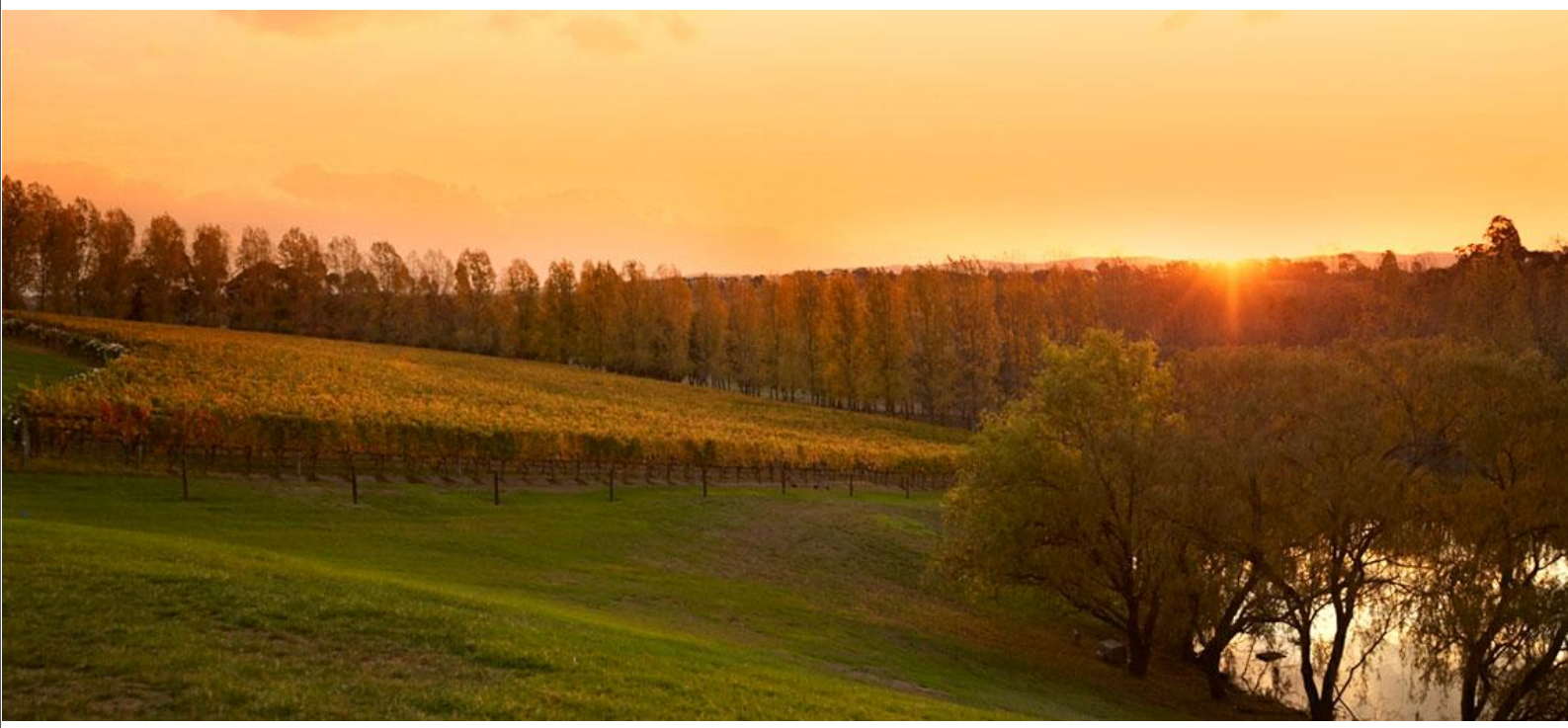
YARRA RANGES TOURISM

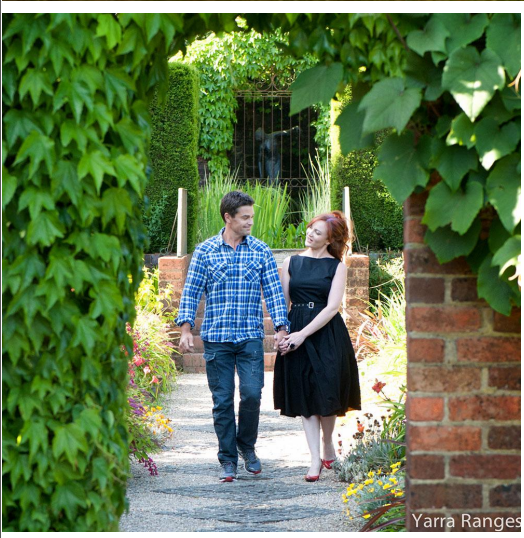
YARRA RANGES TOURISM

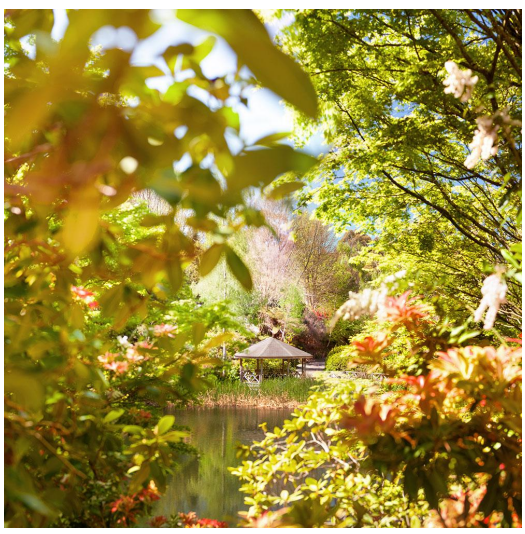
We market to sell the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges to the visitor, driving economic growth.

CEO REPORT

February 2019







CEO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

February 2019

- New look CEO template
- Integration of new staff into team
- Channel 7 Sunrise Yarra Valley Weather feature @ Healesville Sanctuary and featuring Rachel from Cherry Hill Orchards, and Ben Mitchell from the Yarra Valley Cellar Door
- Trial portable Digital Visitor Information Kiosk at Blue Lotus Water Garden up and running
- Off Peak Weddings digital magazine complete

On The Horizon

- Successful Rone Funding Application for $215K from the State Government
- Industry response to Dandenong Ranges Mid Week Campaign
- RTB review with Visit Victoria (2019)

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Increase Visitor Numbers, Length of Stay and Spend

1. ***Grow Mid-Week Overnight Visitation***
2. ***Create New Reasons to Visit***
3. ***Build Brand Awareness***
4. ***Engage Our Visitor Through Storytelling***

Above: Sam Mac from Channel 7's Sunrise catches up with Murrindindi during a live cross at Healesville Sanctuary in December.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

New Initiative:
OFF PEAK WEDDINGS - Getting hitched your way

Dandenong Ranges and the Yarra Valley are already known as Australia's most loved wedding destinations – but we can do more! The Off Peak Weddings (OPW) campaign is designed to fill the times of the year – or week – that aren't the traditional wedding time slots. There's so much amazing infrastructure, so many creative suppliers and so many sensational photo opportunities in the region that we'd like to promote them across new and emerging markets to widen our established active wedding season.

