



A GUIDE TO TOURISM

In Campaspe Shire

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#1 WHY TOURISM?

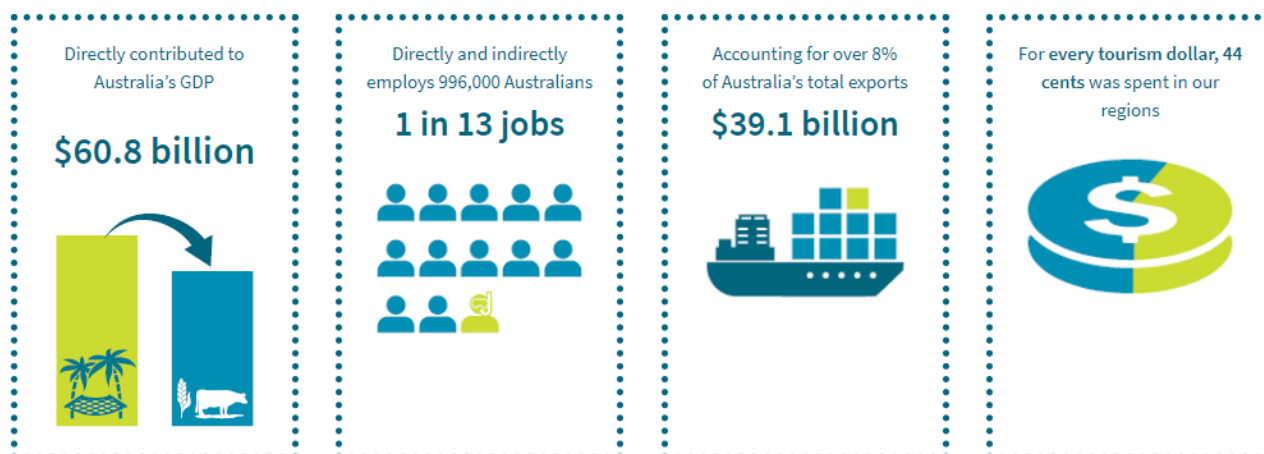
Tourism is Big Business

Tourism is big business.

Did you know that the tourism industry contributes to over 1,000 jobs (7% of total employment) in Campaspe Shire with an output of almost \$200 million? Across the Murray region, the tourism industry supports 1 in 4 jobs.

Echuca Moama attracts an average of 784,000 domestic overnight visitors, with visitors spending nearly 2.2 million nights in the region (*Tourism Research Australia YE September 2019*). A total dollar value of \$364 million spent in region is attributed to tourism – through domestic day, overnight and international travellers.

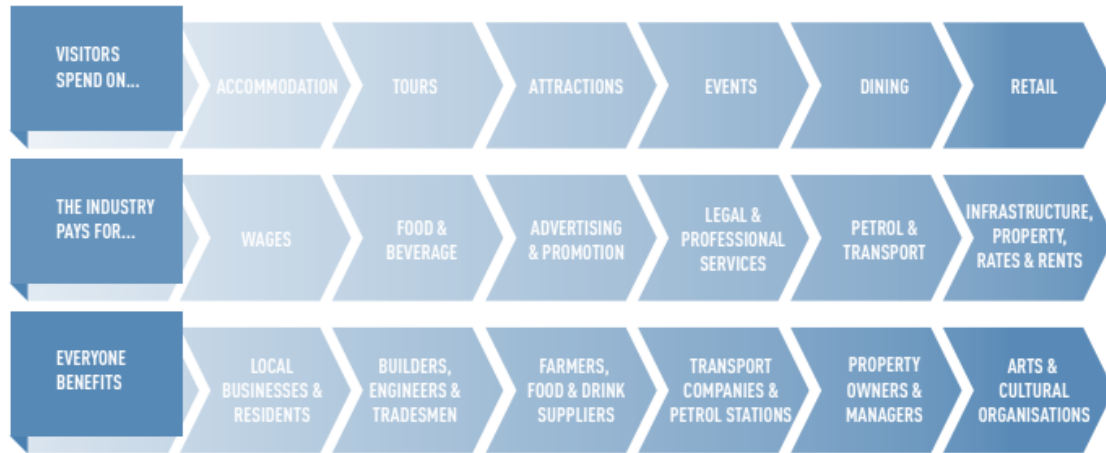
Nationally – tourism directly contributed over \$60 billion to our Gross Domestic Profit and provided jobs for more than 5% of the entire nation.



(Source: TRA 2018-19)

A guide to tourism

Tourism is not only big business – but *everyone's business*. It's not only direct operators, accommodation & hospitality venues that benefit from a tourist's dollar. The flow on effect is far and wide reaching -



This means we are operating in a **very competitive marketplace** and we need to make sure we continue to deliver high-quality visitor experiences.

