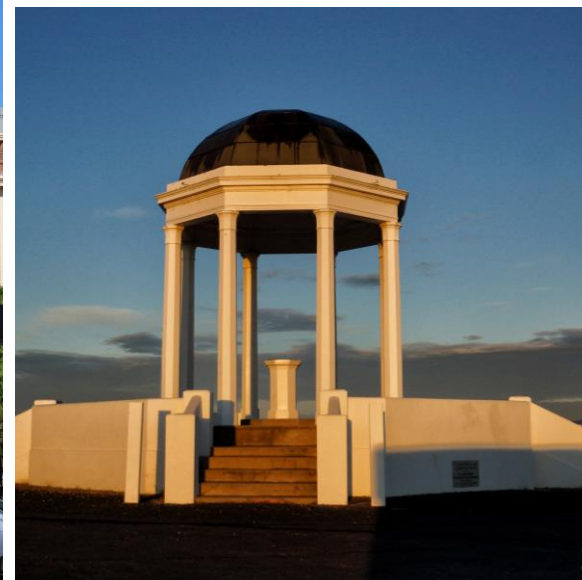


STAWELL TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2022-32

July 2022



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Report prepared by DTM Tourism, reviewed by Northern Grampians Shire Council and adopted following public exhibition, comment and subsequent review.

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Disclaimer

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Northern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk Nations, the Traditional Owners of the lands we discuss in this report. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to Aboriginal elders of other communities.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following organisations, volunteers and participants who contributed their time and valued opinions to forming this Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for the community of STAWELL.

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Grampians Tourism
Stawell Gift Hall of Fame
Grampians Model Railway
Stawell Tourism Operators
Stawell Retail Merchants
Survey respondents and Community Workshop Participants
Northern Grampians Shire Council Staff

Images provided by Northern Grampians Shire Council

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT THE PROJECT

STAWELL is a township of approximately 6,500 people, located in Victoria's Wimmera – Southern Mallee region and administered by the Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC). Originally settled in the mid 1850's during Victoria's Goldrush, the town has a deep connection with heritage and is one of the few towns with an active and prosperous gold mine. STAWELL is famed for the Stawell Gift a professional running race founded in 1857. Together with being surrounded by fertile farming land the town has a strong economic foundation.

In the past five years, the Wimmera region has attracted a new visitor segment as a result of the Silo Art Trail. Likewise, the Grampians Ranges have gained traction in the marketplace and the opportunity now exists for STAWELL to reimagine its destination positioning to consolidate current experiences and identify new opportunities for development, guiding sustainability into the future. The profile of visitors motivated to come to the region for soft-adventure, nature-based experiences, events, heritage and wine tourism all provide opportunities to develop and grow the tourism economy and community.

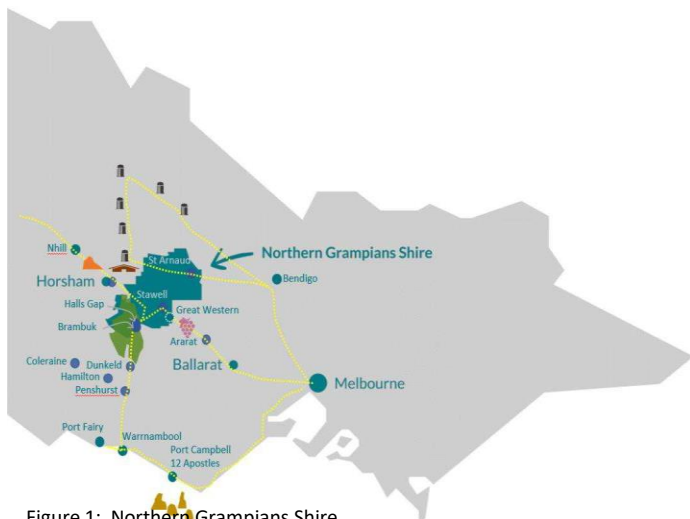


Figure 1: Northern Grampians Shire

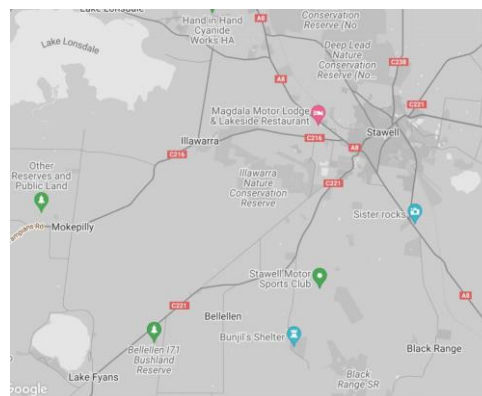


Figure 2: STAWELL Assessment Area

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The STAWELL Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (STAP) is required to set out the vision and aspirations for the visitor economy of STAWELL and surrounds over the next ten years. Through our involvement with Grampians Tourism, we have a very clear sense of the opportunity for STAWELL to position itself as a gateway to the Grampians National Park as a result of the duplication upgrades to the Western Highway and the natural break in journey that will occur for visitors originating in Melbourne. However, equally, we understand that for visitors to consider turning off the highway to visit STAWELL, a clear point of difference in visitor experience needs to be established which establishes a competitive advantage in the region.

The NGSC objectives for this project are:

- To diversify Northern Grampians visitor offering to reduce impact of National Park closures following fire events
- To establish a shared vision of STAWELL and surrounds visitor economy and enable the coordinated delivery of key actions
- To increase the competitiveness of STAWELL as a visitor destination and enable strong promotion by leveraging off existing opportunities
- To grow jobs and visitor spend in Northern Grampians
- To unlock and facilitate opportunities for private sector investment in the tourism offering

THE PROCESS



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The development of a ten-year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan will provide a road map to guide NGSC and the STAWELL community in valuing its visitor economy as the community transitions to consider tourism as an economic driver. The plan is underpinned by a reimagined approach to enabling engagement with STAWELL's heritage, whilst establishing foundations for the emergence of creative enterprises.

Throughout the process of assessing the tourism opportunity for STAWELL and surrounding communities, project consultants DTM Tourism, have maintained a clear focus to identifying projects which will be ACHIEVABLE and AFFORDABLE tourism priorities over the next 10 years.

In this context, it has been determined that establishing a clearly defined visitor-focused plan for STAWELL will provide the best opportunity for flow-on visitor dispersal in surrounding communities. Recommendations made in this STAP strategically align to three **priority focus areas identified in the STAWELL Structure Plan 2021** being:



PLACE

- Preservation of key characteristics and features that should be preserved
- Continued growth in the pride that the town projects
- Fostering opportunities for the creative community



ECONOMY

- Broadening the economic base and variety of industry by the development of the gateway to the Grampians and an investment in tourism assets



ENVIRONMENT

- A network of parks and lakes that benefit the local population and are a drawcard to visitors

'Stawell benefits from key regional tourism strengths forming part of the gateway to the Grampians and the well-renowned yearly Stawell Gift. It also attracts significant visitor numbers from passing traffic on route between Melbourne and Adelaide.' (Hansen Partnership, Stawell Structure Plan, 2021)

Specifically, the recommendations of the STAP, align to the direction identified in the **Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy objectives**.

2. SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH

- a. Iconic Destinations
 - i. Ensure our visitor economy offers diverse, unique, high quality and enriching experiences and dispersal across the Northern Grampians
 - ii. Protect, enhance and celebrate our natural and heritage assets

In addition, the development of visitor experiences have been considered to meet the demands of visitors to the wider Grampians region. **'Lifestyle Leaders' are the priority visitor segment for Grampians Tourism**, accounting for 29% of Australia's population. Importantly, this group buy into regional short breaks, with a focus on nature, food and wine, providing an opportunity to:

- ✓ Position STAWELL within the consideration set of this priority audience segment
- ✓ Build a sense of intrigue around STAWELL's authentic visitor experience and capitalise on STAWELL's competitive advantage
- ✓ Leverage region-wide strategic focus, including Grampians Cycle Tourism, Wine and Culinary tourism in the Grampians, Arts and Events
- ✓ Positively influence current perceptions of the visitor experience in STAWELL
- ✓ Build awareness of STAWELL through quality communication and the development of a unique tourism brand

It is recommended that outcomes of the STAP be captured through the measurement of key performance indicators and reported to Council and community in annual reports. An annual review will ensure the STAP is up-to-date and relevant with the changing environment in the shire, broader region and the tourism industry.

A FUTURE-FOCUSED TOURISM VISION



By 2032, STAWELL's natural and built history will provide a base to capture the imagination of visitors and the local population. STAWELL's community of proud residents and businesses showcase the assets of the town.

It will draw a new visitor base by showcasing the history, nature-based opportunities and events that capture the imagination.

In addition, STAWELL's visitor economy will capitalise on its unique position as a tourism hub, acting as a strategic point of access to surrounding attractions.

Visitors will be attracted to STAWELL through inspiring imagery, intriguing stories and new visitor experiences.

Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan

on a page



TOURISM SNAPSHOT



VISITOR SUMMARY

VISITOR NUMBERS

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) is the federal government authority which collates tourism statistics as a division of Austrade. The last LGA profile report for the Northern Grampians was produced in 2019 and is an unreliable indicator of visitor numbers for STAWELL specifically. Most accommodation operators in STAWELL are not sizeable enough for room nights to be captured under Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reporting. However, a product audit of STAWELL's accommodation operators around 23 establishments indicates capacity for approx. 600 visitors per night – 219,000 overnight visitors per year. Anecdotally, the motel and caravan park owners indicate a high level of business traffic during the week. The gap is at the weekend other than during event times.