What is the Off Peak Wedding Guide?

The newly created website offpeakweddings.com.au is home to ideas, stories and our flagship digital magazine: Off Peak Weddings - Getting Hitched Your Way. The digital magazine will be sent out quarterly to Yarra Ranges Tourism's existing websites, social media channels, PR networks and consumer database of more than 20,000 contacts. Our team is concurrently building exclusive Off Peak Weddings channels on Facebook and Instagram, a direct mail database and regularly uploading fresh content to the new website to achieve a focused servicing proposition to this growing and diverse market.

The magazine and website will feature a range of partner and guest articles, tips and advice that highlights our Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Off Peak Weddings partners. Most importantly, there will be a dedicated directory.

Why an Off Peak Wedding Guide?

As a tourism office, we don't actively service the wedding market. This is a growing sector of the regional travel market that, whilst not strictly tourism, utilises tourism infrastructure and services. Off Peak Weddings is positioned to capture the hearts of a 'new' style of couple – the later in life wedding, second wedding or renewal of vows, LGBTIQ and even someone looking for a smaller, more intimate celebration during the week at any time of the year.

Participation costs are in line with a standard Tourism Partnership and can be purchased in addition to a Tourism Partnership (product live on Visit site and OPW) or as a stand alone partnership (product only live on OPW site).

The first edition of the quarterly digital magazine is available for download HERE.

The website is still in development with the goal of an mid April launch.

