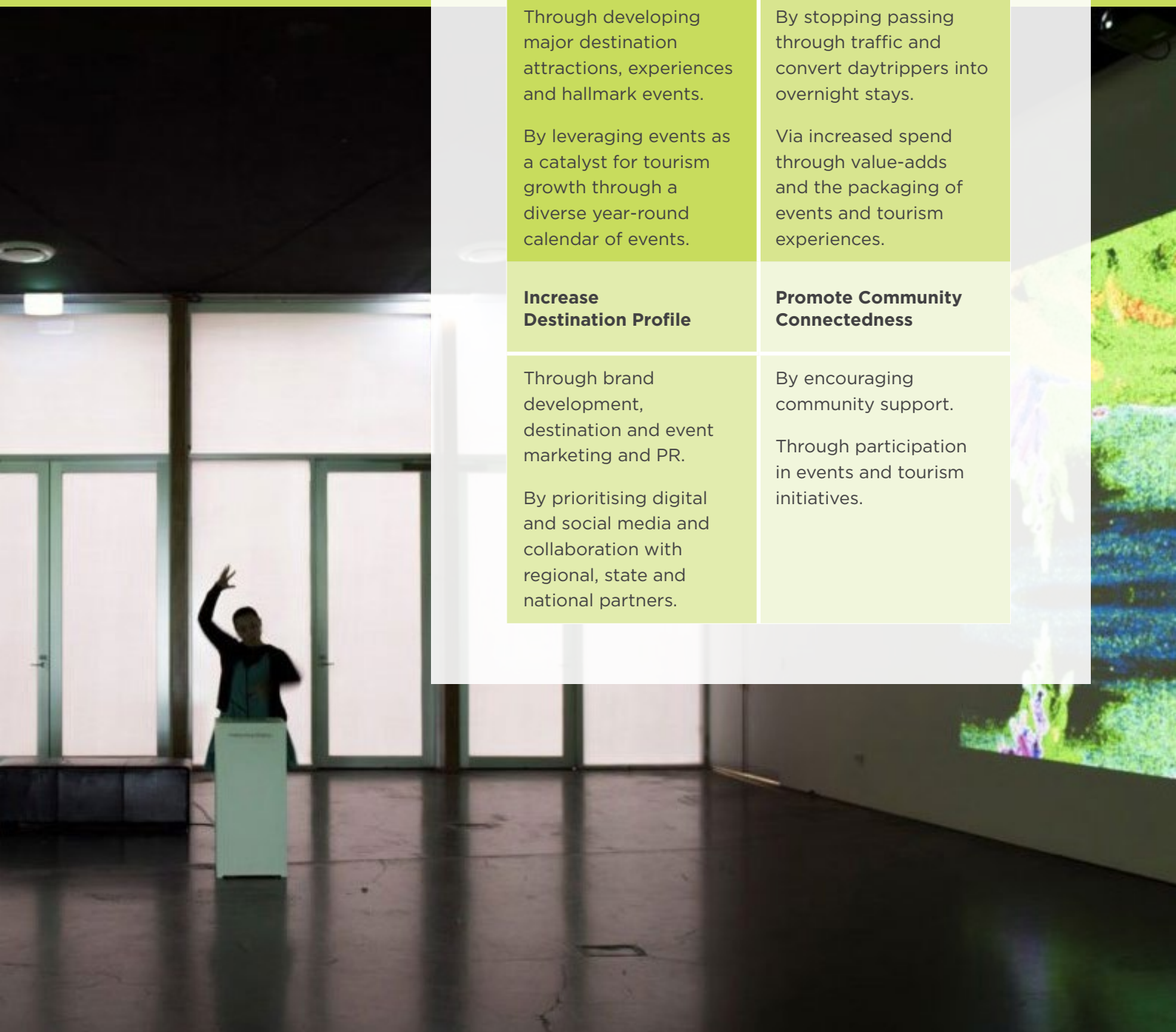
Through brand development, destination and event marketing and PR.

By prioritising digital and social media and collaboration with regional, state and national partners.