This guide has been designed for operators to provide strategies, advice and practical insights on tourism product development.

We can assist to:

- Plan for your tourism business to maximise the potential for success
- Deliver great tourism experiences which meet consumers' needs and exceed expectations
- Showcase your destination, to help bring you success and profitability
- Provide access to professional development opportunities, including workshops and mentoring

Uncover your WHY

Before diving into a new or existing tourism business - **consider why** you want to enter into the industry.

The tourism industry comes with many perks – an exciting and diverse industry, away from a typical office environment and standard 9-5 grind, working collaboratively cross industry on exciting projects, fulfilling your hobby in a dreamy holiday location and more.

However like any business – the hours are long, the work is hard and success can sometimes feel out of reach.

We don't mean to shatter your dream before you start, but do consider:

- *Seasonality of demand* - Most tourist destinations are characterised by fluctuating periods of demand called "peaks", "shoulders" and "troughs". Campaspe is very fortunate – ours typically lasts from October to April.
- *Acts of God* – the start of 2020 has been plagued by drought, bushfires and a virus pandemic; all of which directly and indirectly affect all industries but particularly tourism. These totally unprecedented impacts can't be mitigated; so how do we keep afloat?
- *Long term market development* – be prepared to get through three years of operation before you reach maximum capacity.
- *High fixed costs & high capital intensity* - Seasonality and long-term market development factors often mean the asset will initially be under-utilised and require substantial upfront capital investment.
- *Single use nature of assets* – it's not enough to be a single use asset anymore (e.g. accommodation) How can you be multi-functional? Can your coffee shop sell vintage clothes and run workshops, all at the same time?

Business structure

For many start-up businesses, planning a business structure may not be a logical first step. However, it is important to give thought to the structure of your business prior to setting up. Your businesses structure will ultimately impact on your business dealings, including the safety of your personal assets.

- *Sole trader* – the business has no separate legal existence from its owner. As a sole trader, you will be responsible for the liabilities of your business.
- *Partnership* – two or more people share a business and can legally share profits, risks and losses according to the terms set out in the partnership contract. In the absence of a formal contract, the law will assume that each partner has an equal share in the business.
- *Company* – a legal entity separate from its shareholders. Company Directors have additional legal and reporting obligations.

Registering a company - If you decide that a company structure best suits your business, then you need to register as a company. Companies should be registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission by completing a Form 201 - application for registration as a company. Visit www.asic.gov.au for more information.

It is recommended that you consult a business adviser, accountant or solicitor for advice before you decide on your business structure. For more information see the Australian Securities and Investment Commission website at www.asic.gov.au.

Essentials for start-ups: ABN and trademark

Under the Business Names Act (1962) every business name must be registered, except where the name is that of the owners. For example, John Smith Plumbing may be exempt from registration, but Rochester Backpackers would require registration.

Business names must be registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria at an annual cost. For more information see www.consumer.vic.gov.au or phone 1300 55 81 81.

A registered trademark entitles the owner of the trademark to exclusive rights to its use throughout Australia. It identifies a product or service and differentiates it from similar products or services.

A trademark can be a word, phrase, letter, number, logo, colour, picture etc. Registration of trademarks is not compulsory, but is advisable. Trademarks are registered through IP Australia. For more information or to lodge an online application see www.ipaustralia.gov.au or phone 1300 65 10 10.

Never fear – we are here to guide you through all steps and questions you may have, to help you determine the best way forward for your new idea or existing business.

#2 GETTING STARTED

Research – what do YOU stand for?

Gaining a solid understanding of the tourism industry in Australia, Victoria and in your region is the important first step in formulating a successful business strategy.

Research can help you unearth who is currently visiting your destination and who is paying for visitor experiences similar to yours. Try and uncover everything you can about your potential customers as through this process, you can understand their **needs**, **attitudes** and **behaviour**.

Research however is not just the initial step – it should be ongoing to ensure you remain up to date. The tourism industry is constantly changing through economic conditions, technology, cultural and social trends. Staying up-to-date with market trends and changes in the industry will help you plan and be prepared for anything that may affect your business.

If you are interested in receiving the latest tourism statistics for our region along with other important updates, please subscribe to our regular Eco Dev Newsletter via Council's webpage - <https://www.campaspe.vic.gov.au/Work/Business-support-promotion/Business-newsletter>

The first step in establishing a successful tourism business is careful research and planning. Taking the time to research your market, your competition and create a plan will help you set a vision for your business, identify opportunities and react swiftly to market changes.

Before buying or launching a tourism business, it's then a good idea to:

- Prepare a detailed feasibility study to assess all areas of your business and areas of risk
- Prepare a business plan that covers management, marketing, finance and human resources.