STAWELL VISITOR CENTRE

The STAWELL Visitor Centre is currently only open two days a week on Thursdays and Fridays and whilst it is currently managed by Grampians Tourism (GT) under contract to the NGSC, the council will take back visitor servicing in August 2022.

From August, NGSC will co-locate visitor information within the council library service which is staffed six days a week. At the time of writing Council is exploring the viability of retaining the Visitor Centre on the Western Highway through volunteers and a nominated trial period.

The most successful visitor centres exist where they are co-located with a major attraction and are intrinsically connected to their LGA or RTB to support destination marketing.

Best practice guidance supports the optimal location of the Visitor Centre is a location of higher profile that draws visitors off the highway and into the town. This location then assists in capturing the economic flow on benefits of visitation.

As the STAWELL tourism offering matures and grows its visitor experience along with visitor numbers, Council should continue to monitor and review how, where and through what means visitor information is provided.

GRAMPIANS VISITOR STATISTICS

TRA statistics for the wider Grampians region indicates that although day trip and overnight visitors are down approximately 35% compared to pre Covid-19 arrivals in September 2019, the average length of stay has grown and domestic overnight spend is up by 16%, indicating that a new customer is finding the Grampians for a short break. This is an important consideration for the STAP as it demonstrates the opportunity to grow the value of tourism when visitors understand the destination, which encourages them to plan to stay overnight. Knowledge of STAWELL as a service and amenity hub to facilitate visitation to the greater region will stimulate growth and build on the improving destination footprint.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA PROFILES, 2019 NORTHERN GRAMPIANS (S), VIC

AREA POPULATION: 11,402



TOURISM BUSINESSES		DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	
	TOTAL	VISITORS	NIGHTS
Non-employing	59	Interstate 62K	189K
1-4	65	Intrastate 236K	530K
5-19	33		
20+	5		
Total	167		

TOP INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE	VISITORS	NIGHTS
United Kingdom	7K	18K
Germany	6K	14K
Netherlands	3K	6K



KEY TOURISM STATISTICS FOR NORTHERN GRAMPIANS (S)

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Visitors ('000)	40	298	252	591
Nights ('000)	118	718		836
Average nights	3	2		2
Expenditure (M)	\$9	\$98	\$21	\$128
Spend per trip	\$212	\$329	\$85	\$217
Spend per night	\$73	\$137		\$128
Spend per night comm accom	\$86	\$175		\$160

TOURISM STATISTICS INSIGHTS

Click themes to display data



Reason

Travel party

Age group

Accommodation

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Visitors				
Holiday	39K	211K	167K	416K
Visiting friends and relatives	np	55K	np	93K
Business	np	np	np	np
Other	np	np	np	np



Holiday Visiting friends and relatives Business Other

Data based on a four year average from 2016 to 2019.
'np' = Data is not publishable as the survey error is too high for most practical purposes.

Figure 3: NVS LGA Profile Northern Grampians

Source = <https://www.tra.gov.au/Regional/local-government-area-profiles>

VISITOR ECONOMY PROFILE

Growth in tourism has a significantly positive economic and social effect across a region like the Northern Grampians. Tourism supports industry and employment across a number of sectors from agriculture and manufacturing through to healthcare, retail, and education. Businesses gain from tourism spend, ultimately increasing economic returns, and subsequently resourcing community infrastructure and enterprises.

In the short term, the supply of tourism accommodation is sufficient to meet visitor demand. This is true by bed nights but the quality of the accommodation and the location along the Western Highway other than town centre detracts from the Tourism Experience in STAWELL. The intent of the STAWELL Structure Plan 2021 is to grow STAWELL as a regional hub and the main regional and economic service centre in the NGSC. Accordingly, tourism services will need to be improved to meet growth aspirations. Currently, tourism businesses in STAWELL show:



8 Motels



3 Caravan Parks



15+ AirBnB's



5 Pubs



20 Cafe/Dining

The main current gap in the tourism economy is the provision of food and beverage, this has been reported by all stakeholders as the most critical element missing from the tourism experience. Without an improvement of both quality and availability of F&B this will hold back the potential of tourism growth and the development of the night-time economy in STAWELL.



MAJOR STRENGTHS

ACCESS

STAWELL is positioned on the Western Highway and the duplication of the highway will position STAWELL as the first stop from Melbourne and the last stop before Adelaide. It is also located in the middle of the Grampians wine district and is surrounded by nature-based tourism attractions. It is the perfect place to access a multitude of tourism assets and position itself as a regional hub for both tourism and commerce being the closest commercial centre to the Grampians.

TOWN CENTRE ATTRACTIONS

The majority of the attractions in the town centre are related to the Gold Mining Era and the development of the town from the initial settlement of Pleasant Creek. They provide a backdrop of parks, gardens and heritage architecture that create a town centre of some significance and attraction.

- Central Park is historically and architecturally significant to the State of Victoria.
- Cato Park has something for everyone set in a beautiful recreation area.
- Big Hill Lookout for some of the best views of both the town and the Grampians Ranges.
- Stawell Courthouse is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES – ‘Only in STAWELL’ attractions can be drivers of visitation

- Stawell Gift Hall of Fame
- Amalgamated Miners Association Banner
- A working gold mine that is visible to the public
- Historic architecture with an animated clock depicting miners that appears on the hour
- Bunjil's Shelter, one of the most significant Aboriginal Cultural sites in South-East Australia
- Big Hill Lookout
- Stawell Underground Physics Laboratory



CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

There is significant tourism value in STAWELL that, when harnessed effectively, will have a positive impact for livability in the community and the visitor economy. To achieve tourism growth, priority attention is needed in four focus areas.



LEADERSHIP

- NGSC could encourage the development of leadership in the community across both commerce and tourism.
- The tourism community in STAWELL needs an endorsed tourism leadership role that does not exist now.
- A STAWELL-focused council-led development group to bring the town to life is needed. There is no truly active group in Stawell so this would need to be driven by NGSC.

DESTINATION AWARENESS

- Quality online content is difficult to find, leading to an undervaluing of the tourism experience in STAWELL and community group websites are not optimised for search.
- There is a need to tell STAWELL's stories more effectively online.
- Little information in any of the visitor touch points around the town.
- Establishing a Visit Stawell Website together with one for St Arnaud will be a gamechanger in information distribution.

ACCOMMODATION

- Accommodation is skewed towards one-night stays and is geared around commercial clients rather than leisure. This is reflected by both standard and style.
- The location of the accommodation away from the town centre is detrimental to growth opportunities.
- The food and beverage offering at the accommodation establishments is limited and does not contribute to the amenity.

AMENITIES and SERVICES

- Town Centre directions and signage both to and within the centre needs a complete revamp.
- Food and beverage at all times of the day is limited in availability and standard, this is a major hindrance in visitor attraction and limits the night-time economy.
- Town Centre activation with interpretive signage, marked walk trails and events such as markets are needed to breathe life into the town centre.

TOURISM MARKETING



MARKETING CONTEXT

DOMESTIC OUTLOOK

In 2020, domestic tourism in Australia was impacted by a seismic shift in demand as a result of a 'once in a 100 year' bushfire season and the Covid-19 global pandemic. Over \$10 Billion of travel spend was cancelled as borders closed to international travel and across domestic boundaries.

HOW COVID HAS RE-SHAPED THE DOMESTIC MARKET

Like most small regional towns around Australia, STAWELL is reliant on domestic visitors, mostly Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) holiday makers and regional travellers from within a relatively short proximity. Border restrictions and rising Covid-19 cases in all states of Australia has resulted in Melbourne consumers taking to short road trips and exploring regional areas that have not traditionally been in their consideration set. The caravan and camping market has seen significant growth in the last two years, particularly for active families. 'Lifestyle Leaders' who would have traditionally travelled overseas are now seeking equivalent quality experiences domestically.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR STAWELL?

As 'Lifestyle Leaders' are seeking new experiences closer to home, the opportunity for STAWELL is to take immediate action to create awareness for existing, quality experiences and rich storytelling. In a recent report released by Urban List, the challenge for domestic destinations like STAWELL, has been identified as being one of perception:

"We have a job to do to overcome our decades-old cultural cringe, to unpack a pretty deeply entrenched second-best psyche, and undo this preconceived notion that what's going on "over there" (ie. Internationally) is more culturally enriching and worthy of our most precious resources: money and time. We need to convince Australians that our destinations aren't just places — they are cultural experiences every bit as worthy of their investment; experiences that are at their very best in this moment — uncrowded, safe, restorative."

Urban Insights: Wanderlust or Wanderbust; Travel Marketing In Australia 2021

consumers, measuring confidence, attitudes to travel and booking intent. As at 25 January 2022, the outlook for Australians to travel domestically indicates:



in Victoria:



- The Omicron variant has had a significant impact on consumer confidence
- Fear of contracting COVID is now the biggest barrier to domestic travel and at a higher level than anytime since this sentiment tracking series commenced, however
- 53% of travel intenders cite the need for a holiday is the biggest driver to take a holiday. VFR remains the 2nd biggest driver of intent
- 34% of consumers are thinking about their next holiday
- 33% are cautious about travelling within Australia for a while
- 46% have an intention to travel domestically in the next two years
- 67% are considering to travel domestically in the next four years

Overall confidence in flying domestically has declined as a result of the Omicron variant. International travel intent within the next 1-2 years has trended down, with 31% of consumers now not sure/will not travel internationally.