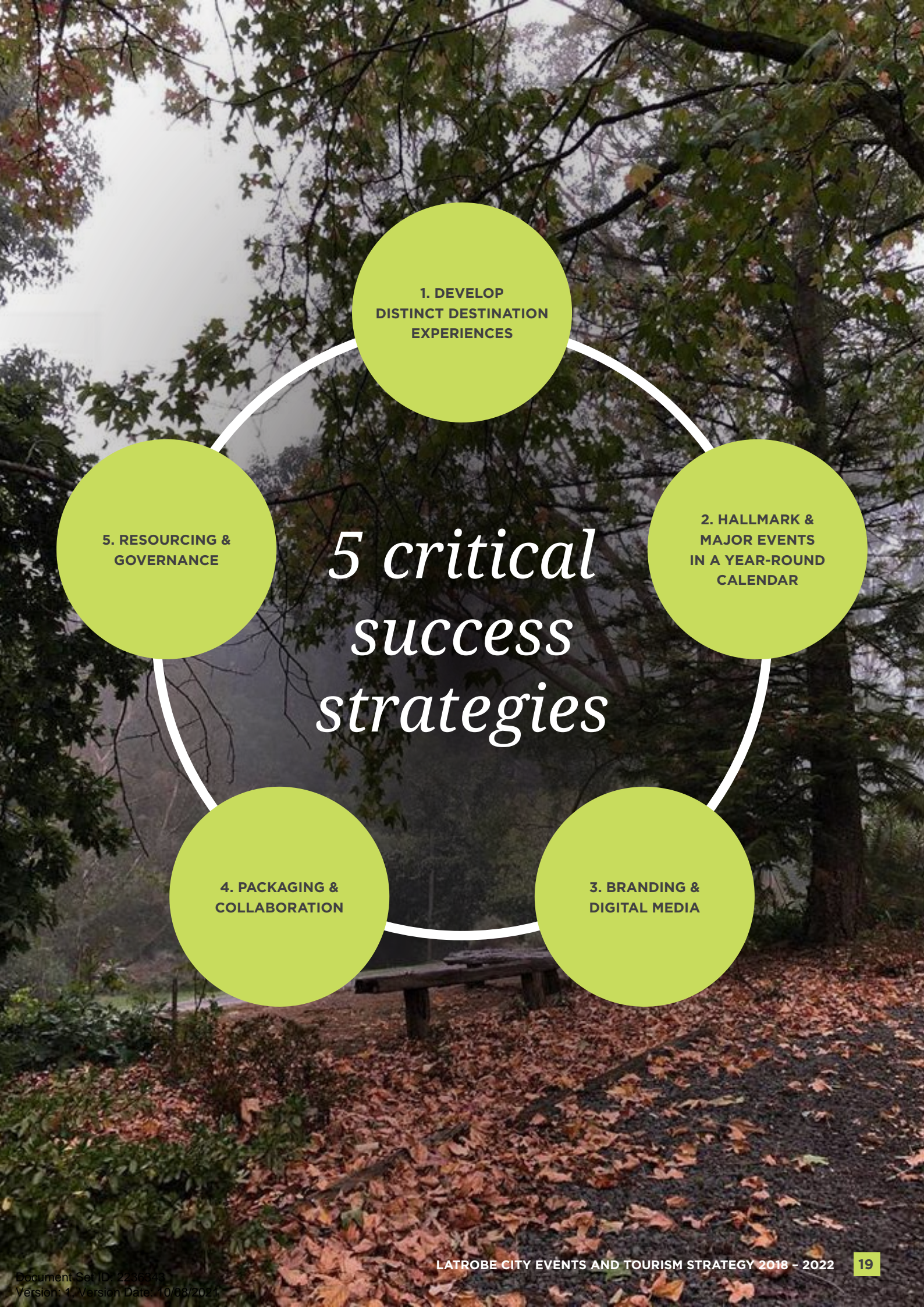
### Promote Community Connectedness

By encouraging community support.

Through participation in events and tourism initiatives.







**1. DEVELOP  
DISTINCT DESTINATION  
EXPERIENCES**

**2. HALLMARK &  
MAJOR EVENTS  
IN A YEAR-ROUND  
CALENDAR**

***5 critical  
success  
strategies***

**5. RESOURCING &  
GOVERNANCE**

**4. PACKAGING &  
COLLABORATION**

**3. BRANDING &  
DIGITAL MEDIA**



# 1. DEVELOP DISTINCT DESTINATION EXPERIENCES

**Creating significant and competitive destination experiences that are distinctly Latrobe will be crucial for the long-term success of Latrobe's events, tourism and visitor economy.**

**The following destination opportunities were identified through the consultation process and should be considered as significant, long-term projects.**

## EN MASSE SEASONAL TREE PLANTINGS

Building on timber heritage and the four seasons. This initiative would give visitors four reasons to visit Latrobe (e.g. Spring - cherry blossoms, Summer - roses, Autumn- leaves, Winter-log fires), mass plantings of seasonal trees, including avenues of trees along city entry points, tourist drives and town centres.