Focus on these key elements to shape your vision and purpose:

- **Mission** – clear statement of purpose which guides everything you do & actions you take to do so.
- **Values** – the underlying philosophy behind the experience you offer.
- **Goals** – make them SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) and you can't go wrong. This sets the standard for your business operation.

Your business plan should be an ever evolving document that changes as you change. You don't want to pour a concrete plan, set everything in stone, and realise your customers are not following the path do you?



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In essence, your research will help you determine the needs below:

- **Establish demand** – just because YOU love your idea, is there a need or want? Will people buy it and at what price? TIP: talk to your local tourist information centre. They're on the front line liaising with industry members, suppliers, operators and customers every day and collect their own data and insights. Call Echuca Moama and District Visitor Information Centre on 03 5481 7555.
- **Competitive analysis** – do yourself a favour, & research your market. Is there a gap in the market or are you playing in a saturated market? What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats?



- **Seasonality** – we referred to this earlier, but it's so important to understand the bell curve of your region & consequentially its visitors. Timing is everything, and so is cash flow. Don't be afraid to ask other local businesses for first hand experiences and advice.
- **Target audience** - not only consider the geographical area you are operating in, but the kind of customer you are targeting. Customer profiling is a handy way to uncover information about your ideal (or existing) customer's habits. When are they eating, sleeping, moving? How are they buying? What are they watching? How do they like to be spoken to?

This process is referred to as customer profiling. It create a specific portrait of your customer, containing all of the above information, to aid decision making for your tourism business.



By completing your business plan, SWOT analysis and customer profiles, you're uncovering your **USP** – Unique Selling Proposition. This is what makes you stand out from the crowd, attracts your customer to you and not the competition, and makes your business uniquely yours. It's also the perfect promotional ammunition, as nobody can copy or compete with you!



TIP: Campaspe Shire's Economic Development team has access to many helpful tools that will assist the research phase including statistics, economic modelling and customer profiling templates. Get in touch!

Lean on me – the power of outsourcing

Before you go launching into the stratosphere, consider just how many hats you as the business owner will be wearing.

The list of below external suppliers are just some that you may need to avoid any sticky situations before opening your door:

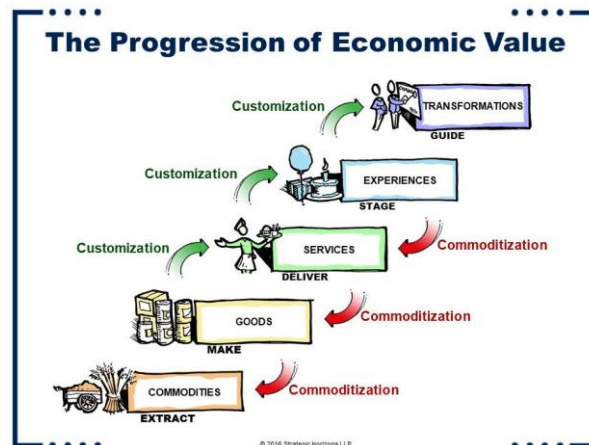
- **FINANCE:** Accountant, financial advisor, bookkeeper – forecasting cash flow, investment or budgeting.
- **LEGAL:** solicitor or legal practitioner – lease agreements, sale of business contracts, start up and operational contracts, franchises or partner business options.
- **INSURANCE:** use a broker or company to determine and assist with the three categories (Assets and
- **COUNCIL:** economic development, planning, local laws, environmental health and more. We understand that it can be challenging to navigate Council departments, so use the Eco Dev team as your first point of contact and we will lead the way. We're a friendly bunch and happy to share ideas and advice. We can also assist with grants and funding opportunities as they become available.

TIP: although starting up or running a business can be a costly exercise, is it worth engaging other businesses or outsourcing different tasks? It can help you save considerable time, money, energy (and stress levels!) often businesses outsource invoicing, administration, HR, marketing & cleaning to allow them to work on the business, rather than it in. The rise of the virtual assistant is also worth investigating too!

#3 CREATING YOUR PRODUCT

The experience economy

Tourism has evolved into the delivery of an experience, rather than a product or service, and tourism operators are in the business of **creating memories** for their customers.

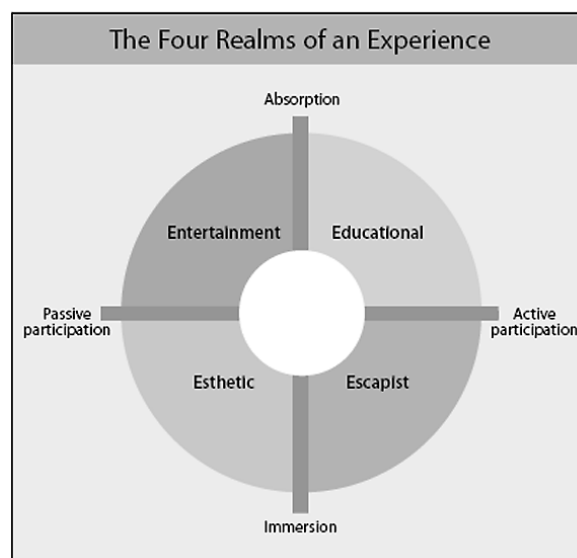


This effectively means that every element of the tourist's visit to a destination (or individual operator) becomes part of the experience.

