

LatrobeCity

Events and Visitor Economy Strategy 2024-2028



Latrobe City Council acknowledges that it operates on the traditional land of the Brayakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present.



Community Vision 2031

In 2031 Latrobe City will be known for being **smart, creative, healthy, sustainable and connected**. It will be the most liveable regional city and at the forefront of innovation.

Working together we are a diverse, connected and resilient community, supporting the equitable diversification of our economic base and transition towards a low emissions future.

We are known as a community that is equitable, liveable and sustainable, with a continued focus on healthy lifestyles supported by high quality recreational and cultural facilities and a natural environment that is nurtured and respected.

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Front cover:
2024 Boolarra Folk Festival
10,400 attendees
Economic impact: \$2.2 million.



Grand Ridge Rail Trail

The Latrobe City Events and Visitor Economy Strategy delivers a collective vision for Latrobe City’s events and visitor economy. Goals and priorities frame the direction for attracting and maximising events and for the visitor economy in the municipality over the next five years and beyond.

Events are the hook that create a reason to visit and spend in the local visitor economy, build Latrobe City’s profile, change perceptions, and enhance pride and liveability for the local community.

Strategy at a Glance

Pillars of the Strategy

-  **Events:** Events are the heart of the Strategy, recognising that Latrobe City’s strength is in its capacity to deliver events of regional, state, and national significance.
-  **Visitor Economy:** Enabling the emerging visitor economy to grow to maximise outcomes from events and support year-round visitation.
-  **Identity:** Creating a strong, united voice and common identity for Latrobe City that is supported by community and industry, and appeals to visitors.

Vision

Events and Visitor Economy Vision 2028

Our dynamic and compelling events calendar and emerging visitor experiences capitalise on the City’s strengths and create a sense of genuine connection for visitors and the community that inspires and enhances pride and liveability.








Community Vision 2031



The community’s vision to 2031 includes the ambition to be smart, creative, healthy, sustainable, and connected; to be the most liveable regional city; and at the forefront of innovation.



Values

-  **Economic:** We generate economic opportunities for our local businesses and community.
-  **Brand and reputation:** We have a strong identity and sense of place.
-  **Social:** We make a positive difference to our culture and community.
-  **Environmentally sustainable:** We champion the protection and nurturing of our natural environment.
-  **Accessible and inclusive:** We are inclusive and welcoming for all people.

Goals

-  **Visitor spend**
-  **Positive perception**
-  **Community benefit**

Strategic Priorities

- 1** Building visitor awareness and local pride and advocacy in the destination
- 2** Growing and sustaining our competitiveness as an events destination
- 3** Maximising economic and social outcomes from events and the visitor economy
- 4** Fostering connections and partnerships

Purpose

In the heart of Gippsland, Latrobe City is building on and transforming its industrial might, moving from traditional power supply to renewable energies as a future focused, sustainable city. The community's vision to 2031 includes the ambition to be smart, creative, healthy, sustainable, and connected; to be the most liveable regional city; and at the forefront of innovation.

The cornerstone of the Strategy is building on and enhancing Latrobe City's strength in events to grow the visitor economy. Events are the hook that create a reason to visit and spend in the local visitor economy, build Latrobe City's profile, change perceptions, and enhance pride and liveability for the local community. The visitor economy, through experiences offered, provides more reasons for visitors to stay overnight and spend more in the local community.

The opportunity ahead is to grow Latrobe City's strength as a regional leader in events, and enable events to fully deliver the economic and social benefits they offer to the community.

As a city in transition, with renewal projects leading to investment in key venues, there are exciting opportunities for events and the visitor economy. Latrobe City's identity is transforming, and events and the visitor economy will help shape that identity.

The purpose of this Events and Visitor Economy Strategy is to deliver a collective vision for Latrobe City's events and the visitor economy. It is a strategy that provides clarity and direction on the goals and priorities for attracting and maximising events and the visitor economy in the municipality over the next five years and beyond through the city's transformation.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF EVENTS IN THE VISITOR ECONOMY

Events are important catalysts for tourism and economic development: three-quarters of event attendees would not have gone to a destination if not for an event. For 57% of first-time visitors and 69% of repeat visitors to a destination, an event is the main reason for visiting, and most event attendees intend to return to the host destination in the future.

Attendees become destination advocates through word-of-mouth promotion: 59% of attendees provide positive word of mouth recommendations of the event to others, and 42% of the destination.

Events can position a destination; and boost awareness, identity and appeal in the minds of visitors and the community of the destination as a centre of sport, arts, culture or industry. The identity and appeal is the catalyst for participants and spectators returning as visitors, business and infrastructure development, and community pride and connectedness.

Events are an important tool to support and showcase the municipality's values and aspirations, including environmental responsibility and sustainability, social diversity, innovation and growth. They encourage and facilitate community pride, tolerance and connectedness, and foster creativity.

Events build community, bring together young and old and disparate subcultures, create a sense of belonging for the different members of the community, and celebrate community values.

(Source: Tourism Research Australia, 'Events: Drivers of Regional Tourism', 2014)

Visitor economy is a contemporary definition of tourism, including people travelling not just for leisure, but for events, business, work, education or visiting friends and relatives. It brings together the wide range of industries that provide visitors with goods and services, both directly such as accommodation, cafes, restaurants, bars, transport providers, tour companies, and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical, and food production.



2023 NBL In-season Match
3,118 attendees
Economic impact: \$649,597

The Strategy

Pillars of the Strategy

The Events and Visitor Economy Strategy has three core pillars:



EVENTS

Events are the heart of the Strategy, recognising that Latrobe City's strength is in its capacity to deliver events of regional, state, and national significance.



VISITOR ECONOMY

Enabling the emerging visitor economy to grow to maximise outcomes from events and support year-round visitation.



IDENTITY

Creating a strong, united voice and common identity for Latrobe City that is supported by community and industry, and appeals to visitors.



Values

Our values underpin all we aim to achieve through the Strategy. They will feature throughout our delivery, interaction, and decision making as we work towards our vision.



ECONOMIC

We generate economic opportunities for our local businesses and community.



BRAND AND REPUTATION

We have a strong identity and sense of place.



SOCIAL

We make a positive difference to our culture and community.



ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE

We champion the protection and nurturing of our natural environment.



ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

We are inclusive and welcoming for all people.

Vision



EVENTS AND VISITOR ECONOMY VISION 2028

Our dynamic and compelling events calendar and emerging visitor experiences capitalise on the City's strengths and create a sense of genuine connection for visitors and the community that inspires and enhances pride and liveability.

COMMUNITY VISION 2031

The community's vision to 2031 includes the ambition to be smart, creative, healthy, sustainable, and connected; to be the most liveable regional city; and at the forefront of innovation.



