

VISIT BENDIGO + 2007-2012 Tourism Development Plan



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| Tourism Victoria's Strategic Plan..... | 2 |
| Success Factors in Regional Tourism..... | 3 |
| Regional Strategy Framework..... | 4 |
| Regional Destinations and Villages Hierarchy..... | 5 |
| Visit Bendigo+ 2007-2012..... | 6 |
| Strategies - Strategic Plan..... | 11 |
| Product Strength's and Attributes..... | 12 |



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bendigo - A Major Regional Tourism Destination

Bendigo, a city of almost 100,000 is located in Central Victoria. It is an idyllic, regional city, offering the best of a big city in a slow paced, relaxed atmosphere – the new wealth can be seen in many aspects of everyday life including the Bendigo Bank's new headquarters in the heart of town to the growth in the café culture, the exquisite dining options, the opportunity to sample local wine in the restaurants and at the many cellar doors which are a short drive from Bendigo. Boutique shopping and accommodation is also dotted across the city providing a range of unique and memorable experiences for leisure and business visitors alike. Home grown businesses such as Jimmy Possum and Fernwood, along with Bendigo Bank are showcasing their businesses on the national stage.

This current pride is reflected in the growing stature of the Bendigo Art Gallery, the growth in View Street and the development of precincts such as Bath Lane, Bull Street and the Chinese precinct. This pride is also reflected in Bendigo's rich heritage streetscapes from a golden era when Bendigo was the richest city in the world – around 9 billion dollars worth of gold was found in Bendigo making it the second largest gold field in the world after Kalgoorlie and the seventh richest field world-wide.

It is in this context that tourism is growing business. With over 1.2 million daytrip visitors per year and over 730,000 overnight visitors, tourism brings \$330 million to the city in yield. It is certainly a growing industry for the City of Greater Bendigo.

Visit Bendigo + 2007 -12 – Tourism Development Plan

The Bendigo Tourism Board of Management, an Advisory Board to the City of Greater Bendigo Council represents both the interests of the industry and the community. The Board currently has 4 industry elected members and 5 appointed by Council, one being a Councillor.

The role of this Board is to set the strategic direction for the growth of tourism across Greater Bendigo and the Destination Plan 2007 -12 sets out the priorities for the next 5 years. The Destination Plan outlines 8 key areas for strategy development. These strategies form the strategic plan for Bendigo and will ensure that the Board is constantly reviewing and updating the priorities of the destination.

These 8 identified issues came to fruition through an industry planning day where the Bendigo Tourism Board, Tourism Victoria and Council staff met to discuss the way forward. Subsequently two industry sessions were held to work through the major issues and for industry comment. These processes will continue over the life of the plan.



Shift in Focus “Tourism Victoria” Strategy

Outlined below are extracts from the 2002-2006 *Tourism Victoria Industry Strategic Plan* which delineates the changes in direction from regional marketing to destination focused marketing (Reference: tourismvictoria.com.au/strategic-plan-66).

Strategic Plan 2002-2006

The *Strategic Plan 2002-2006* aims to move regional tourism to a new level of performance and maturity.



Major shifts in approach include:

An increased promotional emphasis on regional tourism including more significant interstate and intrastate marketing of regional Victoria;

A shift from marketing product regions to marketing the primary motivators for travel i.e. destinations and attractions, desired experiences, special interest themes, products and touring routes within a regional framework;

Further development of partnerships incorporating strategic business, industry and community alliances;

Further development of partnerships incorporating strategic business, industry and community alliances;

A broadening of objectives to maximise economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes;

An emphasis on strategies to **disperse visitors geographically** and seasonally from the Melbourne gateway;

A focus on **developing and marketing of touring routes**;

Improved strategic marketing planning through the requirement for three-year marketing plans;

Regional campaign committees and development of the Regional Partnership Program;

A focus on visitor satisfaction with product and service delivery as a competitive advantage for Victoria;

A strategic emphasis on infrastructure and product development for regional Victoria; and

Evolution of industry structures with a view to building stronger local and regional tourism associations and greater industry self-sufficiency.

