



Destination **GIPPSLAND**

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

CHAIR'S REPORT 2025

I AM PLEASED TO PRESENT THE CHAIR'S REPORT FOR DESTINATION GIPPSLAND FOR 2024/25, AFTER ANOTHER BUSY YEAR.



This has been my third year as Chair, and I'm delighted to play a small part in the tremendous work done by the Destination Gippsland team as a whole – including our CEO, employees, contractors, and of course, the Board.

In last year's report I mentioned that there have been many global and national influences on tourism, and certainly this has continued in the past year. This includes global economic

downturns and general uncertainty in my spheres, including here in Australia and Victoria. As I mentioned last year, Gippsland itself continues its journey of transition from historical industries to those that align to State and Federal strategies for the future, causing some disruption to all sectors, including tourism. However, as green shoots started to appear in the Australian economy, in 2024-25 we also saw cautious optimism among travellers and the tourism industry.

The team at Destination Gippsland take all of these into account as they continue with their focus on supporting our industry across the region. This year saw the first year of our Strategic Plan 2024-27. Our Aim is to support the growth of the visitor economy in Gippsland, and our team continued to lead in supporting this aim in the 2024-25 year.

Whether continuing to provide informative industry newsletters, facilitate strategic business forums, support young operators through mentoring, or provide letters of support for new projects, the role of Destination Gippsland is clear: provide the relevant and strategic opportunities to the industry to support its growth and success into the future.

Tourism advocacy

An important role Destination Gippsland plays is to ensure we represent the interests of the Gippsland tourism industry with government. We have undertaken many opportunities to do this during the past year. Some of the areas where we've had input over the past year include:

- Writing to the Minister for Tourism regarding issues impacting visitor numbers, including free camping (resulting in 'ghost' camping) and short stay accommodation levies. The State budget resulted in free camping being rescinded, which was welcomed by many of our tourism operators and Local Government partners.
- Input into the Great Outdoors Taskforce, assessed options for land which was previously subject to logging in Gippsland. Our CEO Terry Robinson contributed to this Taskforce, and the Board provided a submission on behalf of Destination Gippsland.
- As part of the Victorian Regional Tourism Network we signed a joint letter advocating for more regional marketing to be funded by Visit Victoria, and a more strategic 'Team Victoria' approach in relation to tourism, as well as longer-term funding to Regional Tourism Boards. We are pleased to see that some of the requests of the Network were met, and that Visit Victoria has proactively undertaken a more regional focus since that submission.
- As I reported last year, in 2023/24 Destination Gippsland signed a new Visitor Economy Partnership agreement with the Victorian government, through the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR). While the 2025 budget guaranteed funding for Destination Gippsland for a further 12 months, and we have a signed agreement with DJSIR, we continue to advocate for more certainty of funding and continuity for our industry, so we can continue to support Gippsland tourism businesses into the future. We look forward to continuing to build our relationship with DJSIR throughout this financial year.

- Destination Gippsland is part of One Gippsland and continues to work with Local Government and other key sector stakeholders to advocate key opportunities and challenges for Gippsland. In the past year this has included participating in both Federal and State delegations, where key tourism priorities were raised and discussed.

Board and governance

Board changes

- Traditional owner representation. During the year we farewelled Daniel Miller from the Board. Daniel moved on from his role as CEO of GunaiKurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation and accordingly resigned from the Board. The Board is keen to ensure this representation continues, so will be seeking to appoint another Director, once a successor to Daniel is identified.
- Two longstanding independent Directors finished their tenure on the Board during the year. Neil Travers and Nicola Pero were valued and long-term contributors to the Board, including Neil on the Remuneration and Nominations Committee (which he chaired) and Nicola on the Audit, Finance, Risk and Governance Committee.
- Two additional board directors were appointed. Adam Vardy and Mandi Davidson were elected to the board at the AGM. Both directors bring complementary skillsets that the board were seeking, and we look forward to their contribution over the years to come.
- Local Government CEOs
South Gippsland: We were saddened to say farewell to Kerry Ellias as she moved on from her role as CEO at South Gippsland Shire Council. Kerry was a valued contributor to the Destination Gippsland Board over many years, including chairing the Remuneration and Nominations Committee for a time. However, we were delighted to welcome Allison Jones onto the Board as the new CEO of South Gippsland, who was officially appointed during the financial year.

Baw Baw: We farewellled Mark Dupe who resigned as CEO at Baw Baw Shire Council. Mark was a respected member of the Board and chaired our AFGR Committee for several years. With Mark's departure Mark Kestigian stepped onto the Board as an interim measure, while Baw Baw undertook a search for a new CEO

New Deputy Chair

- With the increase in workload and advocacy, the Board resolved to create a new role of Deputy Chair. This is designed to support the Chair role, and contribute to sound succession planning. In the Board meeting after the AGM, the Board elected Neil Plumridge to the role of Deputy Chair. As Chair I welcome this appointment, congratulate Neil on this appointment, and thank him for his support throughout the year.

In summary

In closing I would like to again thank my fellow Board Directors for their commitment and dedication to Destination Gippsland, to our strategic goal of supporting the visitor economy, and the collaborative and strategic approach that they each bring to the board and our discussions.

I would also like to thank our CEO Terry Robinson for his leadership of the organisation through yet another a complex and busy year. Terry and his very talented and dedicated team are recognised and respected leaders in their industry and continue to deliver again and again for the region. I know I speak on behalf of the Board, when I say we are fortunate to have such a strong and capable team at Destination Gippsland.