Off Peak Weddings

- YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONG RANGES -

LOVE SHINES IN A SUMMER WEDDING p.10
GETTING HITCHED WITH THE LOCALS p.27
INTIMATE WEDDINGS ARE THE NEW BLACK p.36

Participation Buy-in

Our introductory buy-in price of $195 delivers excellent value in the market for the first year. Many digital listings in the wedding market cost $60 per month on a 6-month contract and others are closer to $700 to join.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Hosting Media and Influencers to the Region

One of Yarra Ranges Tourisms' key strategies is to host media in the region to generate stories promoting our core product strengths. By targeting media with reach to our traditional and developing target market segments, we achieve a cost-effective way to gain awareness of our region and the experiences that it offers.

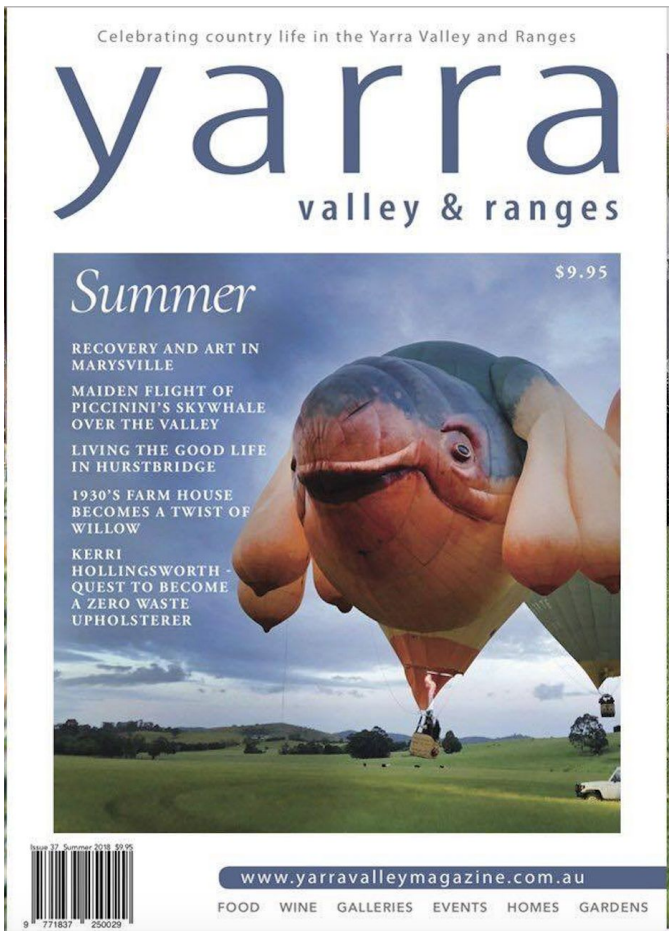
We host bloggers, influencers, KOL's, television crews and print media and we thank you the industry for helping host these influencers in tourism. Some of the media we have hosted and worked with in the last quarter are listed below.

Richard Hamilton - TATE Gallery Americas and UK 1999 - 2018.. Philanthropy & Acquisitions - Tate Americas 2013 - 2018

Currently Hamilton Advisory Services.

Richard was in Melbourne so we hosted him through the RONE exhibition and TarraWarra Museum of Art, Patricia Piccinini. Two significant Australian artists and sites he wasn't familiar with.

The **Yarra Valley and Ranges Country Life** magazine placed Patricia Piccinini's Skywhale on its front cover for the summer issue.



KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Digital Marketing: Facebook

Visit Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges Facebook Page
2 Month Review (December 2018/January 2019)

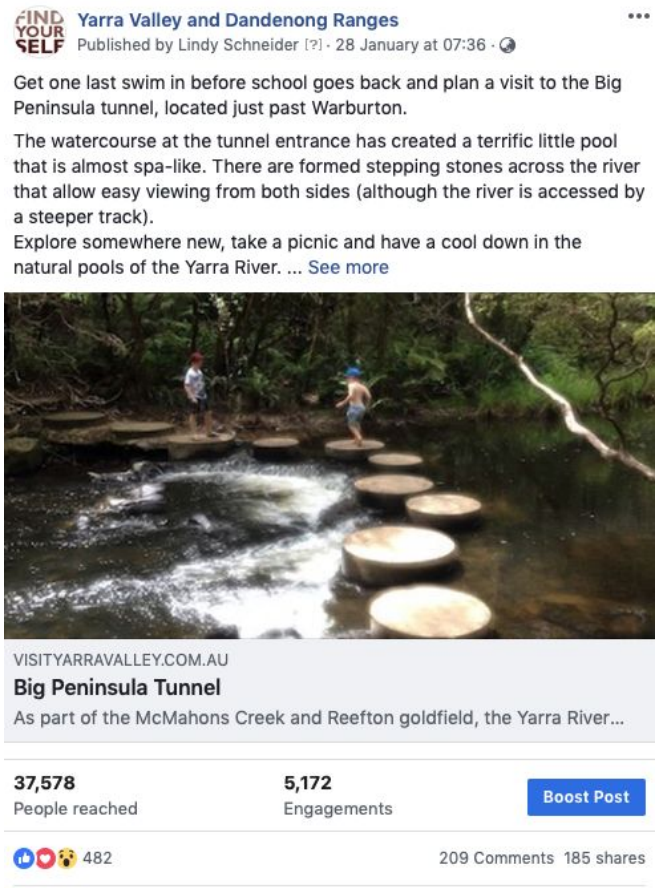
Facebook Page Likes – 55,881 (0.12%)