In 2019 77% of the visitor spend in Australia was from the domestic market. This is unlikely to change soon. As a drive destination, **STAWELL has a primary opportunity to attract domestic travellers who are curious** to seek new destinations within the duration of this plan.

<https://www.tourism.australia.com/content/dam/digital/corporate/documents/tourism-australia-travel-sentiment-tracker-16-22-march-2022-domestic-31032022-v1.pdf>

THE CUSTOMERS WE WANT



OUR TARGET AUDIENCES; ARE ADVENTURERS @ HEART!

A renewed tourism direction for STAWELL will seek to make connections with target audiences across multiple demographics. They will have an appreciation of nature and wellness in the outdoors; a desire to seek out good food, heritage and artisan experiences. Within the 'Lifestyle Leaders' psychographic segment, STAWELL's primary demographic audiences are:

- Active Couples
- Active Families

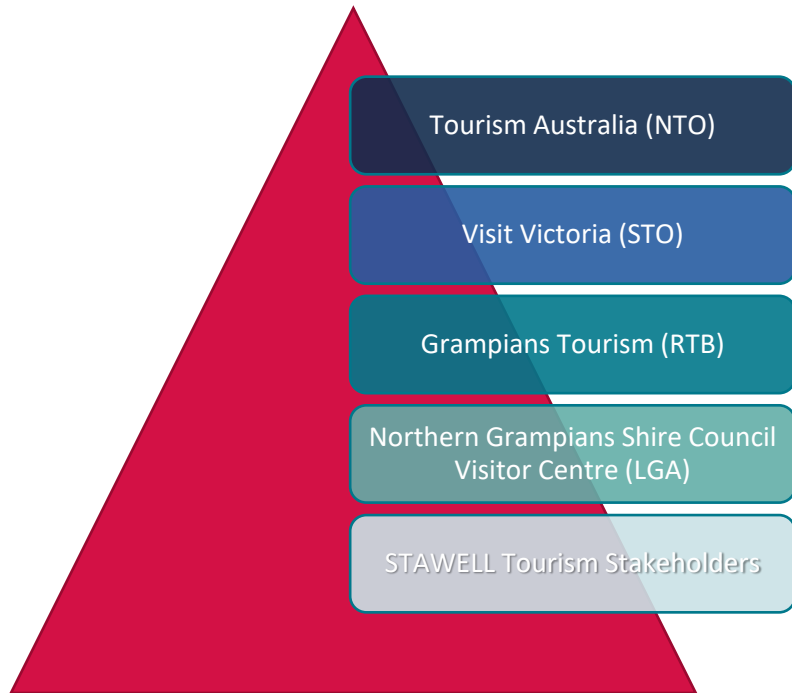
Aligned to visitor source markets for the wider Grampians region, visitors will primarily be regional from within a 2-3 hour drive. The target source market for STAWELL is Melbourne.

Grampians Tourism describe the mindset of 'Lifestyle Leaders' as:

"Lifestyle Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, across varying socio-economic groups and market segments. They have the means and propensity to travel and purchase at local businesses. They are progressive, curious, socially and technologically active, adhere to and seek status, follow trends and love to advocate. They are socially active with friends and family and are always looking for something better. They view experiences as life-enriching and value the great outdoors, adventure and feeling free."

MARKETING ALIGNMENT

Whilst Covid-19 is impacting tourism beyond any destination's control, the reality is that markets will rebound. Australia will be viewed as a 'safe' destination; a country of amazing natural wonders and unique attractions. Attracting sustainable visitor growth means that new markets will need to be explored. Accordingly, the STAP needs to consider how it aligns to the tourism messages that Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's) take to market.



TOURISM AUSTRALIA is the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) and a division of Austrade in the Australian Government. Their role is to influence travel to and within Australia through marketing inspiring content, targeted to High Value Travellers.

VISIT VICTORIA is the State Tourism Organisation (STO). When Australia is in a consideration set for international consumers, V V's role is to position Victoria as an exciting destination with plenty to do. They partner in market with travel agents to enable bookings.

GRAMPIANS TOURISM is the Regional Tourism Board (RTB) in which STAWELL resides. Primarily, GT's role is to partner with tourism operators and stakeholders to promote inspiring, region-wide itineraries; mostly for a domestic market. Their campaigns channel bookings directly to their members and they provide rich content to support V V's in-market promotions.

NGSC is the Local Government Authority (LGA) responsible for promoting tourism to STAWELL and six other LGA's.

Their role is to promote very localised experiences and demonstrate how a visitor can move through the region, aiming to increase length of stay. Their primary market is Melbourne and regional Victoria.

STAWELL's destination marketing role aims to share authentic storytelling and local knowledge with all DMO partners to raise awareness for STAWELL and to leverage their significant social audiences.

Quality destination marketing is the responsibility of every service business in STAWELL which can have a positive impact on visitors. The aim is to reach, inspire and assist visitors early in their planning, making it a seamless experience to choose to visit STAWELL.

EXPERIENCE THEMES



Stakeholder engagement and background work revealed four priority themes. The final themes will be used to guide tourism development and marketing for STAWELL over the life of this strategy.

Building STAWELL's story (brand) will involve further development of the priority themes.

The engagement section of the plan provides an overview of key engagement findings used to formulate the themes.

EXPERIENCE AGRITOURISM

We have abundant produce, wineries and farm-based enterprises that are wanting to shine.

EMBRACE NATURE

National Parks and lakes on our doorstep. We are a community that understands our nature-based assets.

CELEBRATE HERITAGE

We value our heritage and culture and are committed to preserving our built environment and our shared origins both Aboriginal and a multitude of nations from afar.

GOLD HISTORY and FUTURE

Our story is Golden. Our town thrives on gold and with our dark matter lab we will see well into the future.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The NGSC appointed external consultants DTM Tourism to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including the community to lay the foundation for to grow STAWELL's tourism economy.

The purpose of phase one of the engagement process was to gain insights on challenges, opportunities, priority needs, a vision for the future and key themes to guide the development of STAWELL's unique story (brand).

Phase one engagement activities included:

- 1 x STAWELL community workshop (30 people attended)
- 1 x Online community survey (53 responses)
- 14 x Stakeholder Interviews
- 2 x DTM Tourism Site visits to STAWELL tourism attractions
- 5 x Project Control Group (PCG) meetings

Appendix 1: What we heard, details the results of key engagement activities.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The STAWELL Tourism Action Plan (STAP) is designed to guide NGSC in the process of growing the visitor economy and achieving the vision for tourism in STAWELL over a 10-year period.

TOURISM ASSESSMENT MODEL

DTM has developed a model which recognises nine key components to drive growth in a tourism destination.

Ultimately, activity in each of the focus areas will provide the destination with the best opportunity to implement successful marketing campaigns, which are targeted, visitor centric and can be measured.

Inattention across a range of areas will have a direct impact on the growth of tourism in STAWELL i.e. without Compelling Experience enacted through a focus on Product Development, Destination Marketing is diluted through lack of destination appeal.

This model has been used to reconcile the data and community insights in the form of key strategic direction. This strategy has combined element two and nine into one strategic direction.

The following section outlines the eight strategic directions and provide the rationale for action, with the intent that over subsequent years, action plans will be reviewed, analysed and updated budgets applied.



1. FACILITATE STRONG LEADERSHIP

The inaugural STAP for 2022-32 is intended to guide destination development considerations for the NGSC. It is intended that this will be a living document where budgets, responsibilities and delivery are considered nimble, to respond to market changes. The actions in this stage are designed to establish a strategic overview for all further actionable tasks.

Implementing the NGSC's tourism strategic direction requires the establishment of **Local Leaders**, which is equally about resourcing clearly defined tourism roles within the NGSC as it is about identifying community leadership.

The most effective tourism outcomes in local government are achieved where council staff responsible for tourism are included in decision making across the LGA, to assess impact of council decisions on the visitor economy.

Facilitating economic development and tourism:

- Identifying capability gaps in community leadership to provide operational support
- Working with stakeholders to increase local employment, and support small business development, startups and innovation
- Supporting the development of tourism hubs

2. BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DEFINE OUR STORY?

Storytelling is the compelling experience that stays with visitors long after they have left a destination. It's also a driver of curiosity which encourages visitors to seek out a destination in the 'dreaming' and 'planning' phase of the purchase cycle. STAWELL has a rich story to tell, however, currently it's difficult for consumers to engage with online and not adequately told when a visitor finds themselves in town.

Storytelling is owned by the community at a granular level, where authentic content needs to be developed. Currently, the quality of content is a major gap for STAWELL's community and inadequate to share with DMOs. Establishing a program of support for STAWELL's tourism stakeholders and community groups to understand STAWELL's Destination Story, whilst providing guidance on how to engage with the narrative in their own communications, will create a critical mass of awareness for STAWELL's visitor experience promise.

HOW IS OUR STORY TOLD?

A brand is the collection of associations that people have about a product, business or place. Assumptions are made about people by the way they dress, the behavior they exhibit and their personalities. It is the same process which helps consumers to associate with place brands. A place brand helps determine how visitors feel about a destination, and how they would describe it to others. A brand is more than just a logo.

Your brand is uniquely yours and tells your story. It defines your competitive advantage and speaks your truth. Your brand should be consistent wherever customers interact with your destination. This includes its physical location and its online presence, including your website, social channels, signage and all printed marketing materials. Each point at which the customer engages with the brand is a 'touchpoint' where the brand and its promise are reinforced, and the visitor experience and value perception start to be built.

A consistent brand will help visitors recognise STAWELL and its visitor experience promise, no matter where they interact or connect with it.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR STAWELL?