As we continue down the path of embedding our current strategic plan, I continue to be optimistic and excited for the journey ahead. We operate in a dynamic industry in an ever-changing world, but I know our regional product is also second to none. Our vision is that Gippsland's natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit. I'm confident that the years ahead will see this vision come to life.



Jan Fitzgerald
Chair
Destination Gippsland



CEO REPORT 2025



The past 12 months have been strong for the Gippsland tourism industry. Our visitor numbers (7.3 million) remain at historically high levels and visitor expenditure (\$1.7 billion) places Gippsland as one of the leaders in the regional Victoria visitor economy.

These results demonstrate the quality of our experiences and the resilience of our industry that faces competition from other destinations and alternatives for consumer leisure

time and spending. Destination Gippsland continues to work hard with our industry and government partners to expand our product and marketing edge to support the 12,100 jobs and over 3,000 small businesses that rely on the visitor economy.

Demand driving activity

The 'Gippsland - All Kinds of wonder' brand continues to be the core of Destination Gippsland's work in generating demand for our region. This is supported by the event planning and acquisition by our Events Gippsland project that helps to fill our events calendar and contributes valuable off-peak visitation and bed nights.

Growing the recognition and engagement of #visitgippsland as our 'call to action' is the basis of our 'always on' marketing and we continue to do this in innovative and effective ways. We strategically used social media to attract and engage our target audience; drove all consumer interest to our award-winning website (visitgippsland); communicated regularly via email to a loyal database of over 40,000 Gippsland followers; and secured over 20 media visits including the highly successful Channel 7 Sunrise Weather Crosses in East Gippsland that generated over \$15m in media value for the year. Thank you to our incredibly productive marketing team who continue to deliver incredible results for our region. Led by the highly respected General Manager Marketing Ali Conroy who continues to deliver consumer focused and brilliant campaigns. Thank you to Elysa Sorahan, our Digital Marketing Manager, who's skills, expertise and attention to detail deliver outstanding results in our web and social media channels. Thank you also to Kelly McCarthy, our PR and Marketing Partnerships Manager, who generates millions of dollars of media value for Gippsland through her fantastic organisation skills, and strong relationships with our industry, journalists and media outlets around Australia.

Events Gippsland and the marketing team provided outstanding support to many events in the past year including the Art of Annemieke Mein and Turner Exhibition's at the Gippsland Art Gallery, Thorpdale Potato Festival, Victorian Bowls Open, Table Tennis Victoria Open and Country Championships, East Gippsland Winter Festival, South Gippsland Garlic Festival and the newly

created Inverloch Running Festival. Events Gippsland directly supported 13 events in 24/25. As a result of this support our events program generated over 45,000 bed nights and \$19m in visitor expenditure.

Leading this work is our Project Manager Events and Strategic Projects, David Elder who does an excellent job delivering on our Gippsland Events Strategy by negotiating with event proponents and venues, seeking out new event opportunities, and delivering a high rate of return for all our local government partners.

Supply of tourism experiences

Destination Gippsland continues to work on the development of new visitor experiences via tourism planning, advocacy, investor support and industry training and communication. It was great to see the launch of new tourism products such as the Rokeby-Noojee Rail Trail, completion of the Gippsland Stargazing Experience, and the Sailors Grave/Dunetown Cellar Door at Marlo. Complementing these new experiences, we supported five projects that successfully secured Regional Tourism Infrastructure Funding which will see each of them improve their visitor experiences over the next 12 months. Joining our team this year as Tourism Officer was Sarah Barrott. She hit the ground running and has shown great initiative as she helped co-ordinate two booked out Tourism Industry Forums; and managed the 11th year of the Ken Hore Mentoring Tourism Program.

I would also like to extend a special acknowledgement and sincere appreciation to our Industry Development Manager Janine Hayes who retired from her role with DG after almost 13 years.

Janine has been the driving force of our Industry Development activities and will be greatly missed by our team and industry.

Since 2012 she has been highly motivated to support our tourism industry through challenging times such as floods, fires, the Covid pandemic and the impacts on tourism of changing technology and government policy. Her passion for the people in our industry, her understanding of small business and ability to find solutions, think long term and communicate effectively were hallmarks of her career with Destination Gippsland.

Governance

Finally and on behalf of our team I would like to thank our Chair Jan Fitzgerald, Deputy Chair Neil Plumridge and all Board Directors and Observers for their leadership and governance oversight that ensures our purpose, strategy and priorities align to deliver the best outcomes for our financial members and the broader Gippsland tourism industry. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the outstanding and professional services and guidance provided by our Company Secretary, Helen Rose.

It is a privilege to be Destination Gippsland's CEO, and I look forward with confidence to serving our industry and stakeholders and drive the growth of the visitor economy in Gippsland.