The community would be involved in plantings through volunteering and job creation to create connection and community pride. Beautification can include multicultural tree plantings, community story plaques and sculptures, lighting of trees for evening walks/tours, and seasonal opportunities for marketing, seasonal produce and seasonal

events. Mass seasonal tree plantings would provide:

- Year-round attraction with repeat visitation incentives.
- Stop through traffic.
- Long-term development of new target markets, including growing Asian markets.
- Perception shift – fresh air, clean, beautiful destination.
- Community – pride, connectedness and involvement.

## CUTTING EDGE INDUSTRIAL TOURISM

Latrobe's rich industrial heritage and vibrant manufacturing industry provides an opportunity to harness existing infrastructure to create open-air galleries with viewing platforms, cutting-edge industrial public arts projects, sculptures, installations, exhibitions, events, tours of power stations/ locations and evening light tours to encourage overnight stays.

Such initiatives directly support the Latrobe City Council Economic Development Strategy's aim to be the Engineering Capital of Australia.

Cutting edge industry-inspired art incorporated into signage across the city, highways and interpretative signs is recommended.

## GREAT LATROBE PARK

Under this proposal by the Great Latrobe Park project team for the rehabilitation of Hazelwood Open Cut and the establishment of a Great Latrobe Park, the Park would become an iconic attraction, including nature reserves, wetlands, botanic gardens, cafes and restaurants, recreational and educational facilities. An innovative design could reflect the rich industrial history.

The Park could include state-of-the-art purpose built event facilities and amphitheatres for festivals, arts performances and sports.

Examples of successful world-class parks developed in rehabilitated mining and industrial areas include Eden Project (Cornwall, England), Butchart Gardens (Canada), Duisburg Landscape Park (Rhineland, Germany), and Crawick Multiverse (Scotland). Australian examples include Sydney Park (St Peters, NSW) and Wilson Park (Berwick, Victoria).

The Great Latrobe Park has the potential to change destination perceptions, attract major visitation and create employment. For example, both the Butchart Gardens and the Eden Project attract over one million visitors per annum, with a core staff of 400 and community volunteers.

*Taking the Jacaranda Festival to the world is working, and the evidence is the influx of Asian tourists arriving in Grafton in regional NSW from late October as the purple blossoms arrive. Festival coordinator Ms Hunt said the festival committee and Clarence Valley Council plan to promote the festival overseas after they scored Hong Kong's U Magazine featuring the region in a multi-page spread on the festival and other attractions. Ms Hunt said the influx of tourists is bringing benefits to the entire Valley.*

*"The accommodation houses are booked out in Grafton so people are booking in Yamba, Maclean and Woolli".* **The Daily Examiner**, Grafton.



## RURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES

With growing consumer demand to escape the city, and get back to basics, the development of rural tourism product based on the dairy and farming industry presents an opportunity to develop both domestic and international markets.

Rural escapes could include farm stays, with experiences such as hands-on activities like yoghurt/cheese making, in a rural tourism visitor precinct.

“

*“One of the main attractions for Chinese tourists is the clean and green environment. Chinese visitors could be actively engaged in nature conservation activities. As Chinese travellers become more independent, Australia has opportunities to entice a proportion of them “off the beaten track” to engage with local culture and the environment as well as contributing to economic activities outside the main tourist centres.”*

**Professor Susanne Becken and Professor Noel Scott.**  
Institute of Tourism, Griffith University.

”

“

*“In recent years, the Scottish city of Glasgow has become a cultural powerhouse. When the Glasgow International Festival opened its 2016 Festival, director Sarah McCrory presented a thematic group show, inspired by the city’s industrial heritage and its artists’ relationship to manufacturing.*

*The urban shift from heavy industry to the creative industries is a sensitive issue, and by no means one unique to Glasgow, but its self-sufficiency and its inventive, ongoing territorialisation of derelict post-industrial spaces in many ways make it a case apart.*

*McCrory cites benefits such as available studio space, affordability, and a pace of life that allows “more time to develop ideas”, as well as the fact that there’s “still a culture of government funding: it’s not amazing, but perhaps better than the rest of the UK.”*

Story by **Hettie Judah**, The Independent.