Success Factors for Regional Tourism

There are eight factors that are pivotal to the success of regional tourism. They are:

- 1 Strong private sector driven regional tourism organisations, focused on their core role of destination marketing, working co-operatively with local tourism associations and providing an umbrella marketing and representation role;
- 2 Strong local tourism associations focused on their core role of visitor servicing;
- 3 Support from local government for visitor servicing, destination and infrastructure development and co-operative marketing;
- 4 Strategic planning for integrated and consistent marketing and holistic tourism development that is owned and implemented by all stakeholders;
- 5 Co-operative marketing which maximises the effectiveness of industry, local government and state government contributions;
- 6 Leadership by strong and visionary organisations and individuals;
- 7 Quality visitor services that create satisfied visitors and lead to word of mouth promotion; and
- 8 A breadth and depth of quality tourism product and infrastructure that meets the demands of target markets and reflect tourism trends and best practice development and operation.

To be successful in the long term, regional tourism also has to ensure there is community support for tourism development and promotion, ongoing investment in visitor facilities and infrastructure and that the natural, cultural and community assets on which the industry is base dare protected into the future.

Tourism helps to build social capital by raising awareness of community resources and expertise and producing social links between previously unrelated groups. Increased community awareness, cohesion and pride can also result from a region taking stock of its tourism assets and distinctive characteristics. Visitors' appreciation and admiration can further stimulate community celebration, foster community spirit and contribute to social cohesion.



Regional Strategy Framework

Destinations

Level 1

Destinations that currently or potentially attract a strong mix of international, interstate and intrastate visitors and particularly demonstrate international and national appeal matched to Victoria's key product strengths. Proximity to Melbourne is also an important factor.



These destinations have the capacity to:

- Attract significant visitor numbers;
- Provide a range of accommodation, attractions and services to maximise visitor yield (length of stay and expenditure);
- Contribute to visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally); and Provide high visitor satisfaction.

Level 2

Destinations that currently attract strong interstate and intrastate visitation and demonstrate national and/or international appeal potential.

Level 3

Destinations that attract significant intrastate visitation and demonstrate potential interstate appeal, or are important touring and accommodation hubs.

Villages

Type A

Villages and towns with unique character, visitation, yield and dispersal capability and/or product strength alignment.



Type B

Villages that have unique character but lack capacity (accommodation, attractions and services) and require careful management and development.

Touring

Touring routes with international, national and intrastate visitation and appeal. Links to key destinations and villages are also important to maximise yield dispersal and visitor satisfaction. Bendigo is involved in Capital and Country Touring Route focused at the international fly drive market (Melbourne – Sydney).



Regional Destinations & Villages Hierarchy

Background

The migration of marketing programs, from a focus on product regions to the primary motivators for travel, reflects the consumer appeal of destinations, attractions, touring routes, special interest themes and products, and unique experiences. In most cases, the geographical region does not hold the appeal, but the individual destinations or attractions that it offers.

While there are “regional” exceptions, such as the Great Ocean Road and the Grampians, it is more specific destinations, events or activities that are key motivators for visitors.

Recognising this appeal, the plan uses key destinations and attractions as a platform for the integrated marketing of regional Victoria. In moving to market specific destinations and villages a set of criteria has been applied. Destinations and villages may move into different categories over time by strategic development or through the impact of market forces. Acting as an indicative guide, this hierarchy does not preclude other destinations and villages being added through campaign region marketing plans.

Note: As indicated above these classifications are intended to reflect state and regional marketing planning and destination development, over the life of this plan. Other destinations and villages may be added as and when they meet the comprehensive criteria guidelines and regional tourism success factors to ensure sustainability.

Issues

The following are some of the major issues confronting regional tourism;

- Low awareness, visitation and yield;
- Lack of integrated, holistic and sustainable destination development and poor integration of tourism into regional development initiatives;
- Lack of community awareness of tourism;
- Lack of product development for international markets;
- Product supply gaps in accommodation, services, attractions and restaurants;
- Variable delivery of quality products and services;
- Variable levels of support from local government;
- Currency of regional tourism development plans;
- Variable strength of industry leadership and appropriate structures; and
- Predominance of small business limits the ability to maximise co-operative marketing.

Strategies

- Progressively shift from marketing product regions to marketing the primary motivators for travel, i.e. desired experiences, destinations and attractions.
- Build consumer awareness and positive attitudes to regional Victoria as part of the ‘you’ll love every piece of Victoria’ imaging campaign.
- Identify a Villages of Victoria program, integrated into regional marketing plans, to promote quality destinations with a strong sense of place, offering boutique accommodation, restaurants, shopping, galleries, markets and appropriate quality service.
- Progressively review and update the regional tourism development plans, with a focus on implementation.
- Identify priority destinations and facilitate development of integrated destination development plans.
- Review Tourism Victoria advisory publications Planning Tourism: Planning Guidelines (1996) and Planning and Building Tourism from Concept to Reality (2000) to reflect sustainability principles and holistic destination planning.
- Retain regional campaign committees in each region.
- Maintain produce regions (renamed campaign regions) to develop three-year marketing plans and implement the Goldfields Regional Co-operative Marketing Program, to maximise strategic co-operative marketing focused on regional product strengths.
- Increase opportunities for regions and operators to leverage from Tourism Victoria activities through the Regional Partnership Program.
- Develop cross-border touring routes with New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania (e.g Capital and Country Touring Route).