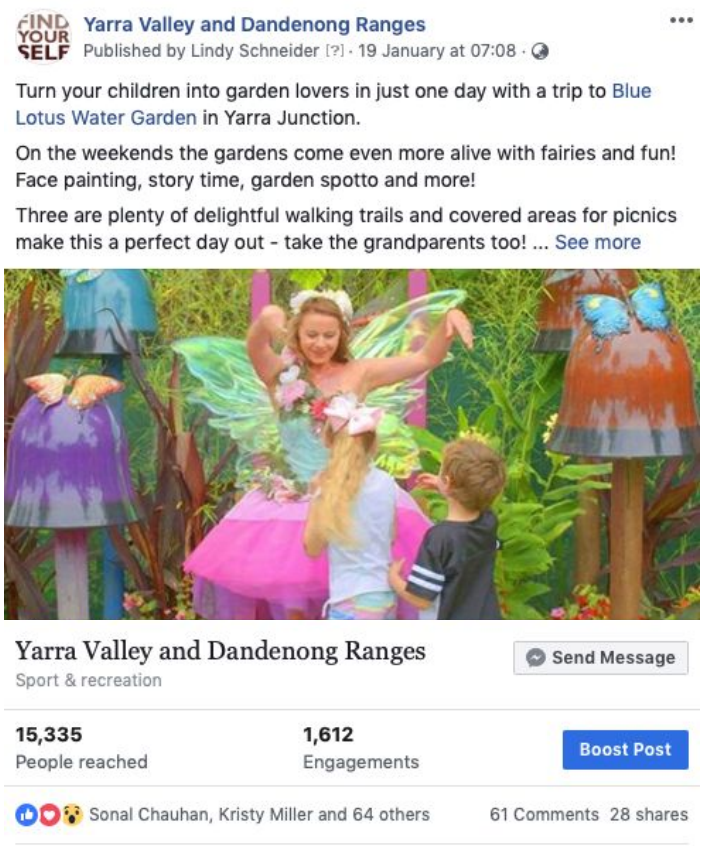
Total Engaged Users – 21,341
The number of users that clicked or interacted with content posted on our Facebook Page.

Total Reach – 378,293
Total number of people that have had our content appear on their Facebook Feed.

Total Impressions – 792,781
Total number of time content appeared on someone's Facebook Feed.

Posts that received the highest user engagement:





KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Digital Marketing: Websites

Over Dec 2018/ Jan 2019, total visitors to our consumer facing websites increased 16% and page views increased 12%.

2 Month Review (December 2018/January 2019)

Consumer Websites		Dec18/Jan19	Dec17/Jan18	% Change
VisitDandenongRanges.com.au	Users	79,462	70,892	+12,08%
	Page Views	277,517	239,385	+15.93%
VisitYarraValley.com.au	Users	109,403	99,680	+9.75%
	Page Views	418,298	378,916	+10.39%
VisitYarraValley.cn	Users	973	687	+41.63%
	Page Views	2,993	1,782	+67.95%

Over 2018, total visitors increased 18.69% and page views increased 22%.

Year in Review (2017-2018)

Consumer Websites		2018	2017	% Change
VisitDandenongRanges.com.au	Users	436,815	399,007	+9.48%
	Page Views	1,504,512	1,265,444	+18.89%
VisitYarraValley.com.au	Users	567,187	546,696	+3.74%
	Page Views	2,212,165	1,994,420	+10.92%
VisitYarraValley.cn	Users	4,670	3,269	+42.85%
	Page Views	16,045	11,610	+38.19%

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Digital Marketing: Instagram

	Number Posts (3 months)	Post Reach (3-month)	Follow growth (2 month)	Follow growth (2018)
visityarravalley_official	47	93,029	2%	33%
visitdandenongranges	16	16,876	5%	61%

Posts with most engagement over the past three months:

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Digital Marketing: Blog Content

Fresh new blogs were created over the 2 month period and numerous blogs refreshed with updated content.