With the transitional approach to economic diversification being a priority for STAWELL, tourism is now coming into sharp focus. Investment in tourism infrastructure and experience development is needed and the expectation of tourism outcomes will be high. However, simply building the infrastructure will not ensure visitors will engage with it. To position itself as a destination of choice, STAWELL now requires a clear and succinct place brand which it can uniquely own. A place brand for STAWELL is about the experience promise that STAWELL can take to market, which defines its competitive advantage.

The development of a place brand for STAWELL will include:

- A memorable tagline
- An inspiring positioning statement
- A compelling story

Stylistically, a place brand for STAWELL should be complimentary to the visitor experience but designed to appeal to the target audiences of the region developed through a robust process.

2. BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND (Continued)

BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND

SOCIAL MEDIA APPROACH

Social media channels are now a major part of the entire customer journey, delivering content at all stages from Dreaming through to Sharing. As the NGSC plans to take back Visitor Centre operations across the shire in 2022, inspired social media management is a core capability to effective visitor servicing operations and requires dedicated resources, coordination and a content plan.

To establish a tourism voice online for STAWELL, it is essential that the NGSC increases both the frequency (volume) and relevance (inspiration) of tourism-related social media content, moving to a coordinated and unified approach. Visual assets are needed as a priority, depicting target audiences engaging with STAWELL's tourism experience.

Establishing memorable #hashtags and @handles for use by all tourism associations and operators in STAWELL, will build the point of difference that STAWELL needs as a unique destination with the known Grampians region. Once established, this can be amplified through planning and leveraging digital marketing budgets.

IMPROVE WEBSITE AND BOOKING CAPABILITY

STAWELL like St Arnaud does not have a digital presence that has the ability to drive tourism. Online bookings at accommodation properties are in place, but the quality of information loaded into portals is relatively limited. Most are not adequately connected with major distribution partners. The information on the Destination Marketing body websites such as Visit Victoria and Grampians Tourism is minimal and not inspiring.

When searching STAWELL online no accommodation properties generate a first page search return on Google. The first attractions that appear are the Stawell Gift and the Historical Society. A look at attractions in TripAdvisor shows little engagement with the town.

At a minimum, tourism information is needed on the NGSC site. Quality information and storytelling will achieve positive impact in attracting residents and investment. It is not sufficient to include a link to Grampians Tourism as a sole source of information. Linking to GT should be a component of a link strategy that adds value to a visitor experience online.

The shire of Murray in Western Australia is an example that has two towns in the shire that has developed a clear digital presence to reflect the tourism assets and to drive visitation.

[Visit Dwellingup - Where Trails Meet - Dwellingup - Destination Murray](#)
[Pinjarra - Accommodation and Things To Do - Destination Murray](#)

The two sites are managed by the council but are tourism focused. Last year Dwellingup won the "Top Small Tourism Town" in Western Australia.

MOBILE FRIENDLY

Over 70% of travellers have done travel research on their mobile. It is essential that all visitor servicing touch points and information are mobile friendly and functionable. Creating visitor servicing content that includes itineraries, trip planners, booking functionality and location activated prompts ensures a seamless experience for a visitor. Mobile devices also hold a range of intelligence that will enable a deeper understanding of customer flow and their customer profile and track engagement and spend. Accessing this data can provide the quantified information that the NGSC requires for planning.

MANAGING CUSTOMER DATA

Customer data is a key region asset, which needs investment across the NGSC. Being able to continue conversations and build relationships with customers, beyond a single 'transaction', is the key to success. By capturing customer data and insights, then sharing these back with industry bodies and operators to use, new opportunities can be revealed and leveraged to increase repeat visitation, drive experience development and become more efficient in region marketing.

3. DEVELOP COMMUNITY BUY-IN

The success of the STAP relies on the local tourism community and residents alike to understand that tourism is an economic driver that will either directly or indirectly affect their prosperity. The message needs to be relatable for residents. Ultimately, visitors want to experience a destination 'like a local'. We want all STAWELL residents to value their town and welcome visitors with open arms.

The STAP should therefore align with the NGSC's Tourism Marketing and Communications Plan which promotes local advocacy. This is the opportunity for NGSC to work closely with local leaders, the Stawell Historical Society and the Stawell Visitor Centre to drive the value of tourism through the community.

Advocacy needs to be co-ordinated through the Tourism Officer role at NGSC and communicated through all channels including:

- NGSC website
- Local Group Social Media Pages
- E-newsletters
- Dedicated tourism websites

AMBASSADORS and VOLUNTEERS

Reliance on volunteers in STAWELL is challenging due to the availability of time for volunteers still in the workforce and the ageing population of STAWELL. However, visitors rate the social engagement with roving ambassadors and volunteers as making a valuable contribution to their enjoyment of a destination.

Though STAWELL may be a community that is proud of its history and achievements, this is not reflected throughout the community. There seems to be more division than collaboration. The role of the STAP is to harness the knowledge of the community, enable positive ways for the community to share their stories and establish a process of recognition for the vital role that ambassadors and volunteers contribute to a vibrant community.

The first step in building strong advocates for STAWELL is to establish a network of ambassadors, who positively share STAWELL's tourism value. Their involvement in engaging with visitors may be ad hoc, but they are recognised for their influence in growing STAWELL's visitor experience. Valuing ambassadors leads to volunteering and commitment of time, which contributes to community wellbeing and positive visitor engagement.

4. PROVIDE QUALITY AMENITIES and SERVICES

The tourism supply eco-system for STAWELL is aged and in need of revitalisation to meet the needs of visitors travelling through the region currently and to pre-empt the needs of an emerging visitor, motivated by the Silo Art Trail and the Pyrenees Wine Region. The priority in the first year, is to attend to WAYFINDING and interpretive signage. This is the low-hanging fruit opportunity to improve the visitor experience in the short term.

5. DEVELOP COMPELLING EXPERIENCES

The community feedback has highlighted the lack of attractions in STAWELL to hold the attention of the visitor. It has been identified that the provision of attractions would add to both the liveability of the town as well as stimulating the growth of visitor numbers.

Whilst most of the focus is around the town centre there is also an opportunity to connect STAWELL to Pomonal through Bunjil's Shelter which also highlights the Aboriginal history of STAWELL and surrounds.

Big Hill was the most mentioned asset in the community survey, and it is reported by Grampians Tourism that the experience is the highlight of a trip to STAWELL. A number of the community members have called for a Gold Interpretive Centre/Museum to be built at Big Hill but we don't feel this to be the most practical suggestion from a visitor perspective there is for the opportunity to enhance the current offering.

The opportunity also exists through the delivery of a farmers' market to breathe life into the town centre on the weekends.

A farmers' market would highlight the produce of the region and showcase the town centre of STAWELL. The opportunity lies to do this in main street on a regular Sunday.

The provision of the market would draw in regional visitors and has the potential to drive visitation from those returning to Melbourne from the Grampians Region.

6. CAPABLE TOURISM OPERATORS

Tourism stakeholders in STAWELL are relatively misrepresented on major platforms. This may be due to a lack of information available to them on consumer behaviour, general marketing skills, and education to establish partnerships in the wider industry.

Most accommodation suppliers have online booking systems that allow them to be instantly bookable. However, they are not connected to major Online Travel Agents. The compounding risk for STAWELL as a destination is that it is perceived that there is nothing to do.

There are also no tour operators in STAWELL that compounds the problem of a perception that there is nothing to do.

The top five STAWELL experiences (all passive) on Tripadvisor are:

1. Central Park
2. Cato Park
3. Sister Rocks
4. Stawell Uniting Church
5. Stawell Gold Mine

HOW TO BUILD CAPABILITY AND INCREASE DISTRIBUTION

Capability Building is about taking a tailored approach to tourism industry training to guide businesses to develop refreshed visitor experiences, aligned to the STAP.

The most effective way to build capability is to undertake one-on-one business mentoring to enhance tourism operations and marketing skills that will establish strong foundations to encourage entrepreneurship and grow reach through new partnerships in the wider tourism sector.

Key objectives of Capability Building are:

- support new and established businesses in product and service development, trade market-readiness, and business diversification and expansion
- develop the skills and expertise of tourism operators to enhance business productivity
- encourage and support business collaboration
- prepare businesses to aim for 'best in class' quality assurance to achieve tourism accreditation

WHY DOES STAWELL NEED IT?

Demonstrating that there is plenty to do through distributing purchasable product online, directly increases visitor volume, creates jobs, increases regional gross product and drives economic transformation by encouraging visitors to stay longer and do more.

7. VISITOR SERVICING

A foundation of visitor servicing is to be where customers are. This requires the development of new customer engagement points at key nodes throughout the NGSC region. Visitors don't see boundaries in the way that residents or local governments do.

A common misconception is that visitors disengage with traditional visitor servicing in preference to seeking visitor information online. The reality is that visitors require quality visitor servicing both online, in-centre or collocated in businesses or existing council services. Engaging with authentic locals is a priority need for visitors in new destinations. They seek reinforcement to confirm their online planning from a trusted source. Visitor Centres equally play an important role in welcoming potential new residents to a community.

As NGSC will resume operations of the Stawell Visitor Centre in 2022, visitor information will need to consider where social posts link back to content on the current NGSC website and that of Grampians Tourism.

Quality visitor information allows visitors to plan to stay longer, making a direct and positive impact to STAWELL's visitor economy.