Goals

Three goals together with the values will guide measurement of the outcomes achieved in the implementation of the Strategy.



VISITOR SPEND

Drive economic growth through increased visitor stay and spend.



POSITIVE PERCEPTION

Transform the profile and perceptions of Latrobe City.



COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Maximise social benefits and community well-being from events and visitor economy.

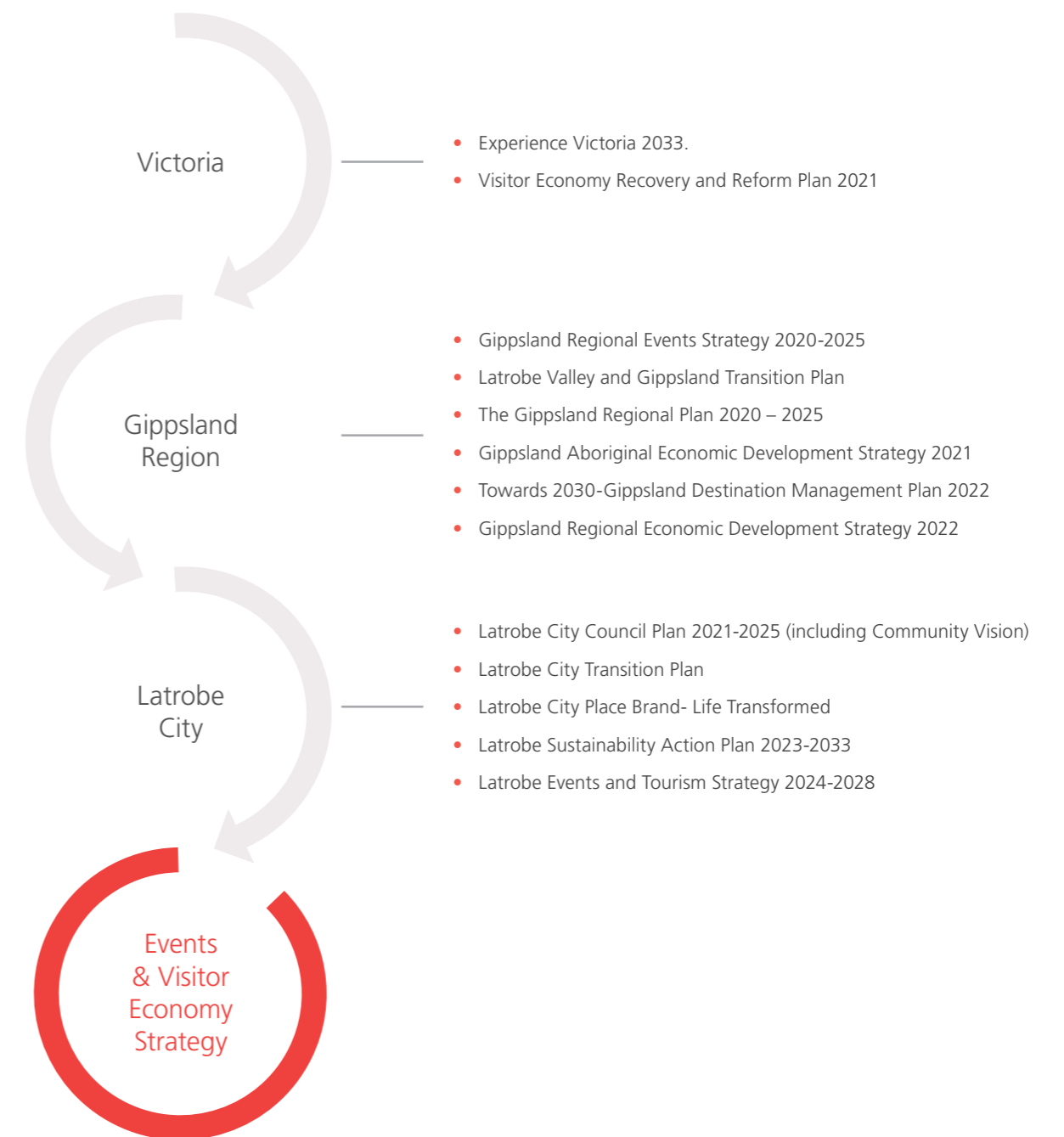


2023 International Rose Garden Festival
5,000 attendees
Economic impact: \$1 million.

Strategic Context

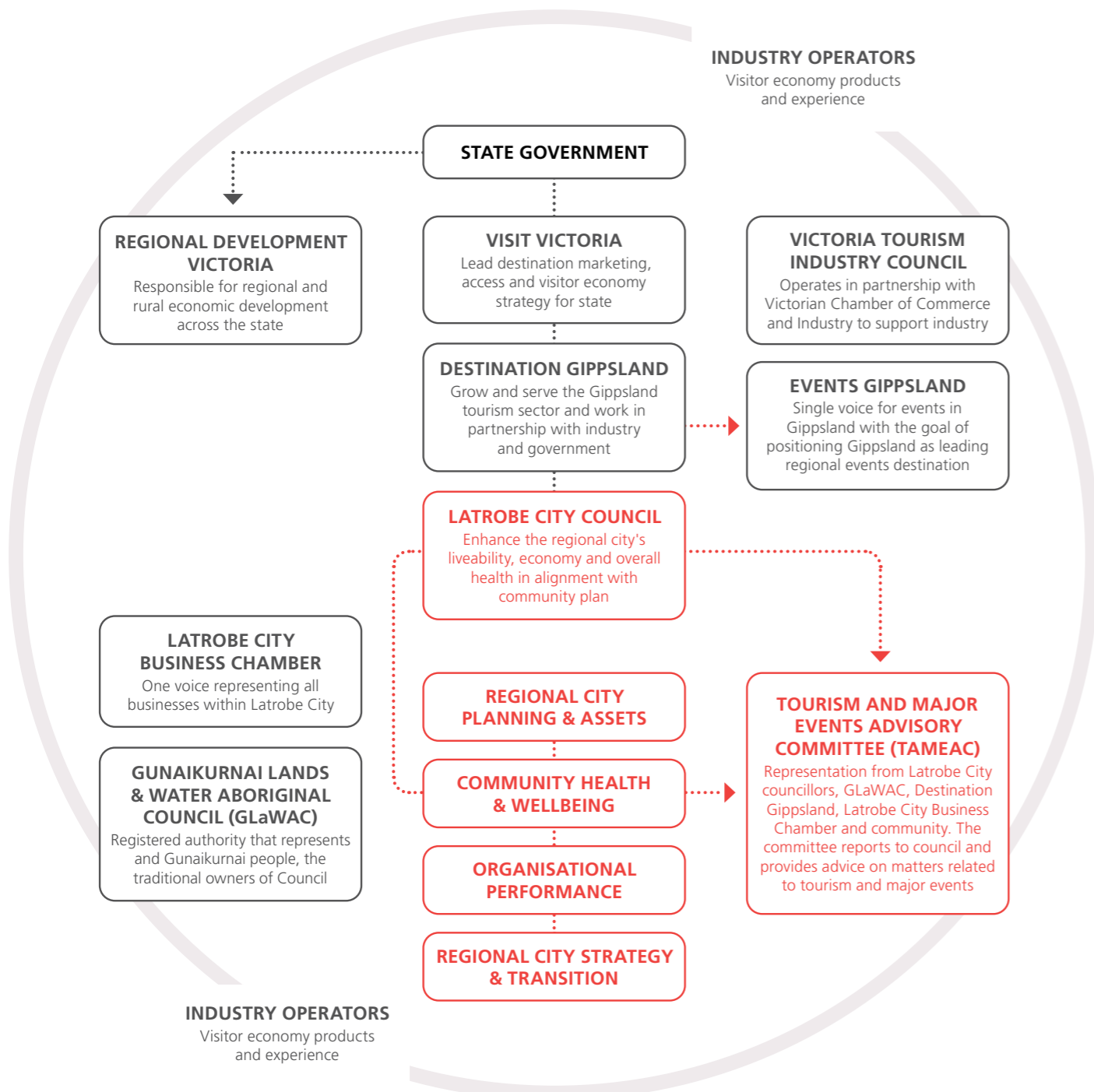
Strategic Alignment

The Strategy has been developed to align with local, regional and state strategies to provide a long-term coordinated approach. The Strategy sits under Latrobe City Council's Corporate Plan and will support achievement of the Council's Community Vision.



Visitor Economy Governance

Successful implementation of the Strategy is dependent upon the multiple partners in Latrobe City’s visitor economy, each with a specific role



- Latrobe City Council
- Visitor economy stakeholders

Forces shaping events and the visitor economy

The following provides an overview of macro trends influencing consumer behaviour, presenting opportunities for Latrobe City events and visitor economy.

BUILDING PRESSURES ON EVENT VIABILITY

Events are risky, increasingly competitive, and resource intensive. Costs to deliver events have skyrocketed in recent years, while grant and sponsorship opportunities have reduced; many events are dependent on annual grants to cover operational costs. Attendee behaviour is changing, such as purchasing tickets last minute. More Australians are interested in ‘casual’ volunteering within a defined (short) timeframe, rather than being willing to support the perpetuity of an annual event.

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

Today’s event attendees and leisure visitors want interactive and immersive experiences that connect them to locals and local culture, and provide them with a sense of place. Destinations are focusing on attracting fewer visitors with higher per capita value and therefore lower negative impact, rather than trying to attract many lower value attendees.

TRAVEL WITH PURPOSE

Today’s travellers increasingly want to connect with our extraordinary planet. Two thirds of Australians are looking for purposeful travel where there are opportunities to give back to the destination, and are seeking experiences that bring self-discovery and growth, enriching their lives through experiences and learning.¹ Around three quarters of travellers are seeking out sustainable options.²

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE NEXT ECONOMY

Prioritising the longevity of a destination, and its ability to cope with the impacts of climate change, rather than prioritising short-term targets for visitor numbers will help meet travellers’ expectations for sustainability, and reduce damage to sensitive natural environments. Business events can help local businesses effectively navigate a local economy’s transition during the global shift to the next economy.

WELLNESS

Travellers are placing more importance on health and wellness. Prior to the pandemic, global wellness travel was forecast to grow at twice the rate of average tourism growth, jumping from \$639 billion in 2017 to \$919 billion in 2022.³ Events that incorporate wellness elements or connect with wellness experiences have the potential to support Victoria’s efforts to complete globally.