In total, all our blogs received 18,537 views between December and January.
Top 5 most visited blogs:

- Bushwalking Tracks in the Dandenong Ranges (4630 views)
- Must see Gardens of the Dandenong Ranges (3488 views)
- Dog friendly cafes and trails (2218 views)
- What's open over Christmas and the New Year (1299 views)
- School holiday activities over the summer (864 views)

Blogs created over Dec '18 / Jan '19

Blog Name	Page Views	Region
School Holiday activities for kids over summer	1505	Yarra Valley
Earthly pleasures of the Upper Yarra Valley	611	Yarra Valley
January activities to bring the family together	308	Yarra Valley
Much ado about Cloudehill Gardens	156	Dandenong Ranges
Australia Day – Live Music to make your long weekend	129	Yarra Valley
Chinese New Year – three authentic CNY celebrations	110	Dandenong Ranges + Yarra Valley
MFWF – All partner activities and things to do	55	Yarra Valley
Kids can tee off this summer – Eastern Golf Kids Program	37	Yarra Valley
Golf Trail 1 – Trade your tools for clubs	16	Yarra Valley

The **SUNRISE** team came to Healesville for the live weather cross on December 19th.

This activity included:

- CherryHill Orchards
- The Sanctuary, Healesville
- Yarra Valley Cellar Door - Ben Mitchell

Links to 6 crosses:

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-6-00-193232991.html

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-6-30-195047058.html

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-7-15-201708560.html

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-7-30-204432917.html

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-8-00-212221553.html

https://au.news.yahoo.com/sam-macs-weather-8-30-214254530.html

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING
Upcoming collaborations:

The Makers Trail - March 30 & 31

TarraWarra's Makers Market and Open Weekend falls on the same weekend as Dandenong Ranges Open Studios - March 30 & 31.

Rather than this 'clash' be a negative, Yarra Ranges Tourism has been working with Burrinja and TarraWarra Museum of Art to assist in bringing their idea to life of having a **Makers Trail** hosted bus run on the Saturday from Federation Square that stops at Burrinja, Open Studios, a lunch spot and then over to TarraWarra Gallery for the afternoon.

We will be providing a trail itinerary, blog posts, social media support and avenues for Instagram and Facebook competitions.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Walks and Riding Trails eBook
A printed copy of the Walks and Riding Trails eBook was produced for review. It was determined that the maps currently in the eBook should be improved to show more information such as starting point, finish, any notable roads, parking, etc. The team are currently looking to source the same maps used by the VicEmergency team as they have more definition than those provided by Parks Victoria.

Irish TV Series Tastes Like Home Episode 6 Cavan to Melbourne Aires
"Tastes Like Home" is an Irish Television Production that focuses on the Irish Diaspora all over the world and finding out what dish they miss from home. The dishes are then replicated when members of families featured in the episodes are visited worldwide. The popular show is now in it's third series and transmits through the main Irish Broadcaster, RTE 1 to an average audience of 240,000.
Presented by well known Irish Chef, *Catherine Fulvio,* the last episode of the 2018 "*Tastes Like Home"* series includes footage of a visit to the Yarra Valley and Fergusson Winery as part of their Melbourne visit, which aired December 10th in Ireland. To view see https://vimeo.com/300929629
Password = tastes2018

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

Business Events

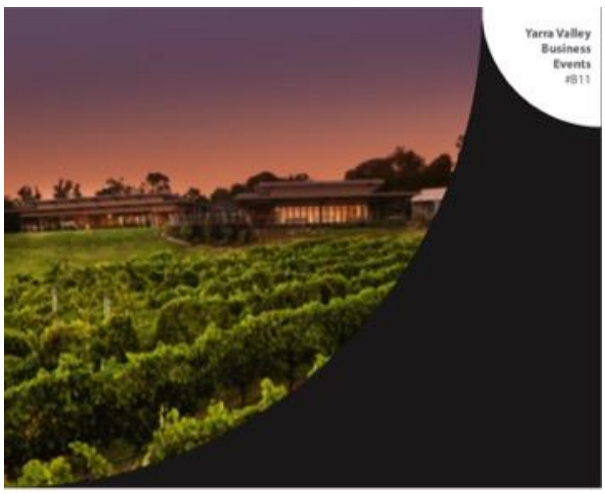
Asia Pacific Incentives Meetings & Events Tradeshow AIME 18-20 Feb

Taking place in Melbourne, **AIME** brings together key stakeholders in the region with the right buyers and exhibitors from the Asia Pacific region and across the world. Natalija MacKenzie is exhibiting with Balgownie Estate Vineyard Resort & Spa over 3 days of Networking and has a full appointment stream of 35 Hosted buyers. New for 2019, Natalija is also attending a Knowledge program with both exhibitors and buyers for an additional full day of educational programs with a variety of guest speakers.