STAWELL's visitor experiences have a low digital footprint, leading to a perception that there is nothing to do. A quick, simple and effective solution is to create listings for STAWELL visitor attractions and locations on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). This is a content aggregator platform that shares content to state and national tourism partners.

<https://atdw.com.au/distributors/current-distributors/>

8. EVENTS

COVID-19 has impacted the ability for regional events to operate since 2020, however, as protocols for event management in respect of Covid are now well defined, preparation for the reintroduction of events, which have the potential to drive visitation, should be considered as part of STAWELL's marketing strategy.

Events serve the purpose of showcasing a destination experience and spiking visitation at a given moment in time, but with the intent to encourage repeat visitation. Development of tourism events needs to align with destination experience themes. Timing should be considered to encourage visitation where accommodation capacity is achievable and/or to leverage awareness of events in neighbouring areas.

Whilst the Stawell Gift is the major drawcard to the region it seems to have a constant audience rather than an ever-growing range of visitors. This is compounded by other events held at Easter that have no potential of drawing visitation due to the lack of accommodation.

A strategy to develop a constant event cycle which looks at both business and leisure-based events would generate visitation across the year.

A focus on business events based around gold and agriculture together with nature-based conference themes would elevate the regional status of the town.

GAME CHANGER OPPORTUNITIES



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR ASSETS

Creating a vision for tourism development in STAWELL resides in the need to find a solution to encourage regular visitors passing through STAWELL to stop, stay and spend, rather than pass through. In a future-focused plan, there is a need to consider and understand the needs of emerging markets that demand fresh and contemporary visitor experiences. GAME CHANGERS are considered as long-term visionary projects that not only reflect the aspirations of the community but are assessed as having merit to enable destination development.

Four priority projects have been identified as GAME CHANGERS, that if developed, will create a momentum that will benefit the local community as a priority and appeal to visitors.

1. **WESTERN HIGHWAY ENTRANCE**
2. **WALK CYCLE TRAIL HERITAGE PRECINCT**
3. **BIG HILL DEVELOPMENT**
4. **TOURISM WEBSITES**



HIGHWAY ENTRANCE to the TOWN CENTRE

MAJOR TOWN CONNECTION

Our town is hidden by the highway, we need to show off our assets.

DESCRIPTION

To create a defined entrance to town at the junction of the Western Highway and Seaby Street which directs and motivates visitors into the town centre. This has been identified in the Western Highway Urban Design Framework and the Stawell Structure Plan as the most attractive and practical entrance to STAWELL.

It will create a defined entrance that demonstrates that the historic town centre has appeal and worth. It will clearly point out that the Western Highway transit zone is not STAWELL which is what the majority of drivers must be thinking.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Visitors can't easily find STAWELL's attractions
- Too easy to bypass, too easy to miss the main street
- Not enough directional signage pointing tourists to the CBD

PROJECT PRIORITY - HIGH

With the Western Highway duplication well under way, STAWELL will be in the position of being the first town from Melbourne for those heading West. This may seem to satisfy an opportunity for drivers to pause but the reality is that the main road is some 2kms from the STAWELL Town Centre. This is compounded by signage at Sisters Rock directing traffic on the alternative route.

The Seaby Street entrance should be the main entrance to town with all appropriate directional and historic signage to appeal to visitors to make a conscious decision to stop and take some time. On the Hume Highway in NSW many towns that have been recently bypassed are seeing tourism visitation and spend increasing with visitors enticed off the highway.

NGSC working with Main Roads needs to pursue the option of traffic lights and turning lanes at the Seaby Street intersection together with appropriate signage at the junction and at the edge of town to drive visitation into the town centre. This needs to be supported by signage at the main street junction that clearly defines the historic town centre.

Key Implications

- Seaby Street is the most significant intersection along the Highway providing direct access into the town centre.
- There is limited signage or demarcation of key routes into the town centre except for at Seaby Street.
- Noting the stone wall signs at the northern and southern highway entrances, there are limited gateway signs into Stawell.
- While it is expected that a highway environment would be vehicle oriented - there is limited infrastructure dedicated to safe pedestrian and cyclist movement.
- The provision of services roads or side streets are important in providing access options to property fronts that do not compete with highway traffic.
- The carriageway varies in width along the highway, occupying only 8m of the 30m wide road reserve in its narrowest segments.

Source: Stawell Western Highway Urban Design Framework April 2021

WALK CYCLE TRAIL TO HIGHLIGHT HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS

CELEBRATE HERITAGE

We value our heritage and culture and are committed to preserving our built environment and our shared origins both Aboriginal and a multitude of nations from afar.

DESCRIPTION

The town centre with the adjacent Central Park, Cato Park and the Railway Station are all areas of tourism significance that are not exposed to the visiting public in an engaging way.

This is the heart of STAWELL and is needed to be highlighted to demonstrate the rationale of spending time in STAWELL. The route is a celebration of the European History of STAWELL and is attached to numerous linger points.

The walk and cycle trails could extend from Central Park to Big Hill and even go via the Library to tap into the new VIC location.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

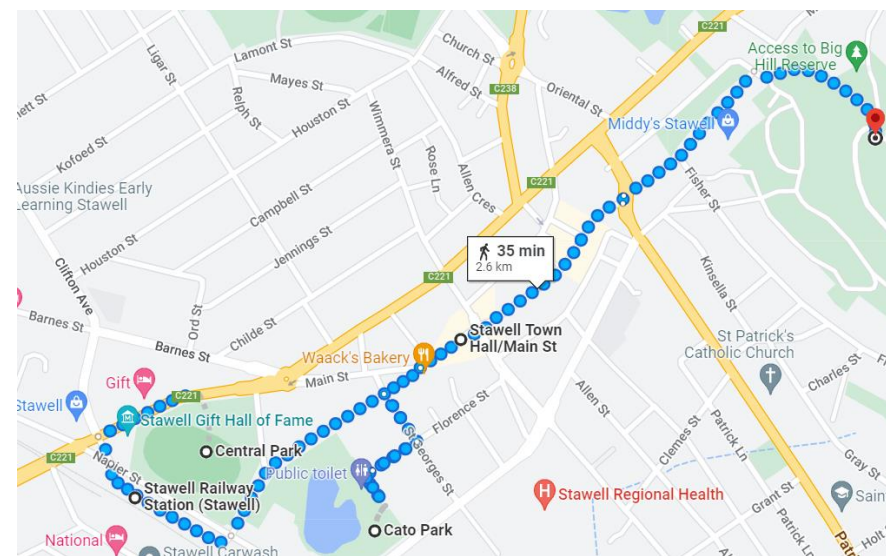
- Self-guided walk cycle trail needed
- Incorporate historical buildings and our gold history
- Story telling interpretive signage is needed throughout the town and adjacent to heritage buildings

PROJECT PRIORITY - HIGH

This project is a continuation of the highway entrance into STAWELL but needs to be delivered before to take advantage of the current traffic into the Town Centre.

NGSC in collaboration with the Stawell Historical Society and the Stawell Gift Hall of Fame needs to identify the appropriate way points along the route, ensure suitable interpretive and directional signage is in place and engage the community in the development of the route.

Once the route is established and signage is in place then a suitable route guide needs to be developed. The route guide would be available at a variety of touch points including accommodation operators.



BIG HILL DEVELOPMENT

GOLD HISTORY and FUTURE

We are built on gold and
want to showcase our
history and future.

DESCRIPTION

The Big Hill Lookout is one of the iconic features of STAWELL and needs an opportunity to shine. Located next to the gold mine it is an integral part of STAWELL's history and future.

It also showcases the abundance of nature surrounding STAWELL.

Development of the area with defined walk and cycle trails, amenities for visitors at the top with appropriate signage including interpretive signage at the Fire Lookout will hold the visitors longer. As will the provision of picnic facilities for day and nighttime use.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

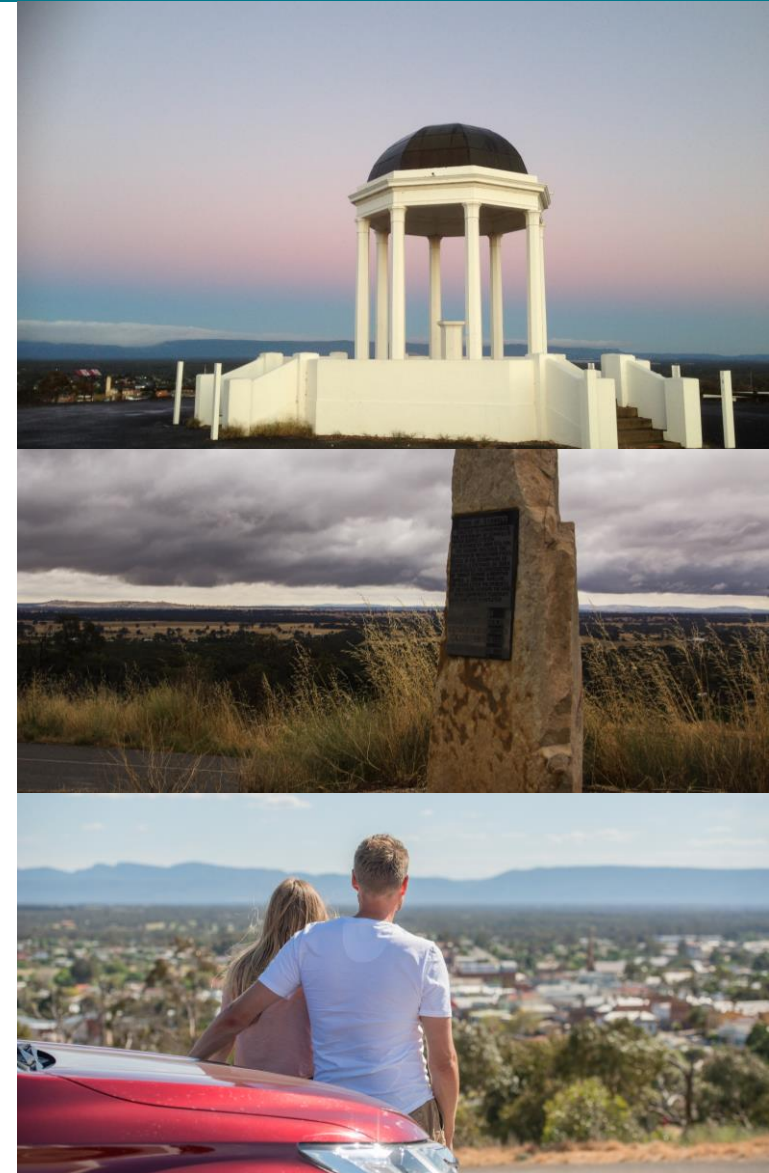
- Development on Big Hill
- Beautification at Big Hill Lookout
- STAWELL doesn't have any tourist attractions

PROJECT PRIORITY - HIGH

Creating a master plan for the area which in effect creates a real attraction to STAWELL will produce a focal point that is a must do for any visitor.