Terry Robinson
CEO
Destination Gippsland



GIPPSLAND VISITOR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDERS

VISITORS

TOURISM BUSINESSES, PRODUCT AND EXPERIENCES, SUPPORTING VISITOR SERVICES AND COMMUNITY

GIPPSLAND LAND MANAGERS

- Parks Victoria
- Gunaikurni Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation
- Bunarong Land Council
- Department Energy, Environment and Climate Action Plan
- Alpine Resorts Victoria

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- One Gippsland
- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- Latrobe City Council
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE GOVERNMENT

- Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Regional Development Victoria
- Regional Development Australia
- Gippsland Regional Partnership

PEAK INDUSTRY BODIES

- Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC)
- Business Events Victoria (BEV)
- Committee for Gippsland
- Food and Fibre Gippsland
- Wine Gippsland

TOURISM ASSOCIATIONS

- Local and regional membership based organisations

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Tafe
- Universities
- Registered Training Organisations

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTERS

DESTINATION GIPPSLAND - Events Gippsland

VISIT VICTORIA / TOURISM, EVENTS AND ENTITIES

TOURISM AUSTRALIA

VISITATION TRENDS

Gippsland National and International Visitor Survey Data	2009 (base year)	2023 (last year)	2024 (this year)	1 year change	Overall change
Domestic overnight visitors	1.55m	2.68m	2.82m	+5.3%	+82%
Domestic visitor nights	5.03m	8.04m	7.61m	-5.4%	+51%
Domestic daytrips	2.99m	4.45m	4.4m	-1%	+47%
International overnight visitors	27,000	44,000	58,000	+29.8%	+115%
Total visitors	4.54m	7.17m	7.23m	+1.4%	+59%
Total Expenditure	\$1.33 billion	\$1.89 billion	\$1.68 billion	-8.7%	+26%

Results are from Tourism Research Australia and are for the year ending December 31, 2024, and are for mainland Gippsland and exclude Phillip Island.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2027

GIPPSLAND'S TOURISM VISION

Gippsland's natural beauty, outstanding experiences and life changing moments inspire the world to visit.

OUR AIM

To support the growth of the visitor economy in Gippsland.

OUR ROLE

As a Visitor Economy Partnership we provide leadership and management capability to deliver marketing that stimulates demand, as well as facilitating the supply of improved visitor experiences.

We will build strong governance, team capability, collaborative relationships with tourism operators, traditional owners, land managers, government and other key stakeholders.

Factors To Enable Success

- Diversify revenue streams to increase financial capacity and independence
- Continue strong governance and accountability on behalf of financial members
- Maintain team performance via professional development and providing a supportive and safe workplace culture
- Maximise opportunities available in the Visitor Economy Partnership model
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration
- Advocate to grow tourism opportunities in Gippsland with all levels of government

We Value

- Putting the visitor first:
Make research based decisions
- Making a difference:
Build a strategic, Gippsland-wide legacy
- Advocating for Gippsland:
Through positive story-telling
- Collaborating to maximise our impact:
Create partnerships
- Striving to continually improve:
Benchmarking with best practice
- Responding quickly to opportunities and challenges:
Listening to industry
- Diverse contributions:
Provide a supportive team culture

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

GENERATING VISITOR DEMAND FOR GIPPSLAND

Marketing

Maximise the reach and impact of **Gippsland's All Kinds of Wonder brand**. Invest in targeted marketing campaigns, maintain consumer communications, increase our digital capability and be active in growing the **international market**.

Events

Support Events Gippsland to continue to secure new events to build a full calendar. Implement stage 2 and 3 of the Gippsland Events Strategy, work with Local Government partners to leverage the broader tourism benefits of business and leisure events.

Goals & Measures

- ✓ Market share
- ✓ Events value
- ✓ Visitor Expenditure
- ✓ Brand performance

IMPROVED SUPPLY OF VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Product

Facilitate investment in new tourism product. Look for opportunities in both public and private sector and advocate for Gippsland's priority projects.

- Gippsland Odyssey Rail Trail Network
- Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail
- Bass Coast Dinosaur Trail
- Nanjet/Yanakie Cultural Experience

Planning and Resources

Implement tourism plans. Continue to secure resources and action the Gippsland Destination Management Plan (DMP) and related strategies.

- Food Drink & Agritourism
- Tracks and Trails
- Gunaikurnai Aboriginal Tourism Strategy
- Events
- Visitor Services

Industry Development

Support tourism businesses. Provide networking opportunities and communication channels for professional development, and industry insights and research.

Elevate the importance of Indigenous, accessible and sustainable tourism opportunities in Gippsland. Adhere to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Goals & Measures

- ✓ Market share
- ✓ Events value
- ✓ Visitor Expenditure
- ✓ Brand performance

SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

We will also undertake activities in the following three important areas:

- **Finance and governance:** Ensure we maintain high standards of accountability, governance and responsiveness to the Board, our financial members and the broader tourism industry.
- **Advocacy:** Be the primary point of contact for government, media and industry. Provide an evidence based, collective voice to influence positive tourism outcomes.
- **Team development:** facilitate the professional development of our staff and Board to deliver effective services and tourism management.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

DESTINATION GIPPSLAND BOARD

- **Jan Fitzgerald** (Board Chair)
- **Michelle Nicholson**
(Member of the Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk Committee)
- **Adam Vardy** (appointed at Nov 2024 AGM)
- **Mandi Davidson** (appointed at Nov 2024 AGM)
- **Andrew Clarke**
(Member of the Nominations & Remuneration Committee)
- **Neil Travers** (retired at Nov 2024 AGM)
- **Neil Plumridge**
(Deputy Chair and Chair Audit, Finance, Governance and Risk Committee)
- **Mark Dupe** (resigned December 2024)
- **Kerryn Ellis** (resigned February 2025)
- **Nicola Pero** (retired at Nov 2024 AGM)
- **Daniel Miller** (resigned in April 2025)
- **Greg Box** (Chair Nominations and Remuneration Committee)
- **Fiona Weigall** (appointed Feb 2025)
- **Allison Jones** (appointed June 2025)