We are advised via Talk2Media that Yarra Valley Business Events received the most hosted buyer meeting requests along with The Hunter Valley for this Tradeshow.

Yarra Valley Business Events POST AIME Familiarisation 20-23 February

Directly following on from the AIME Tradeshow, Natalija is leading a Mega 3 Night, 3 Full Day Familiarisation Tour with 10 AIME hosted buyer delegates experiencing the business events opportunities throughout the region. The Famil covers a vast majority of our region's partners from the Dandenong Ranges & Yarra Valley including Marysville and Holmesglen at Eildon.



Business Events

MICENET Banner Ad Feature for Yarra Valley Business Events AIME

As part of our hosted Buyer promotion for the Business Events Familiarisation, we purchased a rotating banner Ad on the front page of the MICENET website. The Ad ran from mid December until end January, combined with AIME banner advertising. Micenet reports 9,405 Views and 236 click throughs. No actual Famil Registrations were received via this method of advertising, which indicates best results were achieved through the AIME portal by Talk2Media as a direct communication to buyers.

Future Famil 05 April 2019 MEAG - Melbourne Executive Assistants

We are well into completing an itinerary to be promoted by MEAG to 100 of their premier members to attend a high end, day familiarisation to the Yarra Valley. Placement of 10 Delegates will be confirmed only.

Yarra Valley Business Events Website - Corporate Blog
Cross promotion of our Golf Trail has been well utilised as an Inaugural Business Events Corporate blog listed on the yarravalleybusinessevents.com.au website.. To also be referenced in future EDM's.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: MARKETING

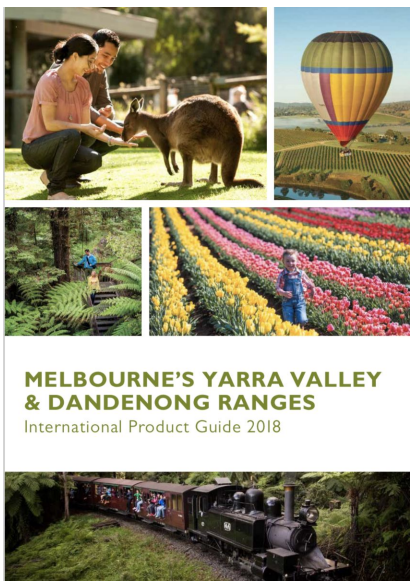
2019 International Program

A total of 40 Tourism Partners have bought into the International Program for 2019. The program runs to the calendar year so that it aligns with the product collateral updates for Go Beyond Melbourne Touring Route and also to the International Trade Event calendars of Tourism Australia, Visit Victoria and ATEC.

Yarra Ranges Tourism has been accepted as a regional seller at Australian Tourism Exchange and Media Workshop held this year in Perth from 7th-12th April. Sally Coyle will be attending this Trade Show, along with six other regional Partners including Go Beyond Melbourne, Healesville Sanctuary, Puffing Billy Railway, Rayner's Orchard, Wild Wombat Winery Tours, Yering Gorge Cottages, Rochford Wines and Australian Wine Tour Company.

In 2018, Yarra Ranges Tourism has supported some of our Partners who are mature in the international market place on sales missions to UK/Europe and SE Asia as representative agents for regional content. This has resulted in some excellent collaborative activities and in gathering useful international market reports and updates from sales reps in those countries.

The Yarra Valley & Dandenong Ranges International Product Guide 2019 will be updated in time for ATE along with a series of updated themed trails and suggested itineraries.



GO BEYOND MELBOURNE TOURING ROUTE

A planning meeting of yearly activities took place on 21st February. Simon O'Callaghan has taken up the Chair role. Budget outcomes and schedule of activities will be reported post the planning meeting and this will help to form the additional regional activities that Yarra Ranges Tourism will undertake in the International market place without duplicating what Go Beyond Melbourne does.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: DIGITAL

Increase visitor Engagement on our Digital Platforms through the ongoing development and maintenance of robust infrastructure.