VISIT BENDIGO+ 2007-2012

Tourism Development Plan For Greater Bendigo

Bendigo and district is an important visitor destination, located 90 minutes from Melbourne in the heart of Victoria's Goldfields region. The City of Greater Bendigo is one of Victoria's largest and most progressive regional centres. Bendigo has a mild climate, heritage buildings, parks and gardens and impressive streetscapes.

Bendigo, a level 1 destination, forms part of the Goldfields campaign region as defined by the Victorian State Government.

This plan identifies a vision, challenges, opportunities and strategies for growth of tourism in the Bendigo area.

VISION

Nationally the City of Greater Bendigo will be recognised as a significant centre of history, arts & cultural heritage which practices environmentally and socially sustainable tourism.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS 2007-2012

1. Develop a fresh Brand positioning for Bendigo that will embrace the city's core essence and attractiveness.
2. Develop a year round events strategy as the key attractors to Bendigo supporting the core product strengths and facilities.
3. Strategic infrastructure projects will enhance the quality and diversity of tourism product.
4. The seamless 'Bendigo Day and Night Experience'. The visitor will experience high levels of product and service delivery.
5. Government, local businesses and the community will understand the significance of tourism and will work cohesively towards long term environmental, social and economic sustainability.
6. Develop a process for industry and community working together



VISIT BENDIGO+ 2007-2012

Tourism Development Plan For Greater Bendigo

Issues

1. Sustainable Tourism Planning

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Actions: Strategic plan Developing strategies for the 8 key issues listed will form the strategic plan for Bendigo and surrounds – priorities should determine time frames</p> | <p>Timing: High - Commenced</p> | <p>Responsibility: Joint - Bendigo Tourism Board, City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures</p> |
|--|--|---|

2. Marketing

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review Brand Bendigo – undertake appropriate consumer research to gain a better understanding of current consumer needs Maintain/enhance existing marketing activities into the Melbourne markets Prepare VFR strategy (50% of total vis) include community engagement and based around events (Possible engagement of surrounding Councils/LTAs (Loddon, Mt Alex, Maryborough, Heathcote) Develop marketing programs to target high yield visitors eg interstate and international visitors. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct International Marketing Workshops - Identify visitor transit patterns – Echuca, Ballarat, Great Ocean Road | <p>Timing: High Priority High Low High</p> | <p>Responsibility: City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures Bendigo Tourism Board / City of Greater Bendigo</p> |
|--|--|---|

3. Events

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Actions: Prepare Major Events strategy / include Business events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an annual listing of key feature events for Bendigo aligned with Bendigo's major attributes Build in the regularity and continuity of feature events which integrate with the stated major objectives of the Plan. <p>Note: Utilise events as the key attractor to Bendigo which would be well supported by quality restaurants, cafes, gallery, theatre, etc.</p> | <p>Timing: High Priority - 2007</p> | <p>Responsibility: City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures See Cultural Arts Strategy</p> |
|--|--|---|

VISIT BENDIGO+ 2007-2012

Tourism Development Plan For Greater Bendigo

4. Significance of Tourism

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| <p>Actions: Implement the Communications strategy - Undertake a public relations and communications program to convey the significance of Tourism to all stakeholders within Bendigo - Use 'identities' to sell the message Partnerships - Identify key partners, reasoning, benefits, actions</p> | <p>Timing: High</p> | <p>Responsibility: Bendigo Tourism Board</p> |
|---|--------------------------------|---|

5. Professionalism and Excellence

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Actions: Develop a Tourism Excellence Strategy which focuses on developing a customer a service strategy/encompassing lifestyle experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake customer service audit and relay to visitor experience • Ensure Bendigo businesses provide a high standard of professionalism and standards through: • Undertake audit and respond accordingly • Professional development industry seminars • Increased participation in accreditation programs • Participation in business audit programs • Development of excellence in customer service programs • Implementing customer survey program • Build industry leadership program <p>(See Tourism Victoria's Professionalism & Excellence Strategy)</p> | <p>Timing: Maintain</p> <p>High</p> | <p>Responsibility: Bendigo Tourism Board</p> |
|--|--|---|