INCLUSION

Hosting events and delivering visitor experiences and services that are inclusive is not a passing trend, and nor is it optional. One in six (18%) people in Australia have disability (about 4.4 million people) and almost half (44.5%) of all people with disability in Australia are aged 65 and over.⁴ With the ageing population, an already large market is set to grow further.

Events and visitor experiences should reflect the diversity of the community – on the organising committee, on stage, and amongst attendees. It’s about catering to a broad, inclusive community with diverse needs rather than creating events and tourism product that target a particular market segment.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Arts and culture events provide multiple opportunities for learning, entertainment, leisure, personal growth, and improving communication with others. As a result, these events contribute to the visitor economy by bringing visitors to the area, while also contributing to community wellbeing.

Victoria’s Creative State 2025 brings strategic focus to the state government’s investment in Victoria’s creative industries that will support strengthening the offering, including further investment in the Latrobe Creative Precinct.⁵

1. Consumer Insights Research, Tourism Australia, 2021
2. Sustainable Travel Report 2023, Booking.com
3. Experience Victoria 2033, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
4. The Accessible and Inclusive Host Handbook, Australian Tourism Export Council and Tourism Australia
5. Creative State 2025, Creative Victoria

Transition and the visitor economy

Locally there are changes occurring that will impact events and the visitor economy. Latrobe City is undergoing a significant economic restructure with the known closure of traditional industries. While there has been significant government investment in Latrobe City, the Council recognises that the private sector investment is important for the City's ongoing economic growth.

For transition to be effective it must identify and address the various impacts that can arise out of the loss of a key industry. It must also identify new opportunities to replace the revenue lost due to the closure of the key industries. Local government has a vital role to play in the face of the known industry closure in Latrobe City.

A key response to an industry closure is to build up other local industries to try and compensate for the economic shortfall, enhance the liveability, and maintain and community pride.

Growing Latrobe City's visitor economy is critical to supporting the municipality's ongoing transition for reasons including:

- Provides new revenue opportunities for local businesses and residents
- Supports job creation. The tourism industry comprises a broad range of sectors, including but not limited to, hospitality, accommodation and retail, which are important in a transitioning economy because they provide entry level jobs for workers to change careers and for people entering the workforce for the first time.
- Provides opportunities for entrepreneurs to open new businesses, bring new money into the economy and employ more local jobseekers to service the number of visitors coming to the municipality
- Enhances the City's liveability and community pride, which, in turn, helps to retain existing residents and attract new ones at a time when there is a danger of losing population.