Inventory Management System
An Inventory Management System has been installed to manage printed collateral from production to distribution.

Work in progress
A number of improvements are currently being implemented on the Visit consumer sites. These include:

- A pop-up modal box prompting visitors to read related pages, e.g. if a visitor is on the Things To Do page for longer than 10 seconds, a pop-up reminds the visitor to check out the Special Deals page.
- Adding the digital display screen module to visitdandenongranges.com.au in preparation for the Digital Information Kiosks being installed in that region.
- Removal of a visitor's phone number from the Digital Information Kiosk after they have been sent the SMS.
- Adding Accommodation records to the itinerary planner.
- Changes to the itinerary planner based on feedback.
- Amendment to the process for downloading PDFs - an email sends a link to the visitor instead of allowing them to download directly.

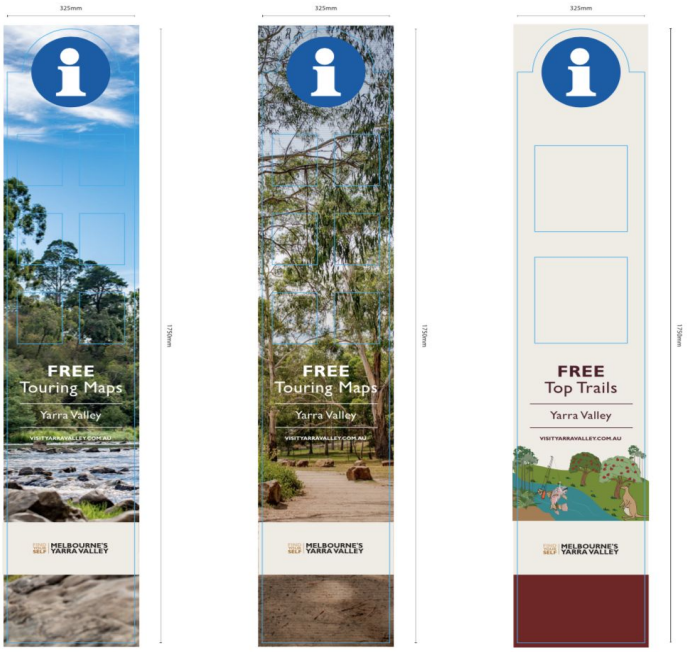
New Initiative
We are working on a subsite with Visit Yarra Valley/Dandenong Ranges for our Off Peak Weddings material. The digital magazine has already been developed and the website will match it in look and style.

KEY STRATEGY AREA: VISITOR SERVICING & TOURISM EXCELLENCE

Developing efficient and effective visitor services

Visitor Information Carousels

Reports from the venues hosting a carousel, as well as information provided by the contractor servicing them, showed they were extensively used over the December/January period. Extra stock was requested and delivered pre- and post-Christmas at places such as Beechworth Bakery in Healesville, Australian Rainbow Trout Farm in Macclesfield, and Dixons Creek Cafe as they saw an influx of visitors requesting maps over this time. The next phase of Carousels is nearing completion and will be delivered through March at 12 new locations.



Digital Visitor Information Kiosks

The majority of the kiosks are working as expected; the unit at The Memo, Healesville, however, is proving problematic with the screen becoming unresponsive during the day. Investigations are being conducted on the unit by the technical team with assistance from Yarra Ranges Tourism to resolve the issues. As we progress this Pilot, any feedback from Industry is welcome. We are also making improvements to the tracking beacons as we believe that the current data is very conservative.

Digital Visitor Information Kiosk Stats from 1 July 2018 to 31 December 2018

*Conversions are visitors who stayed longer than 5 minutes

	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Visits	656	1,232	1,275	1,333	2,175	2,405
Walkbys	13,034	21,860	23,666	24,237	59,372	53,993
Conversions*	5%	5.6%	5.4%	5.5%	3.7%	4.5%

Official Touring Maps

Yarra Valley Touring Map

The geographical area and map timeline was extended until 12/12/18 to be able to include our new Nillumbik Partners. The map was released on 20/12/18.

Demand for map listings was strong with two extra panels required to accommodate the 141 Partner participants. This included the additional 21 Nillumbik Partners.

Map listings were standardised this year to advert listings (with an image) for the purpose of enhancing the aesthetic quality of the overall map for the visitor and to meet demand by the advertisers.