6. Product Development

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Actions: Conduct a regional tourism product audit, (after the branding exercise) followed by a product development strategy to enhance experiences and to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated/holistic approach to product and infrastructure development, inc CBD Plan. Engage Economic Development Directors / strategies • Cultural art strategy | <p>Timing: Medium after branding</p> | <p>Responsibility: Bendigo Tourism Board Supported by City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures</p> <p>City of Greater Bendigo</p> |
|--|---|--|

VISIT BENDIGO+ 2007-2012

Tourism Development Plan For Greater Bendigo

7. Infrastructure and Investment Attraction

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <p>Actions: Develop an investment attraction strategy on a Master plan for the Bendigo area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include recommendations from product audit • Prepare a plan to integrate and enhance core Bendigo attractions such as a seamless 'Bendigo Day and Night Experience'. • Encourage development of facilities for conference/convention/trade show market.(undertake appropriate research to determine viability • Accommodation needs/supply analysis • Conduct a feasibility study on the development of dynamic heritage retail centre utilising the existing shopping areas. • Incorporate a strategy to improve transport options and links between Bendigo's main attractions. | <p>Timing: High</p> | <p>Responsibility: City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures</p> <p>Bendigo Tourism Board</p> <p>Tourism Victoria</p> |
|--|--------------------------------|---|

8. Industry Leadership and Advocacy

| | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| <p>Actions: Ensure that the Tourism industry provides leadership and advocacy within the tourism, business and political arenas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with the key decision makers and influencers within State and Federal Government – funding major city initiatives, infrastructure • Provide regular verbal updates to the Mayor and Councillors of the COGB • Assist LTAs to better understand the importance of their role, including visitor servicing and provide support to reduce fragmentation and build membership and participation • Establish strategic alliances with neighbouring and 'feeder' destinations and regions (touring routes). • Establish a 'Bendigo Town Leaders' advisory/advocacy/ambassador group. • Investigate structural options for Bendigo Tourism Inc to meet the competitive operating environment of the future. Undertake national benchmarking of various RTA models. | <p>Timing: Medium</p> | <p>Responsibility: City of Greater Bendigo – City Futures</p> <p>Bendigo Tourism Board</p> <p>Board to assist</p> <p>Board to assist process</p> |
|---|----------------------------------|---|

Strategies - Strategic Plan 2007 -2012

Individual strategies need to be living documents and reviewed on a needs basis to ensure currency. Strategic plan can then be a rolling plan always providing a 5 year forward look.

Marketing

A rolling 3-year Marketing Plan which is integrated and consistent with the Marketing Plan for the Goldfields campaign region should be prepared and reviewed annually. The Plan should target current and potential markets eg.

Geographic

Domestic – Melbourne, Regional Victoria, Southern New South Wales, Sydney and the Australian Capital Territory.

International – New Zealand, Asia (Singapore, Malaysia), Europe (UK & Germany) and the emerging China niche market

Psychographic

Bendigo Tourism uses Tourism Australia's identified 3 major tourism groups as primary targets as well as adding another segment for the Intrastate market ;

- The Global Experience Seeker (in all markets apart from Australia and New Zealand);
- The New Zealand Experience Seeker, in New Zealand;
- The Australian Experience Seeker in the Interstate market; and
- The Cultural Enrichment Seeker

Who are they?