BOARD OBSERVERS (non-Directors)

- **Jason Banikoff** Department Jobs, Skills, Industry & Regions
- **Kerri Villiers** Parks Victoria
- **Sara Rhodes-Ward** Regional Development Victoria

DESTINATION GIPPSLAND STAFF

- **Terry Robinson** Chief Executive Officer
- **Alison Conroy** General Manager Marketing
- **Janine Hayes** Industry Development Manager
- **David Elder** Project Manager Events Gippsland
- **Kelly McCarthy** PR & Marketing Partnerships Manager
- **Helen Rose** Company Secretary, Finance & Admin Officer
- **Elysa Sorahan** Digital Marketing Manager
- **Sarah Barrott** Tourism Officer (appointed Nov 2024)



GENERATING VISITOR DEMAND

MARKETING GIPPSLAND: 2024/25

IN THE 24/25 FINANCIAL YEAR DESTINATION GIPPSLAND UNDERTOOK A RANGE OF PARTNERSHIP MARKETING ACTIVITIES, SUPPORTED BY OUR BUSINESS AS USUAL CONTENT DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY VIA OUR MULTI-AWARD WINNING WEBSITE, VISITGIPPSLAND.COM.AU, OUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIRECT MAIL GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION AND A RANGE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FOR GIPPSLAND.

Over the FY25, we committed to deliver:

Brand marketing: for Gippsland, All Kinds of Wonder: We delivered brand advertising for the region across the year, amplified in low and shoulder seasons to continue in our goals to create awareness and drive consideration for Gippsland as a leisure travel destination.

Targeted campaign activity: We implemented tactical activity focussing on thematic content driven by cooperative partnership funded marketing.

Maintain owned and earned channels: Our website, eDM and social media remained core to our messaging, focusing on visitor-centric events, seasonality, and ad-hoc content opportunities. We focussed on continual content development with the website as the call to action on all marketing activity.

Public Relations: We continued to pitch, host, and liaise with travel and mainstream media to provide editorial outcomes for Gippsland.

Our focus on digital capability continued through support for industry and events who had ATDW listings. We continued to provide marketing support as we implemented our digital marketing strategy across the year, including an updated Destination Gippsland Marketing toolkit for industry.

We continued to work with product across the region to develop commissionable programs and packages to support a Gippsland as must-see destination for the international market, both on its own and as part of the Sydney-Melbourne touring route.

We continued to support events and business events to gain market share of the business events sector and increase our reputation as a leading destination for consumer events in Victoria.

Visitgippsland.com.au

The website provides an information hub aiming to create awareness and inspire people to travel to Gippsland. We aim to raise awareness about all the things to see and do in Gippsland, and to actively encourage users to consider Gippsland for travel by providing them with tools to research and plan a trip.

We encourage Gippsland tourism operators' take-up of ATDW listings, which are the passport for participation in our marketing.

During the year, we created over 30 new content pages that included seasonal offerings, itineraries, listicles and themed content.

Our website is home to over 1000 pages of content and over 500 business and event ATDW listings at any time and delivers travel information in a comprehensive and visual way, with interactive maps, itineraries, event listings and news. In 2024/25 the website had a 24% increase in page views over the previous year, with an increase in sessions of 22% year on year.

The website is the call to action on all our marketing campaign activity.

Email Marketing

Email is a highly targeted way to create conversion and loyalty, as well as top of mind awareness. The newsletter reached 534k people across the financial year, with an average open rate of 42% for the year. The subscriber list increased by 26% by the end of June 2025.



Social Media

We focused on Facebook and Instagram as our social media channels across the last financial year, supplying original and user generated content, posts, stories and reels. Our social media platforms are strong performers for the region, with 95.7k followers across the platforms. In 2024/25 our social media reach increased by 33% on the previous financial year, with engagement up 12.5% year on year.

Public Relations

Over the year we worked with Visit Victoria and conducted year-round pitches and hosted travel and mainstream media as well as digital influencers.

Over the financial year we achieved \$15m in advertising equivalency for Gippsland, the estimated reach was 92 million, off the wave of media supporting Squeaky Beach named in the top ten beaches by Lonely Planet. We also issued 39 media releases about Gippsland and supported 15 media visits in the region.

Recite Me

On International Accessibility Day, May 15th, we launched the new accessibility plug-in, ReciteMe on visitgippsland.com.au. In the coming weeks we will also upload the widget to the industry pages via www.destinationgippsland.com.au

Designed to increase the quality and volume of the user experience for visitors with accessibility needs, ReciteMe provides a range of on-demand accessibility solutions to support people with accessible needs and complements our social media position to provide screen reader capability in our captions.

MARKETING ACHIEVEMENTS

ATDW Listings and strategic approach

Destination Gippsland have adopted a strategic approach to new listings to provide a gateway for Gippsland businesses to participate in marketing the region. In early 2025 we developed a new infographic to assist operators to digest and understand the benefit of having an ATDW listing.

Baw Baw Shire year-round marketing partnership

Destination Gippsland partnered with Baw Baw Shire Council to deliver an ongoing campaign for the area of West Gippsland over the course of the financial year.

We created new content and itineraries, increasing our AI search capability. A video campaign, image library development, digital media campaigns, influencer cooperative marketing and competitions were included.