Was the accommodation suitable, were the locals friendly and helpful, were the attractions affordable, public toilets clean and easy to find, accessible parking, directions to your business adequate? Alongside elements that make the experience unique to the individual visitor, these are all important questions that will determine the 'visitor experience'.

Consider these connections and how you can build them into your experience at every customer touch point. If your customers feel they have made a personal connection, this leads to positive reviews, repeat business and organic growth through word-of-mouth.

Experience = education + entertainment



But... what does this mean????

Be REAL – be AUTHENTIC – & meet (or exceed) your customers' expectations

Many businesses are guilty of overselling their product or service in order to capture a sale. In the tourism industry this can be very dangerous. If a visitor comes to your business expecting certain promises that you can't deliver, not only will they not return, they are likely to tell other potential customers to avoid your business – or blast it on a public forum such as a review site or social media. It can be hard to bounce back from this.

A great example of authenticity comes from Big 4 Bellarine <https://www.facebook.com/BIG4Bellarine/>

Sophie & her family purchased a vacant block of land with a \$7million loan hanging over their heads. There was nothing to market – only a working construction site and piles of dirt – whilst the accommodation facility was being built. However Sophie saw this as an opportunity to create a picture of what the venture would become. Ten months later they were cash positive and welcoming guests in droves – all through the power of authentic storytelling – no hard sells or overpromises, fake news stories, reviews or stock imagery. Throughout this journey Sophie unearthed exactly who her customer is, when they are online, when they need a holiday, what they like and don't like – and every business decision reverts back to her audience.

Creating a bookable experience

Offering a walk-in experience is only one element to a tourism business. Add value and grow your appeal (and revenue) through creating a bookable experience. Given we're playing in the experience economy space—this is a no-brainer.

What is a bookable experience?

A tour or activity that has a set price, time and can be purchased/confirmed in advance of travel either on your website or your local Visitor Information Centre.

What makes up a bookable experience?

- Set pricing structure & schedule
- Consistency – same for each customer
- Takes place at a set time day for set duration

And the benefits?

- Value-add to the experience (and dollar spend!)
- Confirmed, in advance booking – a guarantee!
- Grow revenue
- Increased time spent by the customer in your business
- Tap into new promotional and sales channels



TIP: Call Council's Tourism Support Officer if you need some assistance brainstorming your bookable product.

Online Booking Platform

An online booking system can help you sell your product by providing live availability, prices and secure bookings directly to your customers.

It can also distribute your product to online marketplaces, such as online travel agents and visitor information centres. Additionally, online booking systems help you manage your inventory and streamline payments and operations.

There are many systems out there, such as BookingBoss, SiteMinder and Bookeasy. If you decide to use an online booking system, do plenty of research and get competitive quoting to find the right one to suit your requirements.

TIP: Echuca Moama & District Visitor Information Centre are always looking for new bookable experiences and can sell experiences on your behalf, taking the stress out of a separate booking platform for you. Plus, the ticket sale commission keeps money local.

The power of the customer

How do you get your information? And who do you trust?

Word of Mouth is the most powerful form of advertising. Tourism Is the number one NUMBER ONE customer service industry. **Travellers talk!**

Have you ever heard the age-old saying – “*the customer is always right*”?

Turns out its true. The most successful tourism businesses consistently offer outstanding customer service and put the customer at the core of every decision they make. This is difficult because we personally love our businesses and product so much, but we must not think of ourselves - but the customer.

Be aware as you enter the industry that your excellent customer service delivery will affect the success of your business.

While it might sound basic in theory, *remember your soft skills*:

- Keep a smile on your dial – even if it is the last thing you want to do
- Become a problem solver – even something as simple as providing advice on the next leg of their journey
- Listen, listen, listen – relate to complete strangers
- Talking the Talk – you'll have to answer the same questions time and time again, so consistency is key
- Always on call – be available at times your customers are active on the web, social media or phone (which may not be the time that suits you)



The customer journey

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With more people than ever travelling and sharing their experiences (online and beyond), consumers are more informed about travel products and experiences.

The modern traveller is becoming increasingly demanding, seeking unique and customised experiences.