”



## 2. HALLMARK & MAJOR EVENTS IN A YEAR-ROUND CALENDAR

**Hallmark and major events will play a pivotal role in the development of destination experiences that are distinctly Latrobe, contributing to the destination profile and community connectedness. All councils benchmarked cited the successful staging of events as a catalyst for tourism growth and repeat visitation.**

### HALLMARK EVENTS

Hallmark and major events can increase destination profile and give the destination and community a genuine competitive advantage where, over time, the event and the destination become inseparable.

Hallmark events can build on Latrobe's sports, nature (adventure sports, cycling) and unique cultural selling points inspired by creative arts and it's industrial and multi-cultural heritage.

The city should aim to secure or develop a hallmark event based on its unique selling points. The Morwell Rose Garden Festival is an event with potential grow to major or hallmark status.

The long-term strategy to develop a hallmark event inspired by the city's unique selling points could provide a lasting legacy for destination positioning and community connectedness. Such an event would need to be innovative, cutting-edge and something not seen or experienced before; something for which Latrobe could become famous.

### LIGHTING UP THE VALLEY

A hallmark light themed program of experiences and events could transform the landscape and industrial assets into a significant iconic event experience for Latrobe City, the region and Victoria.

Such a program would deliver a unique experience generating significant media profiling, and would attract overnight visitation with extensive packaging opportunities.

This idea also builds on Latrobe's 'a new energy' brand and celebrates its rich industrial heritage, its vibrant manufacturing industry, an emerging solar power and renewables industry and its position as the future engineering capital of Australia.

### REINVIGORATING EVENTS

Council will continue to service and facilitate community events through the development of distinctly Latrobe experiences within event programs.

Opportunities will exist to increase community event organiser capacity through a pathway of growth and industry training.

The staging of events, including business events, meetings and conferences in iconic and distinctly Latrobe locations is to be encouraged.

*A hallmark program of events, such as "Lighting up the Valley" could transform the landscape and industrial assets into a signature experience for Latrobe City, the region and Victoria.*

### DIVERSE YEAR-ROUND CALENDAR OF EVENTS

To increase year-round visitation and maximise the return on investment, there needs to be more events in shoulder periods. This could be achieved by balancing the events portfolio through increasing the number of cultural, business and arts events.

### VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

Improve participation, particularly by youth, with volunteer opportunities at events, including training, networking and intern opportunities.

*Encouraging events to include dawn, dusk and/or evening experiences within their programming will assist in converting day-trippers to overnight stays.*





# 3. BRANDING & DIGITAL MEDIA

**Creating a positive destination profile is a key driver for the strategy. An events and destination marketing and action plan will deliver consistent messaging and tailored promotion and will address negative perceptions and stereotypes portrayed in media coverage of the region in our key target markets.**

**The opportunity exists for Latrobe to increase its share of voice in the media through positive messaging of events and tourism.**

## BRAND + DESTINATION MARKETING

We need to recognise that the marketing budget for many regional destinations is often smaller than the annual budget of a major chain hotel or theme park. In the absence of such attractions in Latrobe City, it is imperative we identify and collaborate with tourism and event partners.

A tourism and events sub-brand that links and pays tribute to the parent Latrobe City Council brand should be developed. It should link to its location. For example,

Morwell, Latrobe City, Gippsland, Victoria, Australia.

It is recommended to develop the tourism and event brand to link regionally to Gippsland and Victoria.

Consistent branding and messaging should be carried across all platforms.

Participation in destination campaigns that target the same markets, e.g. Visit Victoria's 2018 "Find Your Happy Space" campaign which encourages more intrastate visitors (particularly Melbournians) to regional Victoria.

## LATROBE CITY MARKETING STRATEGY

The development of a dedicated tourism and events marketing strategy, clearly identifying target markets, and with a digital focus is recommended.

A marketing strategy centred on the four seasons will provide a strategic approach to communicating events and tourism with quarterly themed campaigns, e.g. Autumn in Latrobe City - what's on with packages and holiday

deals. All creative, development and collateral design should be carried across all marketing, digital and social platforms.