Over the course of the year, it is estimated that we delivered over \$276k of advertising value equivalency for the West Gippsland region.

East Gippsland marketing partnership

In partnership with East Gippsland Marketing, we delivered an autumn and spring campaign for the region, creating new content and itineraries through a digital campaign and supported by a competition.

We continued to create support marketing activity for Buchan and Bruthen, including a video on demand ad campaign, featuring summer and winter content to support year-round visitation. Overall there were more than 300k impressions for the ad.

Gippsland Dark Skies

Destination Gippsland conducted marketing activity promoting Gippsland's dark skies opportunities, including new content on <https://stargazinggippsland.au/>, new photography assets and a digital marketing campaign.

South Gippsland marketing partnership

A marketing partnership with South Gippsland Shire was delivered through a partnership with social media Influencer @nathsway as well as a video on demand ad campaign and social media marketing.

Eat. Drink. Gippsland 5TH edition

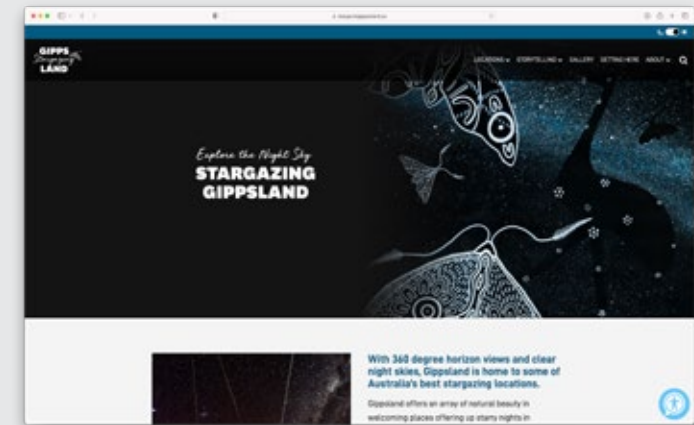
The 5th edition of the popular Eat Drink Gippsland guide circulated throughout Victoria and southern NSW during the financial year. This signature guide for Gippsland grows in reputation with each new edition and now is an annual publication. The guide has a readership of 90k.

Gippsland Caravan & Camping Guide 2024

During the financial year a new caravan and camping guide was delivered for Gippsland and distributed throughout regional Victoria, southern NSW and metro Melbourne.

Gippsland Official Touring Map 2024

A new official touring map was delivered for Gippsland as well. The map is delivered across 4 star and above hotels in Melbourne and surrounds, through the Visitor Information Centre network and into NSW and other regional Victoria, as well as throughout Gippsland.





MARKETING ACTIVITY

Partnership Campaign: Wanderer Adventures

Destination Gippsland partnered with Wanderer Adventure Cruises to provide a strategic and structured, on-going marketing support to the Prom cruise company. The campaign content delivered seasonal messaging, with a focus on itineraries, news blogs and listicles.

Partnership campaign: Metung Hot Springs

In partnership with the Metung Hot Springs, we promoted glamping on the Gippsland Lakes, raising awareness of the 'bathe and stay' packages to the Melbourne market. We worked to highlight the kid-friendly nature of the venue and conducted a social media ad campaign for the Hot Springs.

Partnership campaign: Lardner Park Farm World

In the lead up to this annual major event for Gippsland, Destination Gippsland ran a marketing campaign to promote Farm World through our channels and via a paid social media campaign, producing strong results.

Bass Coast photo shoot

During late spring, DG organised a photo shoot to fill image library gaps on the Bass Coast. Areas photographed include Kilcunda, Corinella, Coronet Bay, The Gurdies and Kernot.

Australian Traveller cooperative marketing

Destination Gippsland partnered with Australian Traveller for their annual "Best of" campaign in 2024. The theme was 100 Aussie Wonders, with the partnership including a full-page colour ad, native digital content and digital amplification with display banners.

Influencer partnership marketing: @Helens Travels

We partnered with Influencer @Helens.travels and through a partnership with East Gippsland Shire Council to cover a road-trip from Marlo to Mallacoota in the last quarter of the financial year.

Sunrise breakfast TV live weather cross, East Gippsland

On Thursday 19th and Friday 20th June 2025 the Sunrise weather crew conducted weather crosses from Metung Hot Springs and Lakes Entrance foreshore. Led by Visit Victoria, and coordinated by Destination Gippsland, some of the weather cross locations include bathing in the barrels, lanterns from the East Gippsland winter festival and a reenactment of the winter solstice swim.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
 Local artist's watercolour painting of the Kernot Store, the historic building that has been converted into a cafe and gallery.

Waterfalls, Forest Trails & Fireside Nights: Noojee Calls

This pocket-sized mountain town in West Gippsland trades in cool air, wild beauty and warm welcomes – the perfect weekend outside-in city life.

DO
 Start with the Noojee Trestle Bridge. Built in 1913, this engineering marvel is one of the highest trestle bridges in the world in Victoria. Head across the gap over a forest canopy untouched by time.

Hike
 Explore the Noojee and Longford Falls Loop Walk, a scenic trail with two cascading waterfalls and a 1.5km return track. Where walking, water and bushy beauty meet the trestle bridge. Catch your breath at the Alpine Trout Farm, where you can look under stone or observe, housed and guided by rangers.

EAT
 For a taste of history, visit the Noojee Railway Station. Historic, selling treats on the town's timber and rail past.