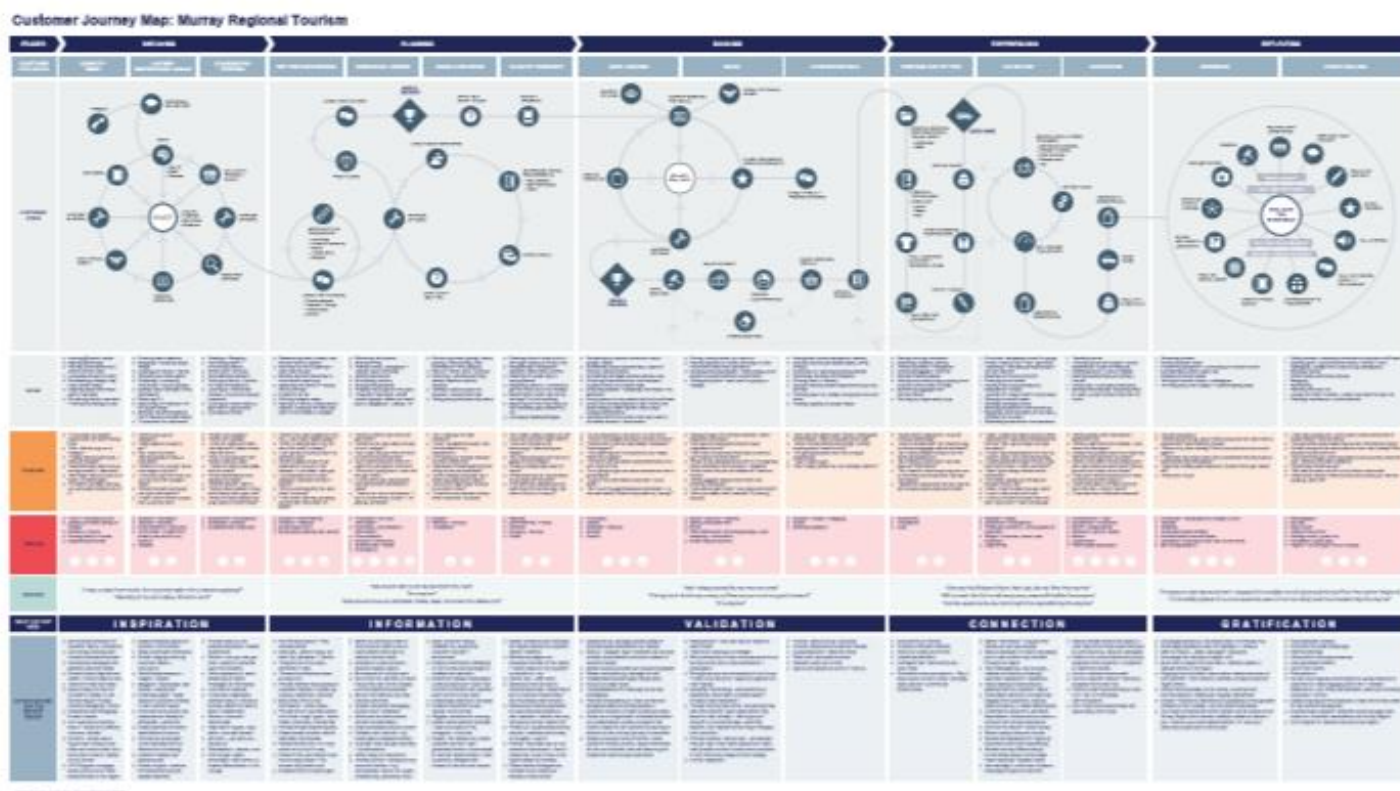
In the research phase, you should identify who to target.

Instead of targeting everyone, focus on one target market then drill down further into market segments to find your ideal customer.

So - how does a visitor come to decide on visiting and spending with your tourism business?

Unfortunately it's not as straightforward as you may think.

Murray Regional Tourism Board conducted an in-depth visitor transformation project in 2019, unearthing a five step cyclical process with many, many steps involved...



Overwhelmed? See Tourism Support Officer for a large-scale print out and pointers

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From this research project, the five stages of travel (5SOT) for Murray visitors and thus our strategic focus areas, were determined:

- Dreaming
- Planning
- Booking
- Experiencing
- Reflecting

These focus areas reflect what the customer needs from the region (or business) across their journey, linked to the five stages of travel above.



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Challenge yourself to think like your customer and embark on the 5SOT journey with them.

Does your business offering flow, make sense & meet their needs?

Price + selling

Setting the price for your product can be a challenge. How do you know how much to charge your customers?

Your research and planning in the business planning stage should lead the way. Research your competitors or similar businesses and estimate what you think the market will bear.

There are two types of rate the tourism industry refer to depending on your business model:

Nett Rate = operating costs + your profit margin

The nett rate is the absolute minimum you could sell your product for and still make a profit. Distributors will need to know your nett rate in order to add their mark up or commission.

Retail rate = nett rate + distribution costs

You provide your retail rate when dealing directly with customers (that is, the general public). This includes featuring it on your website and on any promotional material targeting the customer directly.