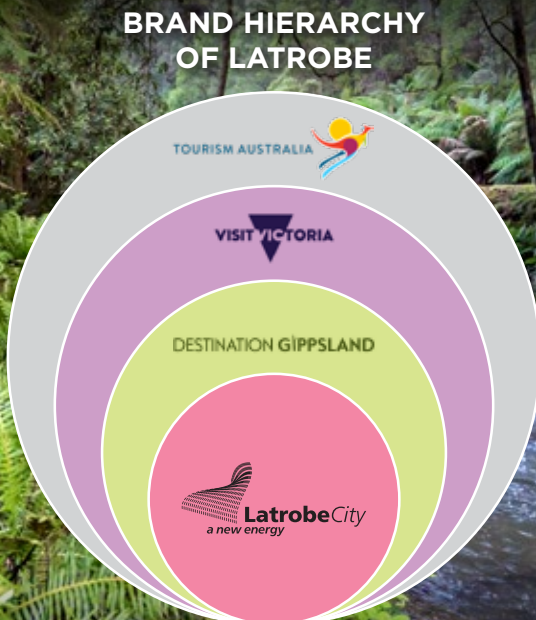
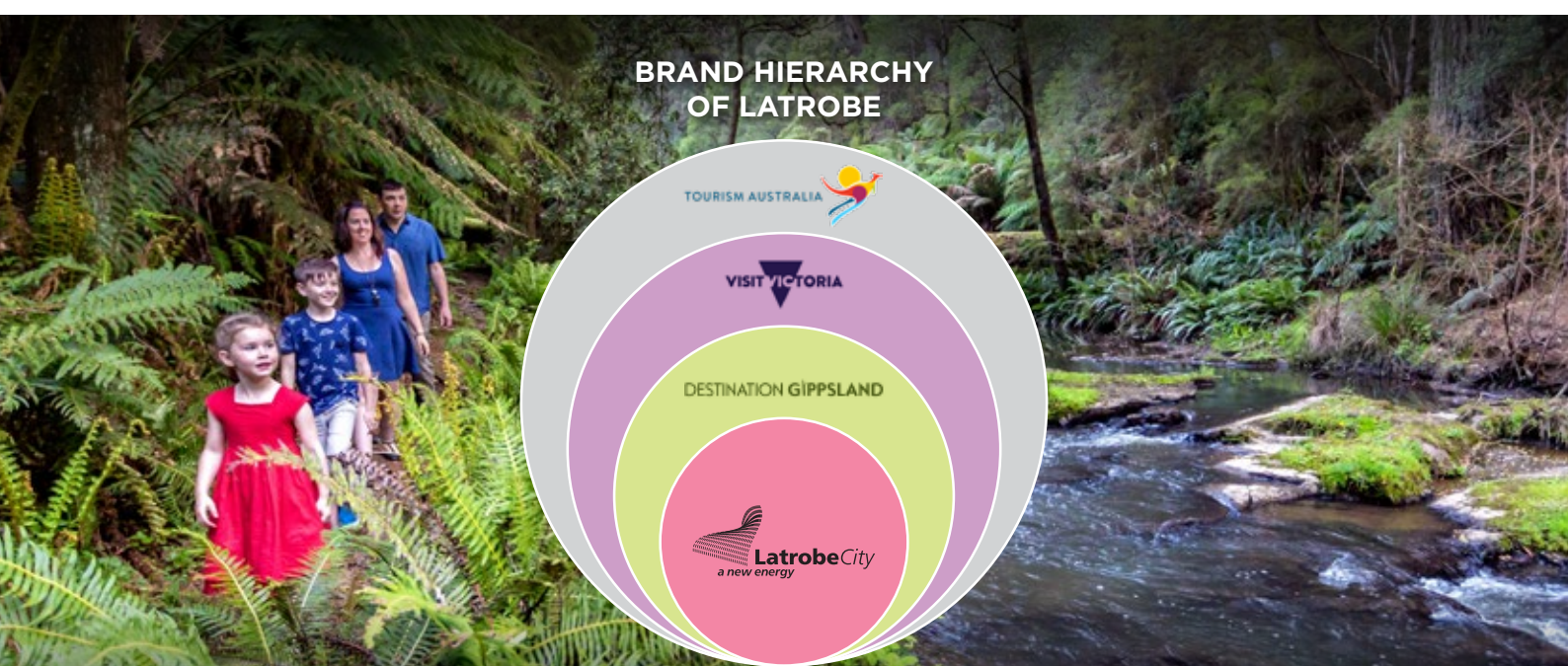
## DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION

Latrobe event and tourism operators need to increase their digital distribution on tourism booking engines and websites such as TripAdvisor and the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW).