DRINK
 Cyclists and walkers will love the Riddell to Noojee Rail Trail, winding through eucalyptus and river gums. Enjoy the sweeping views of the surrounding hills.

EAT
 For heavy post-hike, the Noojee Hotel serves generous plates on a sunny deck or by the fire. The Bushfire Blue Room & Gallery pairs creative charm with Gippsland produce-led dishes and a strong wine list.

STAY
 For a bushy retreat, the Noojee Hotel serves generous plates on a sunny deck or by the fire. The Bushfire Blue Room & Gallery pairs creative charm with Gippsland produce-led dishes and a strong wine list.

The Verdict
 Noojee is a place to breathe deep and immerse yourself in nature. With scenic views and trails, hike to your heart's content and use the day's magic for a relaxing dinner. West Gippsland magic. Noojee is a winner.
 To plan your stay in Gippsland, visit visitgippsland.com.au

EVENT MARKETING

We continue to support Gippsland's broad calendar of events through owned and earned marketing. Some of the highlight events of the last quarter were:

- Inverloch Jazz Festival
- The East Gippsland Winter Festival
- Loch Food and Wine Festival
- Mirboo North Winterfest
- SnowFest, Warragul
- Creative Harvest, West Gippsland
- The Gippsland Rare & Unusual Plant Fair
- The International Rose Garden Festival, Morwell
- Great East Rail Trail Ride
- Blue Gables Oktoberfest
- Fishy Stories, Fish Creek
- The Gippsland Beer Festival, Tinamba
- Open Studios, West Gippsland
- Thorpdale Potato Festival
- The Gippsland Garlic Festival, Korumburra
- The Inverloch Equinox
- Farm World
- Tinamba Food and Wine Festival
- Tarra Festival
- Korumburra Lights
- Great Southern Rail Trail Run
- Turner & Australia Exhibition, Gippsland Art Gallery





VISIT VICTORIA COOPERATIVE MARKETING

We undertook a cooperative campaign with Visit Victoria again in FY25. The FY25 campaign was a video content campaign which included two in-region visits to produce reels shared across both Visit Victoria and Destination Gippsland consumer social channels, with a combined following of 2.5 million.

Visit Victoria included The Beachcomber at Lakes Entrance in the International Mentoring Program (IMP) 2025. GLAWAC staff also participated as part of the Visit Victoria observer program. Visit Victoria also ran their annual Marketing Excellence Program in 2024 with Currajung Estate and Trulli selected to be part of the program.

Destination Gippsland provided their annual product update to Visit Victoria offices in Melbourne in October, where we presented new and refreshed product updates to the Visit Victoria team.

INDUSTRY MARKETING AND MARKETING DEVELOPMENT

Gippsland Marketing Toolkit

Destination Gippsland have continued to update the industry toolkit is to provide an outline of how to increase or improve industry digital capability and align with the brand and opportunities that are offered by Destination Gippsland. The marketing toolkit is housed on the industry website, destinationgippsland.com.au.

Marketing Opportunities Guide

We continued to deliver a Marketing cooperative guide, available for industry in Gippsland to cooperatively partner with Destination Gippsland on an ongoing basis. The opportunities guide is housed on the industry website, destinationgippsland.com.au.



INTERNATIONAL AND TRADE MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS

Destination Gippsland continues to work with the travel trade to promote Gippsland internationally as a visitor destination. We once again attended the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) in May to represent Gippsland. ATE took place in Brisbane and Gippsland hosted a media famil in 2025, one of the few regions in Victoria to do so.

Australian Tourism Exchange attendance

Over the course of the 4-day event, Destination Gippsland hosted 87 meetings on the booth with Product Managers, wholesale sales staff, media, retail Aussie Specialists, Tourism Australia and Visit Victoria staff from around the world. Other Gippsland businesses in attendance were Walhalla's Star Hotel, Metung Hot Springs and Wanderer Adventures (Wilsons Prom Cruises) as well as Parks Victoria and SMT.

Sydney to Melbourne Touring route

Gippsland continued to partner with Sydney to Melbourne Touring (SMT) route to provide international sales support and activity for Gippsland operators. The organisation acts as a sales and marketing function for internationally ready product to be represented with the world-wide travel trade.

During FY25, SMT represented Gippsland on a Visit Victoria mission across the UK and Europe, South-East Asia, and various events in Australia including the Australian Tourism Export Council (ATEC) events and at Destination Australia in Sydney and conducted live-stream training across the globe from key SMT locations.

Additionally, SMT represented the region at the Australian Tourism Exchange and hosted a post ATE visit to Gippsland as well as a G'Day Australia UK/Europe famil in October.

EVENTS GIPPSLAND

EVENTS GIPPSLAND, HAVING BEEN ESTABLISHED IN 2021 IS NOW INTO ITS FOURTH YEAR OF OPERATION. ITS ROLE IS TO ATTRACT A BALANCED CALENDAR OF EVENTS ACROSS THE REGION THAT GENERATES ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND LEGACY BENEFITS.

The Gippsland Regional Events Strategy 2020-2025 provides the blueprint to achieve these benefits. At the heart of the strategy is collaboration between all six Gippsland LGA's, working together with a single voice to compete on a national scale to bring events to our region. Phase 1 of the Strategy was the immediate response phase focused on short term response and recovery and attracted \$1m in grant funding, allowing the creation of an Events Acquisition Fund. To access the fund, LGA's must provide matched funding and can present events for consideration via a formal assessment panel. To date, 78 events have been secured in Phase 1 of the project. Of these, 61 events have been held and 17 are scheduled to be held through to 2030.