TIP: remember, you should be constantly evaluating and re-evaluating your offering. This allows you to reduce costs or increase the value of your product if need be.

Licensing & Permits

There may be licences and permits you require depending on your business model. We've summarised the most common ones below for you:

Licence / Permit	Description	Issued by
Planning permit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constructing, altering, demolishing or painting a building Displaying a sign Applying for a licence (eg, liquor licence, second-hand dealer etc) Subdividing land Clearing native vegetation from land Changing the use of a property. 	Campaspe Shire - Planning Department Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation (VCGLR)
Local Laws permits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street furniture (eg tables, umbrellas, etc) Outdoor display of goods for sale, advertising. Outdoor consumption of food and alcohol on Council controlled streets <p><i>(controlled by Campaspe Shire Trading Code of Practice) Policy XXXX</i></p>	Campaspe Shire – Local Laws
Building permit	Building constructions / alterations	Campaspe Shire - Building Surveyor
Food handling	Where any food (including alcohol) is being stored, prepared, manufactured, served and or consumed for sale.	Campaspe Shire - Environmental Health Officer
Prescribed accommodation	B & B, Hotels, Motels, Hostels, Student Dormitories & Holiday Camps are all Prescribed Accommodation and require registration with Council	Campaspe Shire - Environmental Health Officer
Commercial Tour Operator permit	For operators offering tours on public land	Parks Victoria
Commercial Passenger Vehicle Licences	For operators who intend to carry passengers for hire or reward	Victorian Taxi DirectorateNSW Maritime Services
Boat Operator License and Crewing Certifications	For operators of commercial watercraft	Department of Transport – Marine Safety Victoria or (for Murray River operations) NSW Maritime Services
Paintball or Skirmish Games	Operators must be licences to possess, carry or own paintball markers.	Victoria Police
Travel Agent's Licence	To operate as a travel agent	Business Licensing Authority

TIP: it's up to you as the business operator to be aware of laws, permits and licenses – so best to check in with Campaspe Shire's Economic Development team to check you're across everything.

Now you've determined the price, given the business the opportunity to grow by using the right systems to manage and can sell your products both directly and via distribution partners.

Web & social media

The internet is a key tool for visitors in all 5SOT, so it's integral that your business has a web presence. A simple website or Facebook page is imperative in establishing and increasing business.

Create a website using a basic HTML – Wix, squarespace – or engage a contractor
With or without a website **you need to be on social media.**

TIP: This may be the first point of contact for your customers, so it needs to present your business strongly to capture your audience.

Wait! What information should be included on my website or social media platform?

The internet is an integral marketing tool for your business, so general information that a potential visitor may be seeking should be included on any and ALL of your pages including:

- About me
- Location, open hours
- Pricing or an indication of your rates.
- Booking information –the opportunity to capture a booking or convert interest into a booking is essential
- Links to other platforms – eg social media pages
- Contact information – how to find out more or speak to you directly?

In most cases, people looking at your website or social media page will want to find the information they require very quickly. Research shows that if people don't find the information they need **within three clicks** once at your website they will leave and look for another provider.

So, KISS – minimal words, easy navigation, sharp and to the point.

TIP: once again, think like your customer. When you're planning a trip, making a purchase or booking something, what do you look for or what turns you off a particular brand?

*How do I choose and register a **domain name**?*

A domain name is an address that is used to find your website. Your domain name is your online identity and your brand, so when choosing a name it is important to choose one that represents your business. Search engines also use your domain name to help identify your website in their listings.

Once you have decided on an appropriate name, you can check if it is available by searching on the Australian Domain Name Administrator website at www.auda.org.au

There are a range of companies which will register or host your domain name for a fee. These vary, so don't be afraid to shop around to get what suit your needs.

#4 WORKING IN AND ON THE BUSINESS

All the planning is done, and you're going out in the market.

Marketing

First up – what *is* marketing?

Marketing involves **everything that can influence a potential customer to use your business and/or return to your business**. Many people believe that advertising is the key marketing tool, but in actual fact it is only one in a long list of activities. Many can be costly, so it is important to consider what is going to provide the best return for your business, and when starting-up this can mean taking educated guesses.

The marketing mix –



First things first – *prepare to market*.

Copy & visuals

You identified your USP (Unique Selling Proposition) in the research and planning phase.

Now you need to harness this and use it to deliver - \$\$\$!

Copy is the written content you use on your promotional tools to showcase your business and thus, nail a sale. It's also going to convey your brand's personality to the customer.

Quality copy should:

- Sells the experience, not just the product. Appeal to the customer emotions!
- Is conversational: imagine you are talking to your customers face-to-face.
- Is relaxed, natural and informal. Inject some personality and have some fun.
- Considers your audience: keep your customers in mind, make it personal, give them the information they need and make it easy to understand.