Increasing content and compelling images and footage through social media platforms and Media PR units with Destination Gippsland, Visit Victoria and Tourism Australia is essential.

## DIGITAL + SOCIAL ASSETS

Creation of a digital tourism and events brand toolkit, which can be accessed by the wider tourism and events industry through a tourism and events portal is recommended. To reinforce consistent messaging, the digital toolkit could include brand templates, media releases, hero images and digital footage.





An online image and footage library is required. Ideally this would be undertaken with tourism partners so as to increase the number of Latrobe images within their image libraries.

An events and tourism website ideally with live social media feeds, sign up functionality and e-news updates that include current packages and deals.

Dedicated tourism and event marketing and digital resources are required to address growing consumer demand for online information and to build Latrobe City's digital presence. This will also

contribute to building a stronger, connected community.

## DESTINATION BRANDING OPPORTUNITIES FROM EVENTS

Events provide strong destination branding opportunities including:

- Integrating Latrobe City destination images into event marketing and linking the visitor website and social media channels to event/festival websites.
- Subject to privacy laws, developing a data base of visitors from event online ticketing

systems to provide targeted visitor insights.

- Integrating events into tourism marketing.
- Maximising Latrobe City exposure at events e.g. signage placement, provision of destination images and footage to event organisers for social media and television broadcasts, PR stunts on location (e.g. famous sports stars and artists dining in Latrobe or hiking in Morwell National Park) and incorporating Latrobe City branding on signage, staging, finish lines, competitor bibs and merchandise.



## 4. PACKAGING & COLLABORATION

**Attracting visitors and increasing length of stay and spend can be achieved through value-adds and the packaging of events and tourism experiences.**

**Packages can create a higher conversion rate; making it easier for visitors to purchase with one click or one phone call.**

**The process of developing packages facilitates collaboration across the visitor economy, encouraging networking and referrals.**

### VALUE-ADD PACKAGING

Packaging within tourism businesses (e.g. dinner, bed and breakfast) and events (e.g. VIP experience, back stage pass) can increase profit margins and create new and potentially high end experiences.

### TOURISM + EVENT PACKAGING

Converting event day-trippers with event passes, accommodation and tour packages through online event ticketing systems can encourage overnight stays.

Packaging should include the wider visitor economy, e.g. attractions, tours, dining, beauty therapy, art exhibitions and retail.