Projected outcomes:

- 232k additional visitors
- 276k bed nights generated
- \$57.6m economic benefit for Gippsland
- ROI of 72:1

Supporting projects:

- Business Events Victoria – We continued to work with Business Events Victoria (BEV) to deliver information to Melbourne-based meeting planners about event venues and locations across Gippsland.
 - In June, we attended the Business Events Victoria marquee event for promoting regional Victoria, the Regional Showcase in Melbourne. The event attracted over 100 meeting planners keen to hear updates from product in regional Victoria.
 - The new Events venues Gippsland website launched last year.

Residing alongside businesseventsgippsland.com.au, this website, eventvenuesgippsland.com.au, aims to showcase the various venues across the region capable of holding business, sporting and arts & cultural events.

- Gippsland participated in the BEV Planners Guide for 2025.
- DG continues to represent Gippsland on the BEV Board.
- Manage the region wide agreement with Sports Marketing Australia means that the whole region has the opportunity to host high participation events. Working as a region, we've negotiated reduced costs to LGA's and a single point of contact means a more streamlined process for securing events.
- In 2024/25 FY, SMA was involved in securing 18 events across the region. There were a further 11 events declined. 40 events are already secured and contracted to take place from 1st July 2025 onwards and a further 11 currently under consideration.
- Regional Events Fund – DG continues to support event organisers and hosts to secure grant funding to deliver, grow and develop their events across region.
 - This year some 18 letters of support, alongside advice and assistance were provided to support funding applications to the REF.
 - Of these, 12 were successful and a total of more than \$1m in funding secured.



Event Snapshot – Victorian Bowls Open 2023-2027

- A unique 5-year agreement where Events Gippsland, Latrobe City Council, Traralgon Bowls Club and Morwell Bowls Club, co-funded the acquisition of the second largest bowls event in Australia, the Victorian Bowls Open.
- 4000 attendees over 8 days of competition
- 16 Bowls Clubs from Stratford to Drouin involved in delivering the event, meaning the benefits extend well beyond the hosting LGA's boundaries.
- 9,586 Bed Nights in 2025
- 4.3m Economic Benefit in 2025

Advocacy for funding Phase 2 and 3 of the Gippsland Regional Events Strategy is ongoing. With the first raft of funding fully committed, Events Gippsland is supporting LGA's to attract events but is currently unable to co-fund events. With such amazing outcomes for the region, we will continue to seek additional funding and grow the events acquisition fund.





HELPING BUSINESSES GROW

DURING 2024/25:

Industry Training

Gippsland Tourism Forums: Destination Gippsland hosted two tourism forums over the course of 2024/5 at Cape Paterson in Bass Coast and Warragul in Baw Baw Shire. The forums were an opportunity for over 150 Gippsland operators to network and learn from guest speakers on a range of topics and participate in facilitated discussions.

We delivered an **Industry Training Program** for 2024/2025 that included opportunities and content to improve: Customer Service, Digital capability & capacity, Cultural Awareness, Accessibility, and Sustainability.

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW): ATDW is the main entry point for industry to participate in tourism marketing in Victoria and Gippsland. Destination Gippsland continues to provide education, guidance, and training to engage over 350 operators in listing both their businesses and events on this online platform which feeds into our consumer site, visitgippsland.com.au.



Projects

Ken Hore Tourism Mentoring Program: The KHTMP is a collaboration between Destination Gippsland, Destination Phillip Island and Bass Coast Shire Council. The program is designed to provide annual career development opportunities to young tourism professionals or new entrants in the Gippsland and Phillip Island Tourism Industry. The program is open across Gippsland and celebrated its 10th anniversary with a fantastic alumni function in Korumburra in November 2024. 65 participants have graduated from the program with many achieving career growth since completing their mentoring year. The success of the program has led to an application to the 2025 Victoria Tourism Awards in the Training and Education category.

Tourism Planning: The overarching tourism strategy guiding all of this work is the Gippsland Destination Management Plan Towards 2030. All the above examples were recommended actions in the GDMP. To date 80% of the actions have been completed with the remaining 20% the focus for DG and our partners in the immediate future.

Victorian Tourism Awards: We are always excited for our Gippsland operators to enter the Victorian Tourism Awards and celebrate their successes. Congratulations to the 2024 entrants who worked tirelessly in their businesses and whose submissions were rewarded and recognised at the state awards ceremony. The entrants from across the mainland Gippsland region who were named as finalists were:

Boat Harbour Jetty B&B:

Gold – Hosted Accommodation

Harman Wines:

Gold – Tourism Wineries, Distilleries & Breweries

Beachcomber Holiday Units

Gold – Self-contained Accommodation

Gippsland Wine Company:

Silver - Tourism Wineries, Distilleries & Breweries

Bass Coast Shire Council:

Bronze – Visitor Information Services

Finalist – Local Government Award for Tourism

Tallawarra Homestead:

Finalist – Hosted Accommodation

Communication

Destination Gippsland's Industry Communications Plan has focused on providing comprehensive support through various channels including monthly newsletters, regular social media engagement and website updates (www.destinationgippsland.com.au). These channels allow us to effectively engage with the Gippsland tourism industry.