Elements would include public facilities, picnic spots, signage and trails.

Tying Big Hill to the town centre with the proposed historic walk and cycle trail will cement its place as the must do attraction in STAWELL.



SHOWCASE OUR ASSETS

We are a town of proud residents who want to share our history, nature and community with visitors from near and afar.

DESCRIPTION

The singular biggest issue for STAWELL is the lack of information in the marketplace both direct and indirectly, this lack of information leads to a minimal destination footprint and a void in knowledge that leads to the town being bypassed.

The development of destination-based websites to showcase the amenity, attractions and appeal of STAWELL is a critical element in building the tourism industry.

The Shire of Murray in Western Australia has recently gone through the process of developing a website presence for the two towns in the shire, the websites are independent of the Council's corporate website and serve as a strong driver of visitation to Dwellingup and Pinjarra.

The motivation for the websites was a mixture of community driven, state government tourism attractions investment and the council understanding that they needed to elevate tourism in their pillars of economic development. A strong collaborative approach.

The website development was undertaken after a thorough place brand review and supported with the addition of professionally written content and images and video commissioned for the website and other activity.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- No one knows what there is to do in STAWELL
- We need an identity
- We need promotion of our Gold Mining History
- The current website is appalling

PROJECT PRIORITY – HIGH

For the NGSC to develop town-based websites that showcase tourism to all the potential visitors, independent of the NGSC corporate website. This would follow a place branding project for both STAWELL and St Arnaud which drives the look and feel of the websites.

An example of this can be seen here <https://dwellingup.destinationmurray.com.au/>

In the year after the development of the website, Dwellingup won the Small Top Tourism Town in Western Australia.

ACTION PLANS



1. LEADERSHIP

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-25	MID TERM 2032-27	LONG TERM 2028-2032
1.1	Delegate relevant council staff to establish a tourism mentoring program to assist the officer with the execution of the STAP.	NGSC			
1.2	Foster collaboration between community local leadership, Grampians Tourism (GT) and the NGSC through the establishment of a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) as a function of council but driven by local leaders.	NGSC			
1.3	Develop a Visitor Intercept Survey to map the visitor 'information' journey, including their preferred method of visitor information consumption, so that we can reach more visitors that come to NGS.	NGSC			
1.4	Establish a quantified tourism growth target for the 10-year strategy based on projected accommodation capacity.	NGSC			
1.5	Establish a working partnership with Ararat Rural City Council to drive the wine tourism experience across both municipalities.	NGSC			
1.6	Engage with the Eastern Grampians Tourism Group to foster collaboration with tourism businesses in and around Pomonal.	NGSC			

2. STORYTELLING & PLACE BRAND

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
2.1	Develop a place brand strategy, including the development of new brand elements and assets, leveraging off the Central Goldfields UNESCO World Heritage Bid.	NGSC			
2.2	Review collateral needs at the Stawell Visitor Centre and reproduce with a new STAWELL place brand, aligned to the NGSC style guide.	NGSC			
2.3	Develop a Tourism Marketing and Communication Plan to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. content and social media plan, including PPC strategy to increase website traffic ii. budget to procure visual assets, specifically in videography and imagery to target active families and adult couples, which can be shared with tourism stakeholders and DMO's to promote STAWELL visitor attractions iii. consolidate all tourism content for STAWELL and consider a network site structure to point a www.visitstawell.com.au domain to a STAWELL tourism microsite iv. establish new social accounts as #visitstawell and @visitstawell 	NGSC			

2. STORYTELLING & PLACE BRAND (CONTINUED)

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
2.4	Implement 'Stawell's Destination Story' across all channels and share with DMO partners and tourism stakeholders.	NGSC/GT			
2.5	Develop and deliver a local business support program – Visitor Inspiration Partner (VIP) that enables tourism businesses to implement quality storytelling content outcomes in support of STAWELL's place brand and destination story.	NGSC			
2.6	Engage with Grampians Tourism to share content on www.visitgrampians.com.au and support tourism industry familiarisations.	NGSC/GT			
2.7	Implement training for the NGSC Tourism Officer to load content for all NGSC tourism assets and locations on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), connecting to Visit Victoria, Visit Grampians and national distribution partners.	NGSC			

3. COMMUNITY BUY-IN

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
3.1	Release STAWELL's new tourism direction with community briefings and PR releases.	NGSC			
3.2	Develop a 'Local Legends' Ambassador program for community members who can add value to visitor experience at key locations eg: the Historical Society Museum.	NGSC			
3.3	Grow the network of NGSC volunteers to experience tourism as a new volunteering opportunity at the Stawell VC.	NGSC			

4. AMENITIES and SERVICES

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
4.1	Undertake a wayfinding audit to include directional and interpretive signage to guide visitors into and around the town centre.	NGSC			
4.2	Family-friendly accommodation is a major gap in STAWELL. An audit of accommodation supply and visitor projections is needed to support new accommodation development prospectus.	NGSC			
4.3	As per the structure plan and the Western Highway Duplication assessment ensure that Seaby Street is the main route into and out of town from a visitor perspective.	NGSC			
4.4	Develop an annual visitor survey to identify retail, dining and hire services gaps in preparation for a business start-up prospectus to attract new business investment in STAWELL.	NGSC			
4.5	Elevate the exposure of Cato Park including directional signage to ensure that the visitor base understand the value of the facilities and amenity in the park.	NGSC			
4.6	Create a Tourism Precinct of Central Park, Cato Park and the Railway Station with appropriate signage and ease of pedestrian access.	NGSC			
4.7	Establish defined entry statements on major highway approaches to STAWELL with place branding and sustainable landscaping. Visitors should understand they are entering a heritage town worth stopping for.	NGSC			
4.8	Investigate the installation of EV charging stations in Stawell will be added.	NGSC			

5. COMPELLING EXPERIENCES

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
5.1	Develop a master plan for Big Hill to incorporate interpretive signage of the views and the fire lookout area. Incorporate picnic areas with facilities that are suitable for day and night-time use.	NGSC			
5.2	Explore provision of interpretive material and walking trails at Bunjil's Shelter.	NGSC / PARKS			
5.3	Investigate the development of a gold themed interpretive centre at Cato Park. This could be an outdoor facility that showcases the history and future of the gold influence on the town.	NGSC			
5.4	Support the activation of monthly farmers' markets, arts and culture or community events to be held in the STAWELL Town Centre which generates traffic to the retail district.	NGSC			
5.5	Support the continued development of the rail trail to Halls Gap connecting the two towns on a safe bike trail in collaboration with Stawell Cycling. This could also connect to other features in the regions as the lakes route to Halls Gap and Sisters Rocks which are some of the features of a STAWELL visit.	NGSC			

6. CAPABLE TOURISM OPERATORS

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
6.1	Support Grampians Tourism to introduce a capability building program to mentor tourism operators in the improvement of their online visibility and distribution partnerships.	NGSC / GT			
6.2	Establish internal protocols that can assist new tourism startups in the NGSC to navigate LGA and State approvals and connect with priority tourism support services including Grampians Tourism and VTIC.	NGSC / GT			
6.3	Establish a library of visual assets that STAWELL tourism stakeholders can access for the purpose of sharing quality content for STAWELL's priority tourism attractions.	NGSC			
6.4	Support our agriculture sector and other farm-based enterprises to leverage opportunities from tourism (e.g., value-added products, including farmgate sales).	NGSC			

7. VISITOR SERVICING

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
7.1	Establish baseline visitor engagement data in year 1 to evaluate success over the life of the STAP.	NGSC			
7.2	Establish processes to manage visitor data tracking. Door counts and simple post code data collection will provide a starting point in year 1 which can be easily managed by volunteers.	NGSC			
7.3	Work with local media and community groups to share positive experiences which encourage new volunteers to join the Stawell VC.	NGSC			
7.4	Finalise the move of the VC to the Library to extend the opening times as an alternative to the current location.	NGSC			
7.5	Source merchandise from across the Northern Grampians; specifically art, curios and local produce to generate additional retail revenue for Stawell VC.	NGSC			
7.6	Explore the viability of the Western Highway VIC through volunteers and a trial period.	NGSC			

8. EVENTS

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
8.1	Support event organisers to navigate permit and approval requirements and achieve compliance.	Events/ NGSC			
8.2	Establish a communication protocol between event organisers and NGSC to share PR and events information through NGSC owned channels.	NGSC / Events			
8.3	Support niche community groups to plan new event concepts in advance, to take advantage of grant funding opportunities.	Events/ NGSC			
8.4	Develop an events strategy to showcase the regional assets of gold and agriculture together with nature-based forums and conferences.	NGSC			
8.5	Support internal council collaboration around shared actions and outcomes such as the growth of Arts and Culture in the shire.	NGSC			

Appendix 1: WHAT WE HEARD

PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: WHAT WE HEARD

In March 2022, approximately 30 people participated in a community workshop. The workshop found that the way participants describe STAWELL and its story (brand), echoes the findings in the Stawell Structure Plan section 2.4.