2024 Old Gipps town 50th Birthday Celebration

Setting the scene

Destination features and strengths

- Victoria's fourth regional city, with a population of over 77,000 residents.
- A city of multiple centres, comprising the main towns of Churchill, Moe/Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon, as well as the rural townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Tyers, Traralgon South, Yallourn North and Yinnar.
- A culturally diverse community, due to its history of welcoming generations of migrants and refugees.
- A city undergoing a transformation from heavy industry to a renewable energy future, with the goal of becoming the most liveable regional city.
- Situated in the heart of Gippsland, approximately a two-hour drive from the key source market, Melbourne, readily connected by the Princes Highway, and rail and bus links.
- Positioned as a gateway to other destinations within the Gippsland region.
- Latrobe City Council won the Bunnings Trade Local Government Initiative of the Year award at the 2023 Victorian Sport Awards, recognising a groundbreaking partnership and commitment to sports development in regional Victoria as the Home of Table Tennis.
- Provides the first accredited visitor information centre east of Melbourne, delivering information to visitors to encourage them to explore the municipality and surrounds.
- A mature event destination with proven success as a host of major events.
- Offers a quality and breadth of sporting infrastructure to attract national through to regional sporting events, and for sporting teams to base themselves in the municipality.
- Home of arts and cultural facilities for regional and state performances and events.
- Manufacturing and new energy expertise, and Federation University and TAFE campuses foster youth retention, and learning and professional development for individuals and businesses.
- Although Latrobe City does not have a specific attraction that draws visitors, it has emerging experiences across Destination Gippsland's experience pillars of Rivers and Coastal Paradise, Paddock and Ocean Produce, Inspired Adventure, and Vibrant Local Communities⁶.



6. Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan

Events and the visitor economy snapshot

EVENTS

Events are an important part of Latrobe City's identity, formed over time through the growth in the city's events infrastructure, particularly for sports, and the associated attraction and hosting of events.

VISITOR ECONOMY

Latrobe City's visitor economy services people travelling to the area for visiting friends and relatives, events, leisure, business, work, and education. It does not occur in isolation but contributes to investment and jobs across a range of industry sectors throughout Latrobe City.

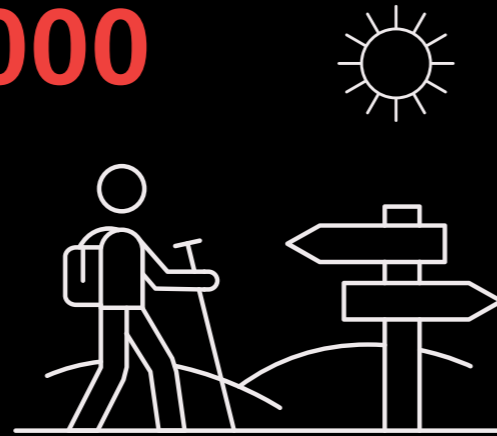
Total visitors⁸

1,046,000

Domestic visitors per year

\$181m

Total domestic expenditure



Day trippers

78%

Domestic day trippers

\$132

Spend per day per day tripper



Overnight visitors

22%

Domestic overnight visitors

\$123

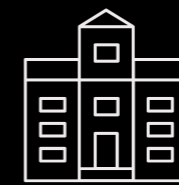
Spend per night per overnight visitor

Accommodation



730

Rooms



2

Hotels (including boutique property)



75

Rooms in the largest motel



4

Caravan parks



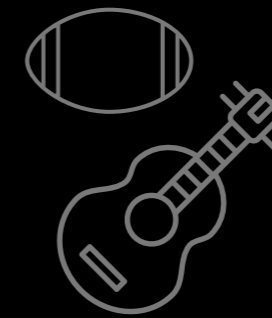
3 star

Rating of the majority of motel and caravan park accommodation

Note: does not include Air BnB listings

57

Events



Supported by Latrobe City major events and community grants

52% Sporting events

43% Cultural/leisure events

3% Civic events

2% Business events

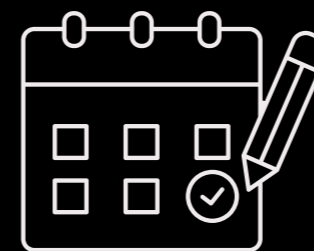


Melbourne

Most visitors are coming from Melbourne followed by regional Victoria and interstate

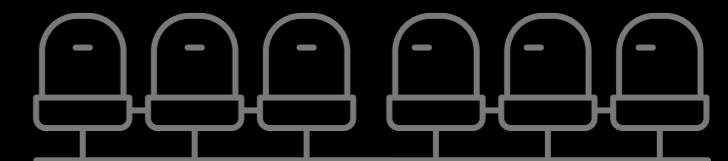


- 48% visiting for holiday
- 34% visiting friends & relatives
- 12% visiting for business
- 6% other reasons which may include events



Nov–Mar

60% of events held from November through to March



Event venues

Latrobe City has extensive sporting venues to host national through to local sporting events

Tracks and trails, including three rail trails, MTB trails, hiking trails (including Strzelecki track)

3 regional cultural facilities

Limited business event venues

Open spaces and recreational reserves suitable for events

7. Four year average (Year ending December 2020 - Year Ending December 2022) for visitation to Gippsland region

8. Conservative estimate supplied by Latrobe City staff



2024 Table Tennis Victoria Open Championships
566 attendees
Economic impact: \$307,166.

Target Markets

The following visitor markets are the focus for the Strategy, recognising the municipality's strengths and capacity to attract and service these markets.

PRIMARY VISITOR MARKETS

SPORTS PARTICIPANTS AND SPECTATORS

Those people fully committed to their competitive sport or participation events.

Participants and spectators will travel from intrastate and interstate for events across the year (depending on sporting code) and during the week and on weekends.

LIFESTYLE LEADERS

'REAL SEEKERS'

As per the Gippsland destination brand, these travellers seek to connect with nature, people, arts, culture, land and produce in authentic ways.

Includes domestic short break couples and singles (intrastate and interstate), families (within region and intrastate), and local residents seeking a new and unique event or tourism experience.

These are weekend visitors across the year and school holiday families.

TOURERS (OLDER COUPLES) AND VFR

Intrastate and interstate visitors that may not decide to visit because of an event, but may attend while they are here, and enjoy local food, drinks, retail, recreational and other visitors' experiences extending spend in the local community.

EDUCATION GROUPS (SCHOOL GROUPS AND STUDY TOURS)

Intrastate and interstate visitors travelling for sporting events and/or to extend learning and explore new places.

Includes high school and tertiary students, with the potential to attract international study tours to Victoria.

Streamlined transport connections, safety, experiences aligned to curriculum, suitable student accommodation and affordability are important for this market.

SECONDARY VISITOR MARKETS

BUSINESS EVENTS

Business events comprises corporate groups, expos, government and association meetings.

These visitors are often high value, and are coming to Latrobe City as a result of the activity of local industries.

There is potential to grow this market in areas aligned with Latrobe City's strengths and growth industries and experiences.



Gippsland Performing Arts Centre



Narkoojee Winery

Events Assessment Framework

A robust event assessment framework will enable Latrobe City to create a balanced portfolio of events across sports, arts, culture and leisure, community and business that drive the visitor economy across the year and support a vibrant and sustainable community.