Throughout the year Destination Gippsland engaged with 1132 businesses via marketing activities, web listings, newsletter opens or social media responses. In our Annual Survey 80% of stakeholders responded saying Destination Gippsland's performance was good or very good.



VISITOR EXPERIENCES

TO IMPROVE VISITOR EXPERIENCES DESTINATION GIPPSLAND FOCUSES ON TWO KEY AREAS: CO-ORDINATED TOURISM PLANNING AND INVESTMENT IN NEW VISITOR INFRASTRUCTURE.

Investment and infrastructure

New and improved experiences and tourism product are the key to long term competitiveness as a destination. Destination Gippsland was pleased to support five projects that were successful this year in the State Government's Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund: RACV Resort Inverloch, Wilsons Prom Motel Foster, East Gippsland Rail Trail, Marlo Caravan Park/Snowy River boat charters, and the Paradise Valley Campground who will all benefit in coming years from this investment. Other businesses to develop their visitor experience include the Metung Hot Springs who are progressing with Stage 2 of operations; the new Sailors Grave Brewing and Malting facility (Dunetown Brewing) that opened near Marlo in September, and Wanderer Adventures who continue to develop new boat tours at Wilsons Prom.

The Dark Skies Stargazing Project is a prime example of this that created a visitor experience by providing interpretation and viewing assets in 11 locations in East Gippsland and Wellington. With funding support from Regional Development Victoria, the collaboration between Destination Gippsland, Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation, Parks Victoria and many communities is encouraging overnight stays through storytelling and interpretation of the night sky. For more information go to www.stargaziggippsland.com.au

The focus on new tracks and trails continued with the opening of stage 1 of the Omeo Mountain Bike Park and the high use of the new sections of the Great Southern Rail Trail. Future investment in tourism assets was supported with progress for the three projects receiving financial support for planning and business case development from the State's Enabling Tourism Fund (Wandilla Estate South Gippsland, Omeo Historic Precinct, and the Walhalla Goldfields Railway). Previously supported projects also progressing are the Nanjet Cultural Precinct at Yanakie and the Kongwak Butter Factory completing considerable planning, design and scoping works for the site.

We continue to advocate for funding for our major project priorities that are the Nanjet Cultural Project at Yanakie, Bass Coast Dinosaur Trail, Gippsland Odyssey Trail and the Gippsland Lakes Aquatic Trail.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

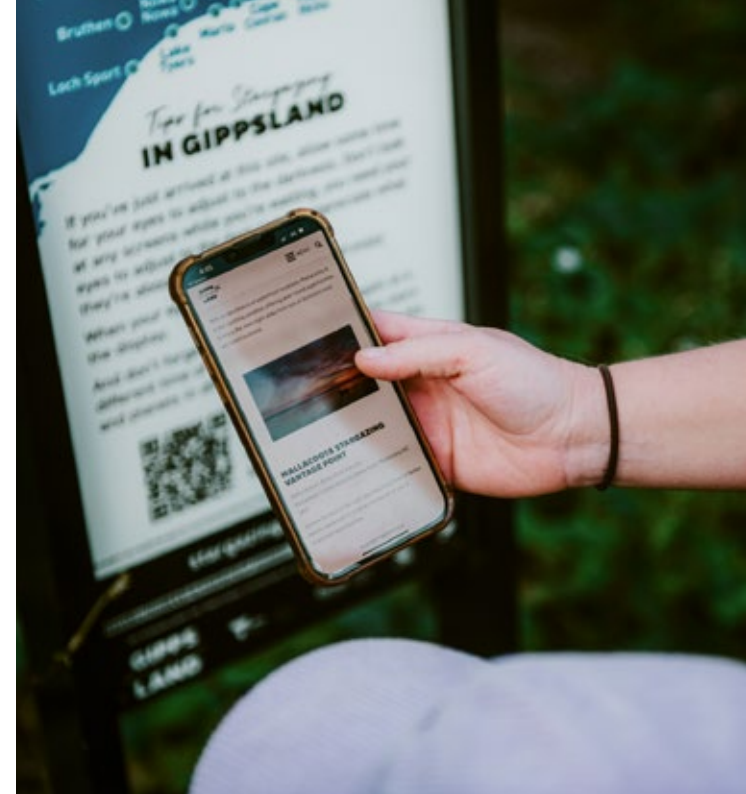
WE WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR FINANCIAL MEMBERS AND MARKETING AND PROJECT PARTNERS AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT.

Thankyou to our financial members:

- Bass Coast Shire Council
- Baw Baw Shire Council
- East Gippsland Shire Council
- Latrobe City Council
- South Gippsland Shire Council
- Wellington Shire Council

We also acknowledge and thank our marketing and major project partners who have contributed this year:

- Bunurong Land Council
- Business Events Victoria
- Committee for Wellington/Central Gippsland Regional Tourism
- Department Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions
- Department of Energy, Environment, and Climate Action
- Destination Phillip Island
- East Gippsland Marketing Inc
- Food and Fibre Gippsland
- Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale
- Gippsland Regional Partnership
- Gunaikurnai Land and Water Corporation
- Inverloch Tourism Association
- Lardner Park
- Latrobe City Business Tourism Association
- Metung Hot Springs
- One Gippsland
- Parks Victoria
- Regional Development Victoria
- Sydney Melbourne Touring Inc
- Tourism Australia
- Victoria Tourism Industry Council
- Visit Victoria
- Wanderer Adventures
- Wine Gippsland



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