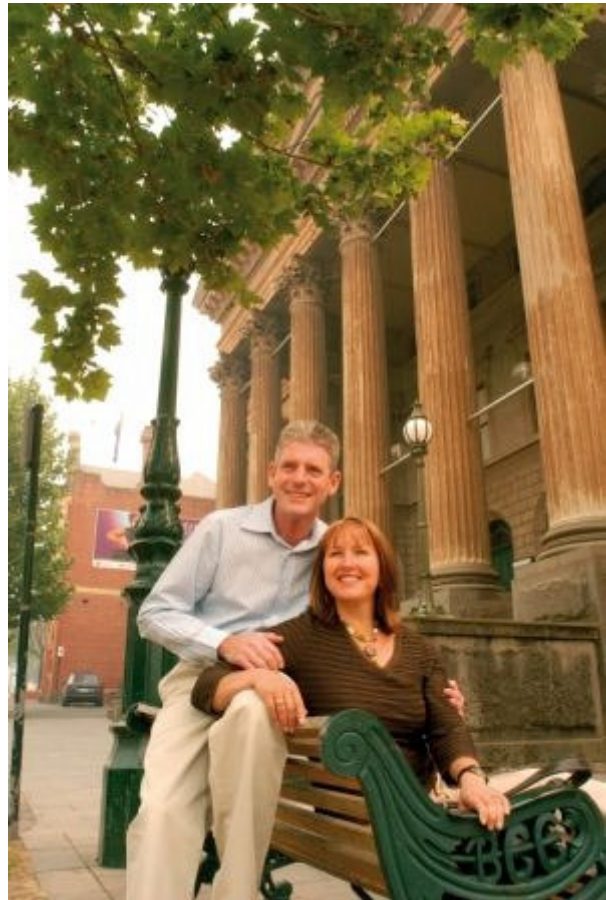
- A global target audience united by values, attitudes and motivations in life, far beyond travel;
- Well educated, interesting, open-minded, happy, positive people who actively enjoy their lives;
- Motivated by opportunities for personal growth and self-fulfilment;
- 'Doers' not just talkers;
- Opinion leaders and advocates within their social circle;
- Searching for new experiences they can 'brag' about; and
- Demanding and discerning about brands and communication.

What are they looking for?

Learn something – new information, angles, insights; Participate in the culture and lifestyle to experience, rather than observe it;

Authentic personal experiences they can talk about. They are sociable and enjoy engaging and interacting with the locals;

The opportunity to be adventurous and travel to challenge themselves – physically, emotionally and mentally;



Cultural Enrichment Seekers - Intrastate market






For all marketing within Victoria, a new market has been created for Bendigo with the help of Tourism Victoria's Research Unit; the "Cultural Enrichment Seeker".

These people are interested in arts, culture and learning. Enjoying the opportunity to explore their interests and share with their family and friends.

These are the people you will find at Albert Park cafes on Sundays, reading weekend inserts, before hitting the local bookshop to scour the fiction aisle.

When travelling, they desire authenticity, but not at the expense of comfort. They are intellectual, curious, and always searching for something authentic and new.

Product Strengths & Attributes

| Product Strengths | Strengths across Greater Bendigo | |
|---|---|---|
| | Primary Strengths | Secondary Strengths |
| Arts, Theatre and Cultural Heritage  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold heritage buildings, architecture and streetscapes • Bendigo Art Gallery and smaller studios and galleries. The Capital Theatre • Gold Heritage – Central Deborah Gold Mine, Bendigo’s Talking Tram, Industrial heritage • Bendigo Pottery • Chinese Heritage – Chinese Golden-Dragon Museum, Joss House, White Hills Cemetery. | |
| Food and Wine  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award winning shiraz and cabernet producing cellar doors. • Quality restaurants and good al fresco dining • Traditional and boutique pubs and hotels, eg: Wine Bank • Bendigo Winemakers Trail (Vine to Vintage) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winery Cycling Trails, Cellar door. • Emerging quality local produce eg: BC3, Let’s Get Saucy. |
| Events  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Uncorked • Heathcote Wine and Food • Easter Festival • Summer Fiesta • Swap Meet • Bendigo Cup • Sheep & Wool Show | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bendigo Madison / Major Sporting events. • Sporting Events |
| Shopping  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large commercial centre • Antiques / Arts / Crafts • Cellar door winery experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Precincts eg: View Street • Boutique shops |
| Touring  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to Melbourne Capital and Country Touring Route | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Dividing Trail • Goldfields Touring Route |