The best fit events

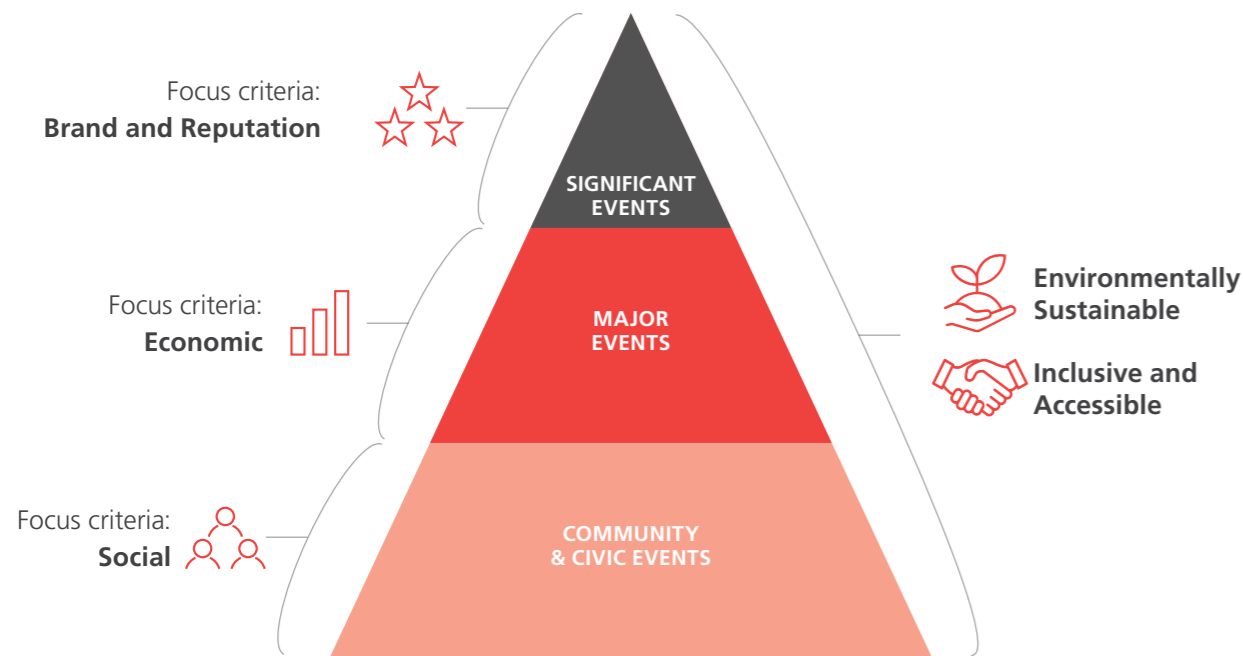
The best fit events for Latrobe City will be those that align with and demonstrate the values to be upheld and meet the supporting assessment criteria. By making smart and transparent decisions on events, outcomes can be maximised and the resourcing constraints managed.

Events will be assessed against the following criteria, which align directly with the Strategy's values.

VALUE	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
Make a positive difference to our culture and community	Social value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events that Latrobe City residents are involved with. • Events that enhance the artistic and cultural diversity of Latrobe City, and celebrate its heritage and Gunaikurnai culture. • Events that connect community, and engender community engagement. • Events that grow community pride, and that offer positive value for residents of all ages, genders and other attributes.
Generate economic opportunities for our local businesses and community	Economic value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of event to attract investment and spend from outside of Latrobe City and Gippsland. • Events that help grow regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and offer strong Return on Investment (ROI). • Events that address seasonality and fill gaps in the calendar • Events that grow overnight visitation (domestic and international).
Reflect our identity and sense of place	Brand and reputation value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of events to activate the Latrobe City Council place brand 'Life Transformed'. • Ability of events to activate and/or leverage the Destination Gippsland regional destination brand 'All Kinds Of Wonder' where there is alignment • Events that change perceptions and generate positive stories about Latrobe City's people and place, and offer relevant marketing and media opportunities for Latrobe City, including high reach with regional, state, or national markets. • Events that align with Visit Victoria product priorities and Destination Gippsland's experience pillars.
Protect and nurture our natural environment	Environmentally sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events that respect the environment, including events that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and enable the use of active and public transport • Purchase sustainably • Recover resources and reduce waste to landfill • Reduce and offset emissions • Educate and engage attendees and suppliers on sustainable behaviours • Conserve waterway health • Have minimal impact on natural habitats.
Inclusive and welcoming for all people	Accessible and inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events that are held in accessible venues and provide for social inclusion. • Events that have a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan and implemented strategies to enhance access and inclusion.

Event categories

The following figure illustrates the event categories for Latrobe City and the relative importance of the assessment criteria. The weighting of focus on the Brand and Reputation, Economic and Social criteria vary depending on the category. Environmental, and Inclusive and Accessible criteria are a key consideration across all categories. By curating a calendar of events that includes each category Latrobe City will be best positioned to maximise social, economic and reputational benefits from events.



SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Large-scale or elite events that align with the priority sectors and provide broad scale brand exposure and positive reputational awareness and enhance pride and liveability for the local community.

Example events

Boolarra Folk Festival, International Rose Garden Festival, AFL pre-season games, Big Bash League cricket, National Basketball League.

MAJOR EVENTS

Events that typically engage a mix of locals and domestic visitors with a focus on economic impact and illustrating the value of the visitor economy.

Example events

Teachers Games, Bowls Victoria, Australian Junior Tennis Tournaments, Table Tennis Victoria Championships, Victoria Bowls Open, Football Victoria Championships.

COMMUNITY & CIVIC EVENTS

Events that showcase and engage community and support council and community programs.

Example events

Australia Day, Racing Club events, community markets, Morwell Festival of Dance, Traralgon Rodeo.

9. These 30 should be a mix of Sport and cultural/leisure events to ensure a balance.

Priority sectors

The aim is to create a diverse calendar of events targeting specific sectors to ensure the city plays to its strengths, aligns with brand and strategies and supports market trends



SPORT

Latrobe City has significant sporting infrastructure and a strong culture of sport that offers a strong opportunity to host sporting events at all levels. The proximity to Melbourne, and rail access, makes Latrobe City accessible for sporting events. These events also lead to legacy outcomes.



ARTS & CULTURE

Gippsland Performing Arts Centre (GPAC), Kernot Hall, Latrobe Regional Gallery, street art and many community arts and creative spaces and events ensure that Latrobe maintains strong creative ties. Combined with the Gunaikurnai culture and the multicultural nature of Latrobe, there is great capacity and desire to host arts and cultural events



NATURE AND OUTDOORS

The natural assets and tracks and trails throughout Latrobe City make it ideal to pitch for adventure and mass participation events. From Mountain Biking and water skiing to trail running and fishing this place offers many great natural assets and outdoor spaces to support events.