The following outlines findings from the workshop.

Q. Which words would you use to describe Stawell and its culture?

- Heritage
- Friendly
- Gold
- Picturesque
- Gateway

Q. Which words would you use to describe the people of Stawell (the community)?

- Open
- Welcoming
- Community minded
- Friendly, multicultural, diverse, helpful, peaceful, safe, comfortable

Q. Which words would you use to describe life in Stawell?

- Laid back
- Relaxed and comfortable
- Stress-free
- Safe
- Prosperous, well resourced and affordable

Q. Which three values do you think define Stawell and its community?

- Supportive community
- Safe
- Accepting
- Tolerant

Q; What's the one thing holiday makers don't know about Stawell that you wish they did?

- The Main Street
- Gold mine, Lakes
- Attractive parks and gardens
- History
- Sporting facilities
- Stawell Gift

Q. Thinking about neighboring regions or shires, what sets Stawell apart?

- Richest footrace
- Attractive surroundings
- History
- Working gold mine
- SUPL
- Free parking

Q. Imagine Stawell in 50 years' time. How do you hope it will be described?

Stawell:

- Has retained its character, history and nature
- Has a booming migrant population
- Is a great tourist centre
- Is a great place for a weekend away
- Is well connected by trains
- Has been creative and forward thinking to create a better future

PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: WHAT WE HEARD (continued)

PRIMARY Themes of Experience

- Heritage
- Gold history and future
- Nature-based
- Agritourism

SUPPORTING Themes of Experience

- Food and wine
- National parks and waterways
- Business tourism
- Self-drive
- Events
- Sport



PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: WHAT WE HEARD (continued)

HERITAGE/HISTORY

- Murals
- 8 -hour banner
- Heritage Trail down Main Street
- Bunjil's Shelter
- Pioneer Walk
- Big Hill
- Main Street Building Plaques
- Cato Park
- Cemetery
- Central Park
- Arboretum
- Gift Hall of Fame
- Guided Coach Tour hosted by Stawell Historical Society
- Historical Society Museum
- Railway Station Building and Art Gallery
- Major Mitchell Trail
- Model Railway Show

GOLD HISTORY AND CURRENT

- SUPL – Dark Matter Lab
- Town Clock
- Historical Society (Ancestry, Building and Gold)
- Gold Walking Tour
- Historical Workings
- Prospecting
- Business Tourism
- Bleisure Travel

NATURE

- Lakes – swim, fish,
- Birdwatching
- Bike Trail
- Sisters Rocks
- Wildflower walk
- Ironbarks – running, walking
- Cato Park
- Federation Park
- Camping
- Orchid Shows

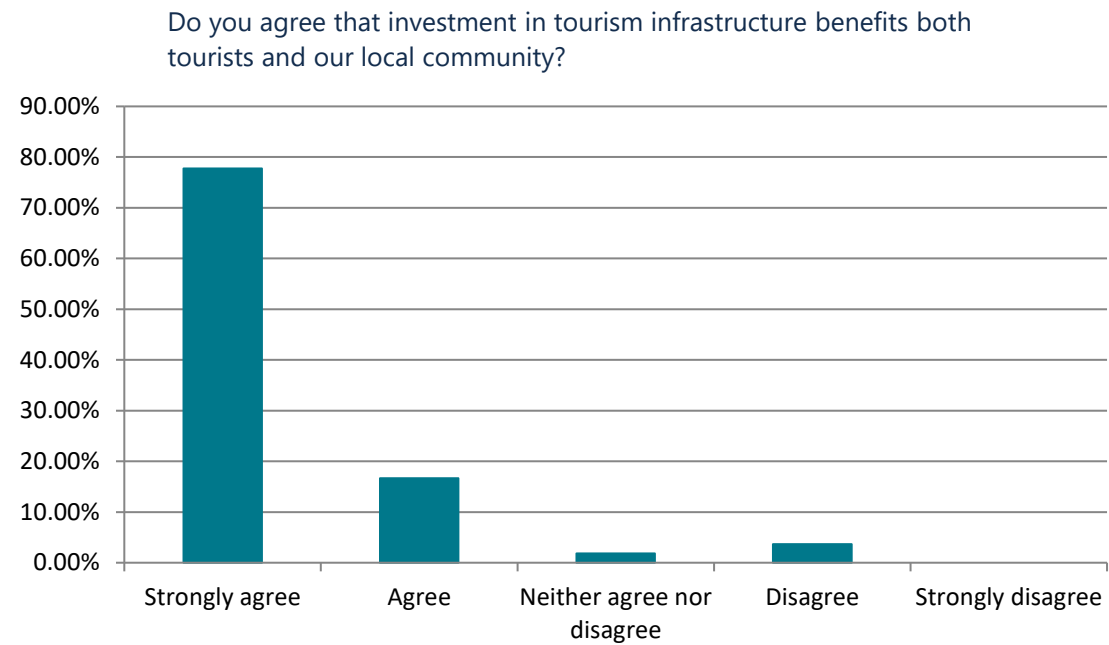
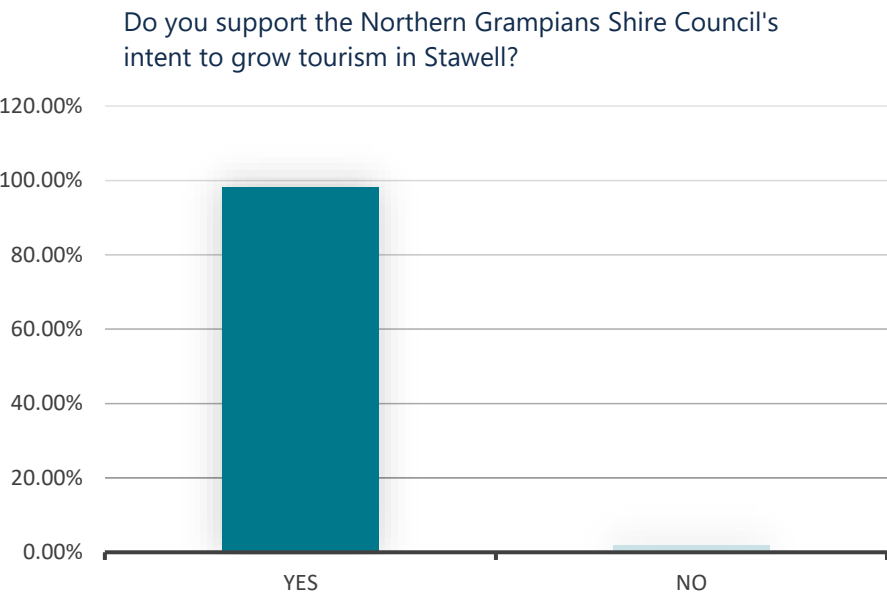
AGRITOURISM

- Wineries
- Sunsets
- Alpaca Farm
- Brewery
- Farmstay
- Farmers Markets
- Winter Woollies Festival
- Helicopter Flights

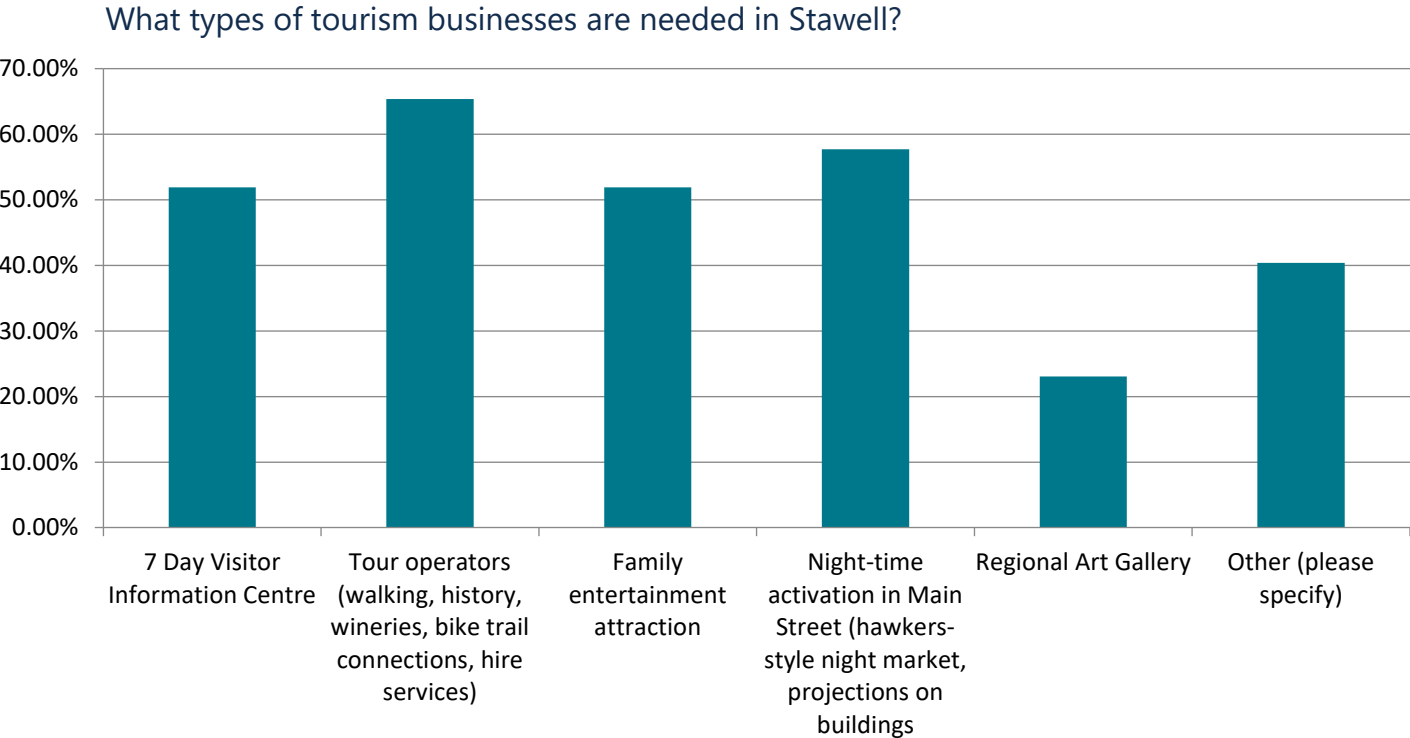
PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