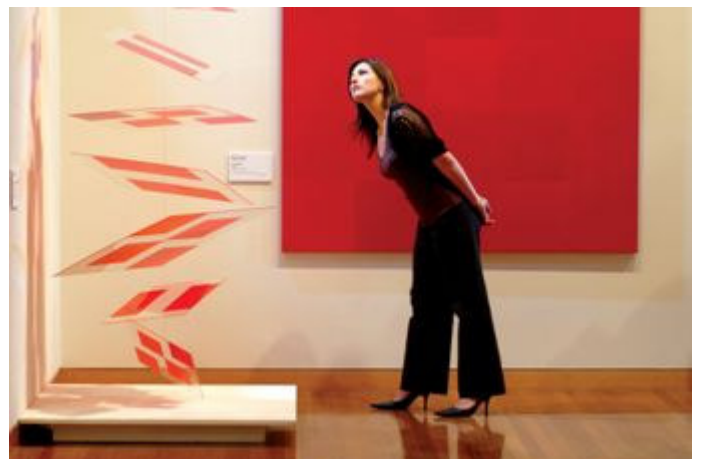
Opportunities

Marketing and Events

- Continue to capitalise on the regions relative ease of access and proximity to Melbourne and Melbourne airport.
- Develop stronger interstate and international marketing.
- Develop strategic infrastructure projects that will enhance the quality and diversity of tourism product.
- Develop a seamless 'Bendigo Day and Night Experience' for visitors featuring high levels of product and service delivery.
- Develop and understanding across government, local businesses and the community about the significance of tourism and build broad support for long term environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- Coordination of existing product into experience oriented 'packages' for consumers.
- Development of a significant event which highlights Bendigo's arts and culture and food and wine product.
- Continued development of existing and future events, for example the 2006 Commonwealth Games.
- Leverage our Chinese Heritage to attract an interstate and international market.
- Work more closely with surrounding Tourism Regions (Mt Alexander, Loddon, Central Goldfields, Echuca and Ballarat).
- VFR strategy.
- Develop for Bendigo
- History, culture, arts branding across the city through key events and activities.

Professionalism and standards

- Provide training and skill development of operators to raise customer service standards to exceed visitor expectations.
- Benchmark visitor satisfaction through the customer care audit program to facilitate a working relationship and networking function with industry groups.
- To develop an umbrella association for accommodation providers.
- Increase the number of accredited businesses.



Product Development

- Integrated/holistic approach to product development and infrastructure.
- Develop niche markets, such as the schools/group market.
- Continue to build on heritage, arts and cultural strengths of Bendigo.
- Application for a 'Goldfields' World Heritage listing, in conjunction with Mount Alexander Shire.
- Develop and enhance existing attractions. Encourage operators to continually review and refresh their products.
- Further work to encourage integration with the Retail sector.

Opportunities

Sustainable Planning

Encourage sustainable planning and development of tourism, incorporating balanced environmental, social and economic considerations.

Infrastructure and Investment Attraction

- Encourage development of facilities for conference/convention/trade show market
- Encourage and support a dynamic 'heritage' retail centre.
- Attract and develop new tourism projects.
- Develop a strategy to influence the development of improved public transport within Bendigo.
- Develop additional night experience projects.
- Integrate and continually develop core attractions e.g. Central Deborah Mine, Bendigo's Talking Tram, Chinese Heritage Attractions and cultural precinct, on 'The Bendigo Day and Night Experience'.
- Influence the development of improved public transport within Greater Bendigo.



Issues and Challenges

The challenge for Bendigo is to achieve full commitment for integrated tourism development from all levels of Government, business and the wider community, and to work cohesively towards long term economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Marketing and Events

- The heritage experience is well recognised but requires ongoing integration with the contemporary experience with the city.
- Bendigo be recognised as part of Melbourne and surrounds.
- Develop Bendigo as a major destination with own surrounds & brand encompassing Mount Alexander Shire, Campaspe and Loddon.
- Work in conjunction with surrounding LGA's to strategically counter Melbourne's centrality of tourism significance.



Significance of Tourism

- Convert support for tourism into active participants for Bendigo residents.
- The lack of a shared vision between business, community, and Government
- Gaining a retail sector commitment to Tourism.

Tourism Industry Structures

- Local Tourism associations are relatively weak with low membership support
- Partnerships between regional operators and the travel industry, for example wholesalers, needs improving.
- Develop more strategic alliances within and between industry associations.
- Structures across Local Governments – develop regional structures with surrounding local government associations.

Professionalism and Standards

- Encourage businesses to keep investing into their businesses to develop standards and new products and services in line with increasing consumer expectations.
- Further consumer research needed, particularly regarding visitor satisfaction and audiences.
- Develop an experience strategy (similar to Tasmania strategy) across Greater Bendigo.

Infrastructure and Investment Attraction

- The lack of accommodation supply for conference market.
- Lack of 4 star and above accommodation. e.g. serviced hotels.
- Influencing stakeholders to consider tourism as part of the planning agenda.
- Attract investment by Superannuation managers for investment in the Great Bendigo area.

Environment and Sustainability

- Develop an environment strategy
- Establish industry guidelines to provide a more environmentally friendly tourism industry
- Policies to be reviewed in terms of “greening” the industry.