INDUSTRIAL AND EDUCATION (EMERGING SECTOR)

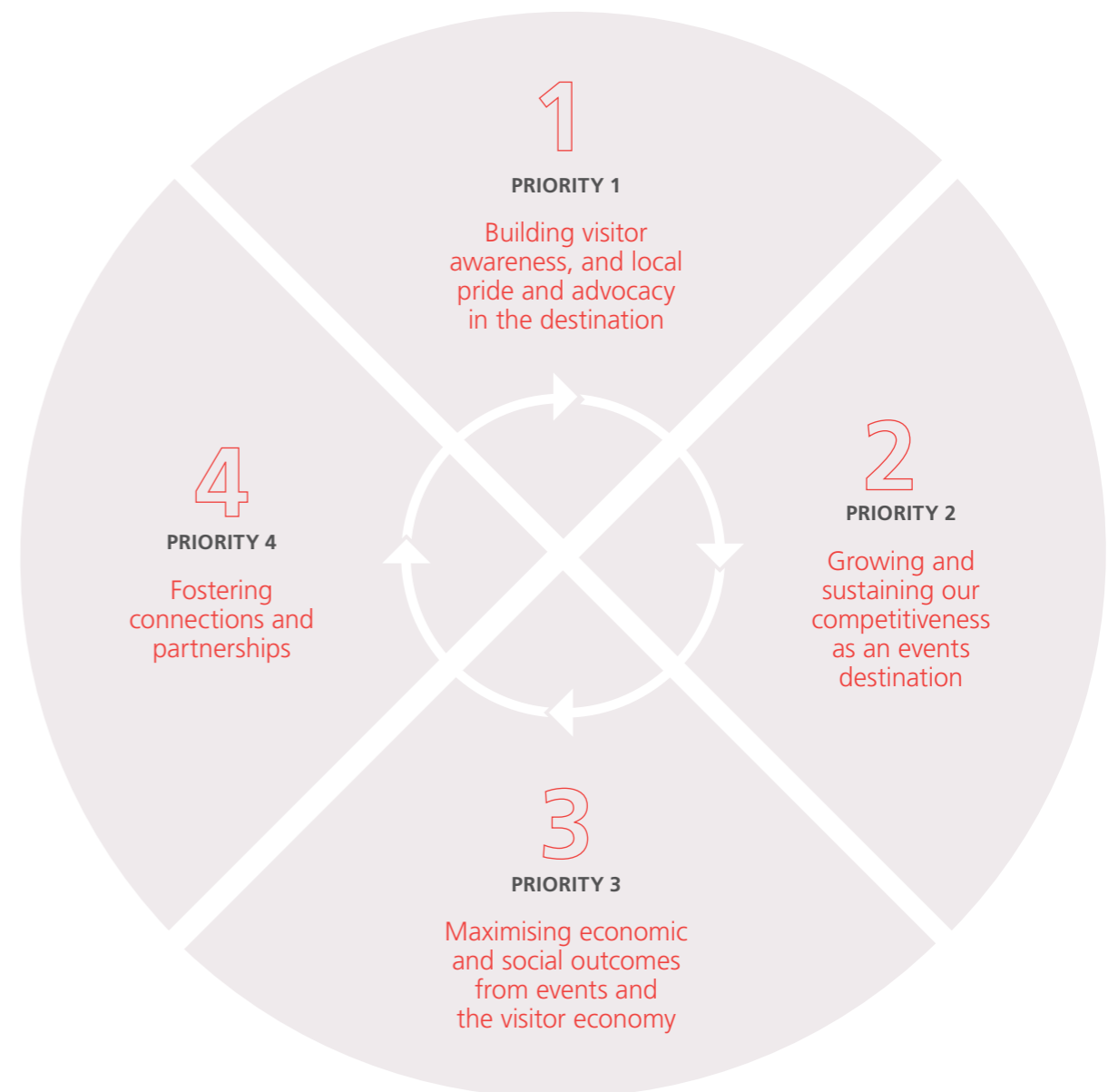
Latrobe City's transition to renewable energies alongside its food processing and sports excellence offers a critical mass of infrastructure and knowledge that is a draw for business events, education groups including domestic school groups, international study tours, professional development tour groups. Tertiary and technical institutions and an innovation centre are assets that can be leveraged to attract these groups.



Gippsland Plains Rail Trail

Strategic priorities

The vision for Latrobe’s events and visitor economy is underpinned by four strategic priorities that will support achievement of the goals:



1 PRIORITY 1 Building visitor awareness, and local pride and advocacy in the destination

OUR IDENTITY

Latrobe City's story is one of transformation, building on its industrial might and becoming a visitor destination and a place to invest.

We will unpack Latrobe City's Place Brand's 'Life transformed' story with the local community and businesses to create awareness of the value of the visitor economy, and to understand the identity of the municipality.

We will then translate this story into a unique positioning as a visitor destination to build awareness and a positive profile amongst visitors and pride within the community.

Latrobe City will stand proud for what it is, and what it is becoming, and give a sense of the transformation by sharing the stories that show culture, heritage, diversity, innovation, and ambition as the municipality's DNA. A consistent telling of these stories through destination marketing and via the passionate advocacy of local businesses and residents will capture the interest of visitors, and drive a positive narrative. Latrobe City's First People's culture and stories, and its migrant history are an important part of the municipality's DNA, and therefore part of the stories to be shared with visitors.

VISITING FRIENDS AND RELATIVES

There is no better way to build destination awareness, support and pride amongst locals than by encouraging them to explore their own backyard, and to share experiences with visiting friends and family. At the same time, visitors are reliant on personal recommendations from friends and family when considering spending time in a destination.

Through the Latrobe City Place Brand and its Visit Pillar 'Always on Activity' for family, friends and return visitors, we have the opportunity to encourage the local community to invite their visiting friends and family to events. With the accredited visitor information centre as a central touchpoint, we will work with local businesses to ensure locals are aware of the experiences available, and inspire them to discover these with their friends and families.

Continuing to align with Gippsland's regional brand, 'All Kinds of Wonder' where appropriate, will enable Latrobe City to position itself in line with consumer trends and leverage the collective strength of the brand in building awareness and profile amongst the Visiting Friends and Relatives target market and other target audiences. We will also continue to leverage Visit Victoria's brand and campaign activity in raising awareness of and driving visitation to Latrobe City.

EVENTS PORTFOLIO

Our events portfolio is an important means of building the municipality's profile amongst target audiences, and creating and growing local pride. Major events, in particular, will be used to communicate and bring to life the destination's identity, and drive a positive profile and perception of Latrobe City and what it offers as an events and visitor destination.