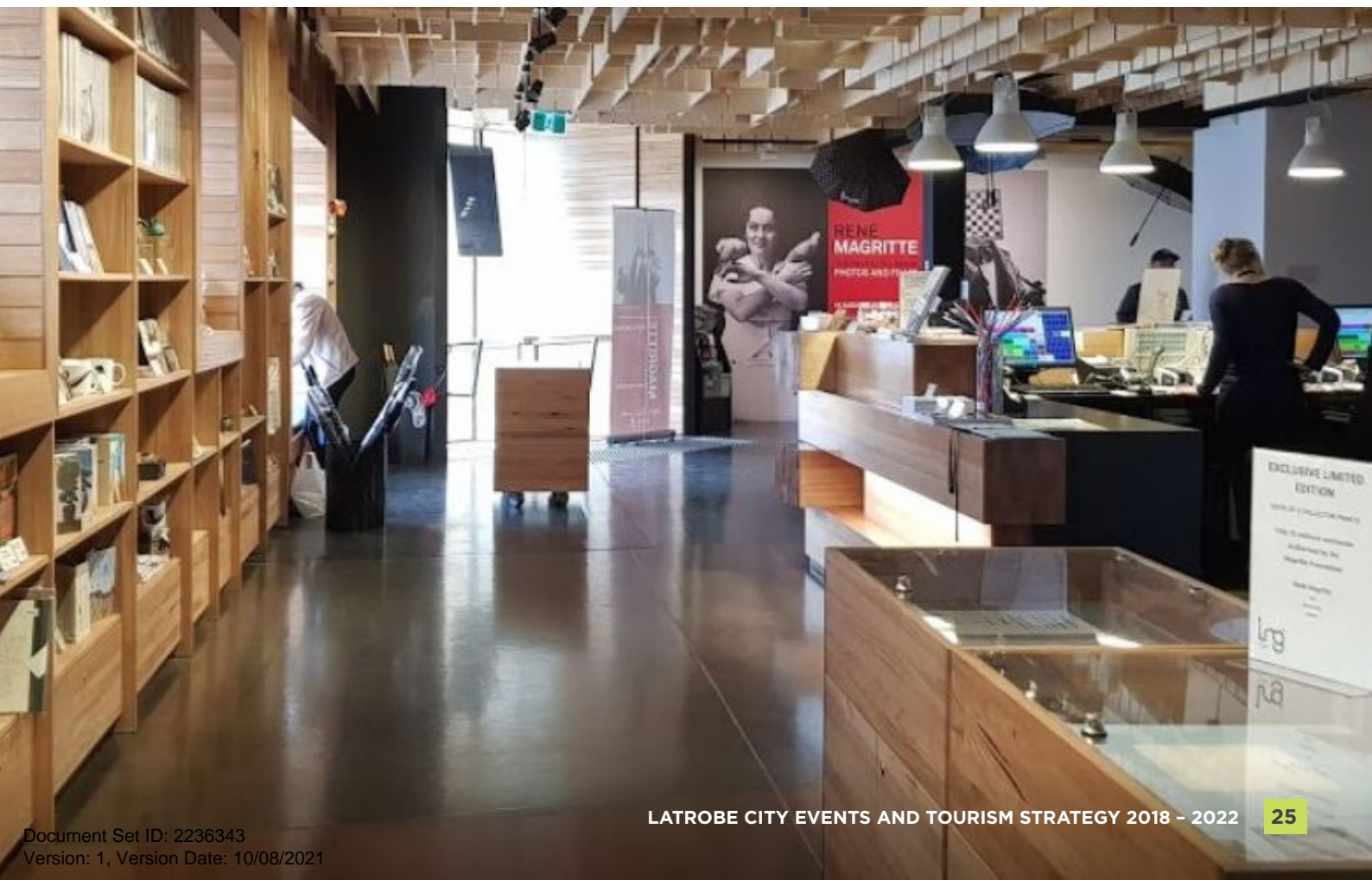
Themed packaging for special interest groups such as cycling/ bushwalking, families, and partner packaging for conferences can provide cost effective targeted marketing.

### REGIONAL PACKAGING

Packaging Latrobe accommodation and tourism services with neighbouring regional experiences, such as a day in the snow, experience the high country on a 4x4 and a ghost tour in Walhalla could help position Latrobe as a hub and spoke destination.

### TRAINING

Training workshops would assist operators in increasing capacity to package attractions and contribute to a united events and tourism industry. Collaboration between event and tourism providers could be facilitated through such workshops.



## 5. RESOURCING & GOVERNANCE

**To successfully grow events and the visitor economy in Latrobe City, critical success factors will include building a corporate culture of collaboration between tourism and events, adequate resourcing and good governance.**

**In findings from the local government event benchmarking and following the trend of the merging of state tourism and event bodies in Victoria (Visit Victoria), New South Wales (Destination NSW) and Queensland (Tourism and Events Queensland) in recent years, it is recommended to create greater alignment between tourism and events within Latrobe City Council by:**

### TOURISM + EVENT UNIT

Combining the Event and Tourism teams within council as one unit within the same department with a common focus and budget, while at the same time growing resourcing to implement the strategy, will build Latrobe City's competitive advantage. This will include developing funding opportunities with strategic partners.

### LATROBE TOURISM & MAJOR EVENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Extending the role of the Latrobe Tourism Advisory Committee to include major events as the Latrobe Tourism & Major Events Advisory Committee, whose terms of reference would also include: providing advice regarding major event funding and making recommendations to council about event sponsorship.

It is recommended the committee seek strategic networks and allow for a skills based board with professional experience in major events. It must be agile in its timing and processes to remain competitive to respond quickly and secure major events.

### PROCESSES

Streamlining the application processes for tourism and event operators, building on the one-stop shop approach to grow Latrobe City Council's reputation as a tourism and event positive council.