Craft your copy with these tips:

BE CONCISE	USE POWERFUL SENTENCES	USE SIMPLE WORDS	MAKE KEY POINTS CLEAR
Sometimes one word is better than three.	Aim for short sentences with an active voice.	Exclude words that you would not use in real life, keep the language simple and conversational.	Use dot points and short sentences to make it easy to see key information.
DON'T REPEAT SUPERLATIVES	THINK ABOUT THE LAYOUT	START AND END STRONG	GET FEEDBACK
Edit copy and check for repeated superlatives like "wonderful time in wonderful scenery".	Put the most important information first, use easy-to-read fonts and keep spacing and sizes consistent.	Grab the readers' attention right away, keep them interested, then give them a reason to take action.	Ask a writer or editor to read your copy. Listen to their advice and make edits.

Imagery speaks for itself – a picture is worth a thousand words. With so much distraction and clutter in the market, images can create cut-through. They also create a personal connection. *Please don't undervalue their power!*

You'll need a few different types that are all equally important and have different purposes:

- *Hero images* - these are the key shots that capture the main focus of your product and can be used on your brochure covers and website.
- *Supporting images* - these show more details of your product and could include room types, tours, activities and menu options. Aerial shots of your location are also visually powerful.
- *High res* - it is essential to have some high resolution professional images for marketing purposes (particularly media and PR.)
- *Candid shots* - ideal for social media and could be taken by you, your staff or your customers, on a smartphone or camera.

We recommend:

- Include people (talent) that your ideal customers can relate to.
- Showcase the business destination and location.

- Try and be natural and not staged. Ensure your talent is relaxed.
- Make images lively. Include people — no empty restaurants, hotel rooms or tour buses.
- Show people engaging in activities — action shots are ideal.
- Think about the composition — consider what's going on around you in the background, lighting, colour and movement.

Videos bring your story and your experience to life. It's a good idea for tourism businesses to consider producing long and short video content for their products.

Appealing videos:



Marketing Channels

Ok.... So what are your options?

There's quite a few, and they're constantly changing and evolving. Some ideas below:

- *Print advertising* – choose wisely as it can be \$\$\$\$.
- *Social media advertising* – great bang for buck. You can run and change the ads as you go to target the right customer, and you get concise post campaign reports.
- *PR* – can be unpaid or paid promotional opportunity to reach your target market. Think about the media source and what its audience is interested in and tailor your message. Also consider using social media influencers that align with your product. They have tens of thousands of loyal followers and generally a quick turnaround time!
- *Marketing collateral* – Brochures, guides, itinerary maps etc are used extensively in tourism, collected prior travel or during trips to plan the next destination or stop. Consider not only what you need to say but how you plan to distribute it and using what channels.
- *Word of mouth & customer service* – once again; critical to your business. Plan to provide more service than you're customers expect and you'll work toward exceeding their expectations.
- *Packaging* – working with other businesses that are likely to attract a similar target market may enable you to increase your exposure and share the costs.
- *Direct mail* – keeping in touch with your existing customers (especially in a business that is likely to attract repeat visitors) can be vital to encourage their return. Collecting email addresses and providing updates on information can keep your business front of mind.
- *Events* – generating special events or attending specialist e.g. trade shows.
- *Sponsorship* – a great way to align directly with your target market. Could be a sporting team, event, game, award, personality...
- *Wayfinding* – make sure your customers can find you. Use Google SEO, Google maps, good directions referring to easy to find land marks, and signage to make sure those that already want to find you can. More on this below under **Tourism Signage**
- *Co-operative marketing* - Tourism is a competitive field where destinations compete against destinations. To compete, local and regional businesses which would normally see themselves as being in competition, need to work in a co-operative manner to jointly promote their destination. Co-op marketing uses power in numbers to position an individual business on a platform that alone they may not be able to afford, e.g. airline in-flight magazines, trade show stands, TV commercials.
- *Member based organisations* - such as Echuca Moama and District Tourism Association (EMDTA).
- *Discounts / value adding* – providing a time-limited discount or adding value (eg an additional product or service for the same price) can assist in influencing your customers to choose you over your

competitors. However, there are a number of things to consider. When discounting or value adding it is important to make sure your potential customers are aware of your offer, there is no point offering discounts to visitors who have already selected your business. Discounts can also be seen as a pushy sales pitch in a modern market, and can cheapen your brand. Also, do not fall into the trap of permanently needing to discount to attract customers, as you may find customer will only choose your business at discounted rates.

- *ATDW listings* – the only way to be featured on the Visit Victoria website and a first stop for media and journalists – add your listing via their website <https://atdw.com.au/listing-with-atdw/>

Effective marketing is limited only by your imagination, with the most successful marketing activities being unique and certainly different from competitors.