In March 2022, 53 people completed a project survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify opportunities and challenges around growing the visitor economy in STAWELL

The following outlines the survey findings.



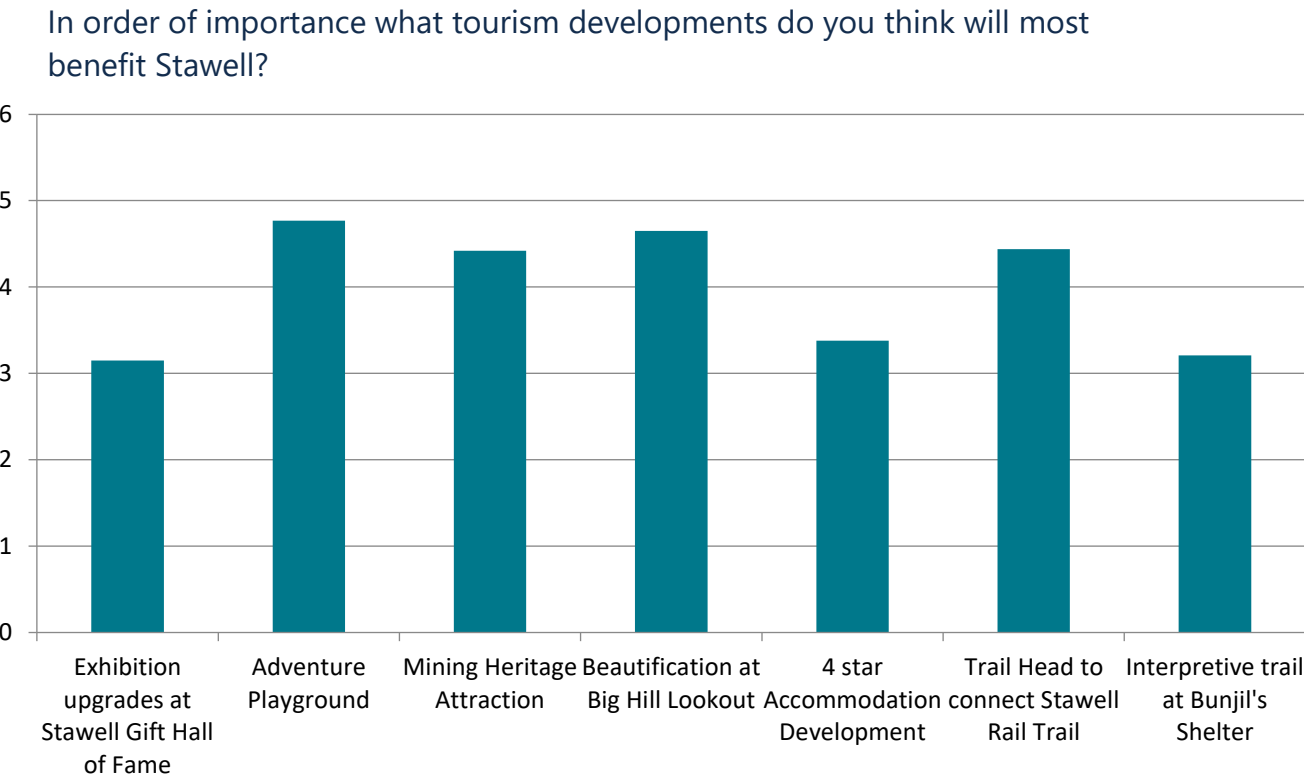
PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD (continued)



PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD (continued)



PHASE ONE ENGAGEMENT COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD (continued)



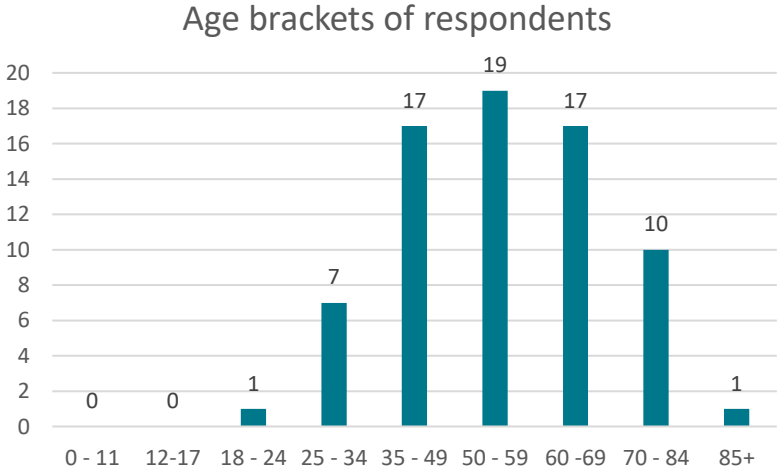
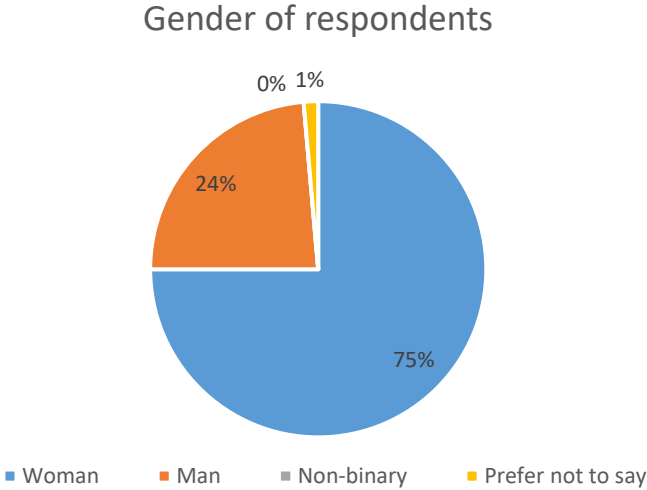
PHASE TWO ENGAGEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

In May/June 2022 Council invited the community to participate in a project survey. To support participation, Council also delivered several engagement activities as shown in the below table.

Stawell Show Market	30
Shop 108 pop-up (across 2 days)	35
Woolworths pop-up	10
Main Street Traders and Highway motels drop by	All open businesses across two different days were visited. Approximately 45 businesses.
Online and written survey responses	73
Western Highway VIC Volunteer EOI response	33
Approximate total amount of people engaged	250

PHASE TWO ENGAGEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

In May/June 2022, 73 people completed a project survey and these well represented the age profile of the Northern Grampians Shire. The purpose of the survey was to test the tourism themes, strategic directions and action plan derived from the initial stage of engagement.



PHASE TWO ENGAGEMENT - COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

Overall, the community agreed with the themes and direction of the Stawell Tourism Strategy and Action Plan.

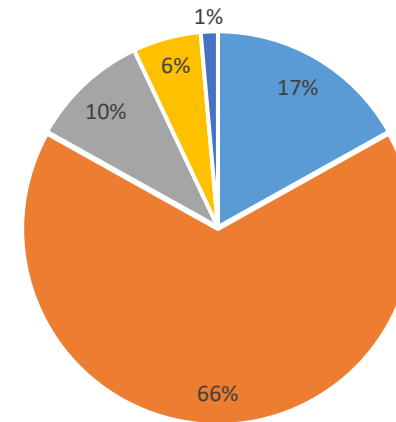
When asked how they would describe Stawell to friends and family outside of town, most would recommend Stawell.

- 40% described its proximity to natural assets and vistas,
- 28% mentioned the friendly, safe and quiet appeal of the town
- 10% would mention the Gold Heritage.
- 22% would not recommend Stawell to visit, mainly due to poor opening hours and lack of things to do.

When asked what needs to change to improve Tourism in Stawell.

- 40% said improved Food and Retail.

Agreement with existing themes



- These themes represent the most important things to focus on
- I mostly agree with these themes
- I feel neutral/don't know how I feel about these themes
- I mostly disagree with these themes