# PROCESS + CONSULTATION

The strategy development process included: a desktop audit of reference materials, face-to-face consultation in region, participation in the Destination Gippsland's Destination Management Plan workshop in Latrobe City.

Benchmarking was conducted with the City of Ballarat, City of Greater Bendigo and City of Greater Geelong Bendigo, as well as Toowoomba City Council.

Mystery shopping was undertaken as first-time visitors travelling to Latrobe City, and as an outside event organiser to potentially bring an event to the City.

An online survey was sent to over three hundred (300) Latrobe tourism and event operators and strategic partners were invited to participate in an online survey with seventy-eight (78) respondents.

## LATROBE CITY COUNCIL EVENTS AND TOURISM STRATEGY 2018 - 2022 PROCESS

1	<b>DESKTOP AUDIT</b> April 2018
2	<b>FACE-TO-FACE CONSULTATION</b> 7, 8, 30 & 31 May, 2018
3	<b>BENCHMARKING - DESKTOP + PHONE INTERVIEWS</b> June & July, 2018
4	<b>ONLINE SURVEY</b> 27 June - 27 July, 2018
5	<b>COUNCILLOR PRESENTATION</b> 27 August, 2018
6	<b>EVENTS + TOURISM STRATEGY</b> September - October, 2018
7	<b>ACTION PLAN + BUDGET</b> October - November, 2018

*Consultation included 85% local and 15% regional and state representatives. Face-to-face consultation, workshops and phone interviews were conducted with 68 people, and a survey with 330 survey invitations and 78 survey respondents was undertaken.*

# A SPECIAL THANK YOU

*to the people who gave time, input and advice  
into the making of this strategy*

ORGANISATION	NAME	POSITION
Advanced Morwell	Keith Brownbill	
Baw Baw Shire Council	Mark Kestigian	Executive Manager Communications & Economic Development
City of Ballarat	Heidi Zukauskas	Creative Arts & Events Manager
City of Ballarat	Jeff Johnson	Executive Manager Events and the Arts
City of Greater Bendigo	Terry Karamaloudis	Manager of Tourism and Major Events
City of Greater Geelong	Sharon Cockerell	Coordinator – Event Services Unit Executive Officer – Geelong Major Events
CUSCI	Sam Darrock	Communications Coordinator
Destination Gippsland	Alison Conroy	Marketing Manager
Destination Gippsland	Janine Hayes	Tourism Project Manager
Destination Gippsland	Terry Robinson	Chief Executive Officer
Latrobe Valley Authority	James Fahy	Senior Project Officer
Sport and Recreation	Katie Davidson	
Latrobe Valley Authority	Scott McArle	Snr Program Office Economic Development
Latrobe Valley Authority	Karen Cain	CEO
Latrobe Valley Authority	Rob Collyer	
Latrobe Valley Authority	Sue Mather	Strategic Communication Manager
Latrobe Valley Racing Club Inc	Rod Stephens	
Mountain Top Experience	Ron Camier	
Park Lane Group	Brenan Tibballs	
Power Works	Bruce Lougheed	Vice Chairman
Sports Marketing Australia	Jason Sleeman	National Events Manager
Sports Marketing Australia	Rick Sleeman	Managing Director
Toowoomba Regional Council	Ross Begent	Principal Tourism and Events
Tourism Advisory Committee	Christine Lee	
Tourism Advisory Committee	Jacqui Almack-Onley	



ORGANISATION	NAME	POSITION
Tourism Advisory Committee	Mario Monacella	
Tourism Advisory Committee	Peter Ceeney	Latrobe City Business and Tourism Association
Tourism Advisory Committee	Sophie Morell	
Tourism Greater Geelong and the Bellarine	Tracy Carter	Marketing and Communications Manager
Visit Victoria	Charles Deuchrass	Brand Campaign Lead – Domestic Markets
Visit Victoria	Monique George	Manager Regional Events Fund
Wellington Shire Council	Ashley Smirl	Visitor Economy & Events Coordinator

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

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*Destination Gippsland Strategy Plan 2015-17, Destination Gippsland.*

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*Latrobe City Council Arts Strategy 2016-2021, Latrobe City Council.*

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*National and International Visitor Survey, YE Dec 17, Tourism Research Australia*

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