Dandenong Ranges Touring Map

Production and map sales have started with a revised release date of April 2019. This is attributed to the extended project timeline of the Yarra Valley Touring map and slower uptake of map listings.

Illustrated Trails

A new themed trail has been added to our repertoire for a new market segment. The Golf Trail was developed to showcase and promote the region's 8 golf courses.

Yarra Valley Golf - A Range of Great Shots!

"The Yarra Valley is only a chip shot away from Melbourne. So it's perfect for a quick 18-hole day trip, relaxing overnight escape or even an extended adventure with friends or family. So come tee it up in the Yarra Valley. Your next 'great shot' is just around the corner."

KEY STRATEGY AREA: INDUSTRY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Actively engage industry in our activities for the benefit of the region in growing the visitor economy

Business Visits

- James and Simon undertook business visits across the Yarra Valley in Healesville and Nillumbik on Tuesday 12 February, as part of our ongoing engagement with our industry partners.
- Simon met with the new General Managers for RACV Healesville Country Club - Josh O'Brien and Yarra Valley Lodge - Neil Mason, Andre Napoleone at DeTour Beer Co and attended the Four Pillars Gin Pig Dinner. While also meeting two new developers looking to establish glamping and a new integrated visitor attraction.

Partnership Update

- Communication to Partners - Reminder emails and call outs to our Partners to take up their benefits – monthly and seasonal – continues to prompt an immediate response.
- Partners who have taken up the State and Active Marketing Partnerships will be contacted by Visit Victoria to activate their ATDW listing.
- A Partnership sales focus is being carried out in the Dandenong Ranges to attract more engagement from new businesses. John McGaw, with 16 years experience as Sales Manager for Destination Melbourne, is conducting sales calls to new businesses throughout the Dandenong Ranges with information about the mid-week Campaign and Off Peak Weddings and the 2019 edition of the Official Dandenong Ranges Touring map,

KEY STRATEGY AREA: SUSTAINABLE ORGANISATION

Providing strategic industry leadership, governance and accountability

Staff Resources:

- Brook Powell is now working 4 days a week in the role of Marketing and PR Manager. Reporting to Brook will be:
    - Ryley Heap, our new marketing intern, who is currently focused on the Dandenong Ranges Mid-Week Campaign and our social and digital marketing.
    - Lindy Schneider who is delivering the weekly What's On and generating our blog and digital content for our new responsibilities for the Nillumbik LGA and our Off Peak Wedding digital magazine.

- John McGaw will be doing some further work for us in promoting our Partnership program, Touring Maps and Off Peak Weddings sales calls in the Dandenong Ranges. John will also focus on Manningham.

- Natalija MacKenzie our Tourism Sales Officer has resigned to take some time off and focus on her family. Her last day with us will be April 12. Natalija has made a significant contribution to the delivery of our Online Booking System and Business Events program. We are very grateful for all her work and dedication to the role. Her departure will be a loss to our team.

Funding:

- Awaiting a response application to the Wine Growth Fund Round 3 - for our joint submission with the Yarra Valley Wine Growers Association for Chardonnay focused event.
- Awaiting a response for our application to the Volunteer Grants 2018 to support Board training.
- *Preliminary discussions are scheduled for March with Casey and Cardinia Councils about potential Partnership with Yarra Ranges Tourism to promote the Visitor Economy.*

KEY STRATEGY AREA: ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a process that challenges inequities by collaboratively and actively working with communities and key stakeholders to bring about change.

To bring about improvements for the Tourism Industry in support for:

- ***Reliable Utility Infrastructure***
- ***Funding support for key Tourism Infrastructure Projects that will grow the Visitor Economy***

- We have been advocating for funding on all key infrastructure projects in the lead up to the 2018 November State Election, and will be consulting with our funding Stakeholders to identify what the key focus should be for 2019.

- Simon continues to represent the region's tourism interests by committing to the following industry committees and working groups:
  - Project Control Group (PCG) for the *Small Business Regulatory Review (Visitor Economy)* – Innovative New Ventures Initiative
  - VTIC Destinations Policy Committee
  - Melbourne East Metropolitan Partnerships Committee

KEY DIARY DATES FOR 2019

Industry Networking Event
Wednesday 20 March 201 5.30-7.30pm
Fondata 1872
150 Eltham-Yarra Glen Rd, Kangaroo Ground

Annual Industry Summit
Wednesday 22 May 2019 12-5pm
RACV Healesville Country Club
Followed by post-summit drinks 5-6pm