INITIATIVES

- 1.1. Continue to roll out and activate Latrobe City's Place Brand 'Life Transformed', embedding its essence and values into events and the visitor economy.
- 1.2. Drive awareness and understanding amongst residents of the importance of the visitor economy and the role of local businesses and the community.
- 1.3. Identify and profile the many colourful characters, the many faces, that represent the community's identity, the DNA of Latrobe City, including local sporting heroes, in brand and marketing campaigns.
- 1.4. Re-vision the International Rose Garden Festival as a signature destination event to effectively activate Latrobe City's brand and celebrate the DNA of the place.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Events and visitor experiences are used to share the Latrobe City story, transforming the profile and perception of Latrobe City.**
- **Local community advocacy of events and visitor experiences in Latrobe City.**

2 PRIORITY 2 Growing and sustaining our competitiveness as an events destination

EVENTS ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The best fit events for Latrobe City will be those that align with and demonstrate the values outlined earlier and meet specific assessment criteria:

- Economic value
- Social value
- Brand and reputation value
- Environmentally sustainable
- Inclusive and accessible

The intention is to create a balanced portfolio of events across sports, arts, culture and leisure, community and business that drive the visitor economy across the year and support a vibrant and sustainable community. The assessment framework, which is further outlined in this document, will enable Council to assess and determine the best-fit events, how those events should be supported, and the outcomes sought from that assistance. The assessment framework will ensure that event resources are allocated adequately and strategically to attract, support, and leverage events that will support the achievement of the vision and objectives of this Strategy.

MEASUREMENT OF EVENT OUTCOMES

In supporting the development of events across the municipality, we will be seeking to measure the outcomes achieved based on the assessment criteria. Outcomes generated will be shared with the community to build local community and business support and advocacy for events.

EVENT READY AND ACTIVATED INFRASTRUCTURE

Latrobe City has significant event infrastructure including state and regionally ranked sports facilities and a regionally significant art and performance space. To ensure infrastructure is effectively used across the year requires understanding of Latrobe City's event precincts and the current capacity of infrastructure in each and matching these with the appropriate events. Venues that are 'event ready' for targeted events will help avoid incurring costs in providing additional infrastructure to host events.

We are focused on a planned approach to the maintenance and activation of this event infrastructure to optimise these facilities and maximise the economic and social outcomes they can deliver.

Much of the infrastructure is a legacy of government funding to provide a lift in the economy when faced with industry contraction. New funding opportunities will be pursued to enable the infrastructure to be event ready and utilised to its full capacity, including a maintenance schedule.

EVENTS PROSPECTUS

A strategic events prospectus is an important tool in enhancing Latrobe City's profile and reputation as an events destination and targeting events that are the right fit. We are focused on attracting events that align with our values and identity, and deliver positive economic and social benefits for our community and visitor economy. Our events prospectus will outline the events we are seeking to attract and host, and link with the Gippsland Event Venues website with details on Latrobe's fit for purpose event venues and sites, and their capability for the right fit events. We will promote our visitor economy through information on local accommodation and experiences.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROCESSES

A critical enabler of event and visitor economy benefits is investment in accommodation to meet the needs of current visitors and to attract new markets. Latrobe City has an opportunity to lead by example with accessible, inclusive and sustainable infrastructure including accommodation. This is coupled with the need for ease of access through parking and public transport options.

Streamlining the compliance process for events is another enabler. Competition for event attraction demands Latrobe City has a reputation as an event friendly destination. Latrobe City Council wants to make it an easy decision for event organisers to choose to hold their events in Latrobe City. This will require a commitment to meeting the needs for a site to be event ready in terms of event set up and logistical needs, as well as approval pathways.

INITIATIVES

- 2.1. Implement the new event assessment criteria and measurement tool to enable all events to be assessed and their outcomes measured consistently and transparently.
- 2.2. Review Latrobe City Council's events venues and sites to determine their event strengths and capabilities.
- 2.3. Establish pre-approval status for the fit for purpose event venues and sites that meet required criteria.
- 2.4. Optimise Latrobe City's events infrastructure and encourage investment in accommodation stock to maintain competitiveness and be a leader in accessible, inclusive and sustainable tourism.
- 2.5. Enhance Latrobe City's positioning as a competitive events destination with provision of targeted and timely information on the right fit events and relevant event venues and sites.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Latrobe City secures an annual events calendar that delivers on the Strategy's goals.**
- **Ongoing investment in events infrastructure and accommodation.**

3 PRIORITY 3 Maximising economic and social outcomes from events and the visitor economy

EVENT LEVERAGING AND ACTIVATIONS

Activations are a tangible way to increase economic impacts by encouraging visitors to increase their length of stay and spend locally. They can include pop-up activities that align with the Place Brand, event theme and event specific deals offered by hospitality, retail, accommodation and attractions. The creation of packages and itineraries that create awareness of what the municipality has to offer encourages visitors to explore, extend their stay and leave as passionate advocates. In marketing events, we will work internally across teams and with event organisers to identify and plan activations during and around events to extend and enhance the event experience for locals and visitors.

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

Latrobe City has the opportunity through its events activity to drive change in visitor perception and grow spend in the local visitor economy. We will seek to capitalise on the increased traffic in the municipality pre, during and post an event, to provide an exceptional visitor experience and drive strong economic returns for local businesses.

Critical areas to focus on are encouraging experience development and creating awareness of the experiences and services for visitors. This will involve a multi-step process: identifying the potential for the development of new or enhanced experiences; encouraging investment in experience development; and facilitating businesses to coordinate experiences and services into appealing packages or suggested itineraries for visitors coming to events. We will encourage local tourism businesses to tap into funding programs available to support the development of transformational projects

REGIONAL PLANNING CALENDAR

A forward planning events calendar will be coordinated and managed in collaboration with event organisers. This calendar is an important tool to maximise outcomes from events: event organisers can check timing to avoid date clashes with other events; local businesses can learn about upcoming events and plan activations and packages to leverage events; local residents can share what's coming up with family and friends; and Latrobe City Council can support the dissemination of messaging through Place brand platforms.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

To thrive, the visitor economy and events need to be environmentally and financially sustainable and responsive to the expectations of their target audiences. Demonstrating environmental sustainability in events and visitor experiences is an increasing expectation of visitors and residents. Financial sustainability is critical to increasing resilience to external shocks and weather events.

We are focused on enabling success for visitor experience and service providers and event organisers through access to practical information, training and encouraging networking to foster collaboration, information sharing and ideas generation. The proposed Gippsland Regional Events School (piloted in East Gippsland) has the potential to support local homegrown events to enhance their capability and sustainability.

VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the backbone of many of our events. We recognise that a concerted effort is needed, working with regional and state partners to develop an innovative solution to address the lack of skilled and enthusiastic volunteers that is being felt not only in Gippsland, but also across Australia.

We are supporting several volunteering recruitment and retention projects: providing an online volunteer hub to connect organisations seeking assistance with locals looking for volunteer opportunities; and investigating capacity building for volunteer groups across the community. More work is needed in encouraging our community to volunteer.

EVENT EQUIPMENT

Access to locally based event equipment and services are important components of event success. There is an opportunity to explore the creation of a database of equipment available for hire by event organisers and of local equipment suppliers, and encouraging the creation of event equipment hubs across Gippsland. Facilitating networking amongst event organisers can also encourage sharing of equipment and volunteers across events.

INITIATIVES

- 3.1. Activate around events with experiences to maximise outcomes for the visitor economy and local community.
- 3.2. Develop one centralised regional event calendar to support forward planning and marketing.
- 3.3. Identify experience development gaps and needs across Latrobe City to enhance the competitiveness and appeal of the destination for event visitors and groups.
- 3.4. Foster a sustainable visitor economy and local events industry, enabled by access to targeted capacity building, human resources and equipment.
- 3.5. Enhance the overall visitor experience and create an environment conducive to increased spending, longer stays and higher levels of visitor satisfaction

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Events and visitor experiences increase visitor numbers and encourage longer length of stay and repeat visitation.**
- **Increased visitor spend with local businesses and organisations.**
- **Local community participation in events including in a volunteer capacity.**
- **Visitor experiences and events build Latrobe City's reputation in environmental sustainability.**

4 PRIORITY 4 Fostering connections and partnerships

BETTER EVENT PLANNING AND PREPARATION

A whole of Council approach to events is core to ensuring event opportunities are captured, and requests are addressed efficiently. We are committed to a clear and streamlined pathway from event acquisition to planning, marketing, leveraging and post event reporting; and equally, a streamlined approval process.

We will assign appropriate level of delegated authority to the Creative Venues, Events and Tourism team for event approvals to increase efficiencies and the timeliness of responses. We will also review and update the Terms of Reference and position descriptions for members of the Tourism and Major Events Advisory Committee (TAMEAC). This will see a change in focus away from advice on event approvals to a forum with the remit to proactively and strategically identify and advise on visitor economy and event opportunities; and have oversight of the Strategy's implementation. The Committee will be renamed the Visitor Economy Advisory Committee in line with the new focus and members will be skill-based appointments.

AN EFFECTIVE ECOSYSTEM

The stakeholders in events and the visitor economy are broad ranging and form an operating 'ecosystem'. We will encourage collaboration and cooperation to maximise synergies that exist.

We will work with regional and state partners including Events Gippsland, Destination Gippsland, and Visit Victoria and locally with Latrobe Visitor Information Centre to ensure opportunities for Latrobe City are maximised, and collaboration drives growth and success. Networking and bringing industry stakeholders together, and Council providing strong leadership, will be important in forming a healthy ecosystem.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships with event organisers are vital to support the acquisition and retention of events. We will continue to proactively acquire events, and negotiate strategic partnership agreements with sporting bodies and other event organisations that support the achievement of their events' strategic goals and key performance indicators.

INITIATIVES

- 4.1. Create a streamlined whole of organisation approach to maximising event outcomes.
- 4.2. Assign delegated authority to the Creative Venues, Events and Tourism team for event approvals.
- 4.3. Review and change the remit and membership of the current TAMEAC to a proactive and strategic Visitor Economy Advisory Committee focused on providing strategic advice on maximising visitor economy and event opportunities.
- 4.4. Continue to foster a collaborative approach with regional and state partners and the LVIC to maximise event and visitor economy outcomes for Latrobe City.
- 4.5. Establish strategic partnerships with sporting bodies and other event organisations to acquire major events that are the right fit for Latrobe City's venues.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Positive feedback from event organisers on the event approval process.**
- **Strategic approach to the identification of events to attract and/or support, the development of visitor experience opportunities and ways to leverage events to maximise economic and social outcomes.**
- **Strategic partnerships secured with major sporting bodies and event organisers.**

Measurement and Monitoring

A series of measures will be used to assess the success of this Strategy in delivering on the Strategy's values and objectives.

The Visitor Economy Advisory Committee (the former TAMEAC) will undertake an annual review of the Strategy and the Strategy's Activation Plan. The review outcomes will be reported to Council.

VALUES	GOALS	METRICS AND METHODS
Social We make a positive difference to our culture and community.	Community benefit	More residents agree events and the visitor economy have had a positive impact on their community (Resident survey)
Economic We generate economic opportunities for our local businesses and community.	Visitor spend	Increase in visitor numbers and visitor spend (SpendMapp, visitor numbers at events, Tourism Research Australia data) Increase in economic impact and return on investment generated through major events.
Brand and reputational We have a strong identity and sense of place.	Positive perception	Positive stories generated (Media activity)
Environmentally sustainable We champion the protection and nurturing of our natural environment.	Community benefit	Proportion of funded and acquired events with an environmental sustainability plan (Events assessment criteria) Proportion of funded and acquired events with measures in place to achieve Council's net zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2035 (Events assessment criteria)
Accessible and inclusive Events and visitor economy experiences are accessible and inclusive of all people.	Community benefit	Proportion of funded and acquired events that are inclusive and accessible (Events assessment criteria)

Acronyms and Definitions

RIGHT FIT EVENTS

Those events that meet the defined assessment criteria set in this strategy.

FIT FOR PURPOSE VENUES AND SITES

The venues identified as having the capacity and capability to host the right fit events.

LATROBE CITY

Refers to a city of multiple centres, comprising the main towns of Traralgon, Morwell, Moe/Newborough and Churchill, as well as the rural townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Tyers, Traralgon South, Yallourn North and Yinnar.

LATROBE CITY COUNCIL (COUNCIL)

The organisation representing Latrobe City.

LVIC

Latrobe Visitor Information Centre, Latrobe City's accredited visitor information centre.

NEXT ECONOMY

National Visitor Survey

NVS

The climate-safe global economy founded on renewable sources of energy that the world is transitioning to. Leveraging the transition offers many opportunities for a local economy that is proactive.

TAMEAC

Tourism and Major Events Advisory Committee. A community consultative committee to provide advice on furthering tourism within Latrobe City and consider proposals for major events and funding applications.

VISITOR ECONOMY

Visitor economy is a contemporary definition of tourism, including people travelling not just for leisure, but for events, business, work, education or visiting friends and relatives. It brings together the wide range of industries that provide visitors with goods and services, both directly such as accommodation, cafes, restaurants, bars, transport providers, tour companies, and attractions, as well as indirectly, such as retail, medical, and food production.



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