TIP: check out our Free Events Promotion document for more options on spreading the word

INSIDER TIP: Visit Victoria's corporate website

The State Government's corporate website lists a number of tools and support for businesses in the tourism industry. Resources include market planning and positioning, advertising, producing brochures, digital marketing and trade marketing.

In particular, Visit Victoria's corporate Tourism excellence guides are well worth reading.

Categories include:

- Business excellence
- Understanding visitor needs
- Marketing excellence
- People excellence

For more information go to <https://corporate.visitvictoria.com/resources/industry-development>

Evaluation

Evaluating your marketing activities is very important to assess which activity works best and is cost effective for your business. However, evaluating marketing is incredibly difficult and can be costly. As with any business, a potential customer may be influenced by your marketing activities but not make the decision to visit your business or purchase your product until a later date.

Tourism signage

Tourist signage (for attractions, accommodation and services) is used both in Australia and internationally to assist visitors to find attractions or services they may be looking for.

There are **three different types of signs**:

- *Directional signs* – white on a green background that usually direct motorists to destinations and townships.
- *Tourist Attraction signs* – white on a brown background indicating features and attractions (commercial and non-commercial) of significant interest to the visitor (as determined by a Criteria set by Tourism Victoria and VicRoads). A detailed description of the Criteria for Tourist Signing on VicRoads roads can be found at: www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
- *Service signs* – white on a blue background, used to direct motorists to a range of facilities, including accommodation providers, petrol stations, rest stops, community facilities etc.

Important things you need to know about tourist signage:

- Only 4% of visitors use signage for wayfinding – they are more likely to use Google or the internet to find your property in advance to taking their trip. So make sure you are present on all of these platforms!
- Tourist signs are not used for promotional purposes, but to reassure the visitor. They should be used in conjunction with a wider marketing plan to direct motorists who are already aware of your business.
- Signs on all major roads are controlled by VicRoads.
- Signs on other roads are controlled by Campaspe Shire
- Applications for any tourist signage (regardless of it being controlled by VicRoads or Council) must go through Campaspe Shire's Tourism Support Officer
- Generally, only one sign will be permitted per business and in Echuca signs are restricted to those businesses not in the central area.
- All costs associated with tourist signs must be met by the business.

HELP?! Council's Tourism Support Officer can provide the guidelines, answer signage questions and assist you to apply for tourist signage.

Associations

What is a *local tourism association*?

An association is a group of members who come together for a common purpose. Their motive is to combine their energy and share resources to create or provide services and programs which they desire for themselves or to give to others.

There are many different types of associations that you can subscribe to, to assist your tourism business to grow and develop.

- *Tourism Australia* – the Australian Government agency responsible for international tourism marketing. Tourism Australia's role is to:
 - Influence people to travel to and throughout Australia.
 - Increase the economic benefits to Australia from tourism.
 - Help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Australia.
- *Visit Victoria* - supports the development and marketing of sustainable tourism destinations and experiences within our state, to increase awareness and attract visitors. Each state/territory has their own government tourism agency that works with the industry.
- *Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC)* – non-governmental agency and peak industry body for Victorian tourism industry. Become a paid member for additional benefits, exposure to networking, industry development opportunities and more.
- *Murray Regional Tourism* – regional tourism is vital sector of the Australian economy and key to the sustainability and vibrancy of many communities. Our regional tourism board covers Campaspe Shire and 12 other Local Government areas along the Murray.

Local tourism organisations –coordinate local destination marketing and strengthen local tourism businesses by liaising with regional tourism authorities and state bodies on behalf of operators. Operators are encouraged to make contact and participate with the local regional tourism organisation in their area.

Echuca Moama and District Tourism

Echuca Moama and District Tourism Association Incorporated (EMDTA) is a membership-based organisation whose key role is to market the destination and assist visitors.

The Association provides visitor services within Campaspe Shire, through operating the main accredited Echuca Moama Visitor Information Centre at Heygarth St Echuca, managing www.echucamoama.com & social media pages dedicated to destination marketing the region. EMDTA also assist the Rochester Sports Museum to operate as an ancillary information hub.

Membership is open to any business in Campaspe Shire and Murray River Council with fees determined on the type and size of the business and proximity to Echuca Moama.

Council recognises the association as our peak destination marketing & visitor servicing body, and supports its contribution to tourism for the region through two separate funding agreements.

All new tourism operators are encouraged to speak with EMDTA to discuss if membership will benefit their business.

EMT members receive opportunities such as:

- Opportunity to display brochures in the Visitor Information Centre – over 120,000 visitors per year
- Listings, links and ability to facilitate online bookings on www.echucamoama.com – receiving over one million hits annually.
- Advertising in the Echuca-Moama Official Visitors Guide – 80,000 copies distributed across Victoria, South Australia and the Eastern Seaboard.
- Cooperative marketing opportunities
- Opportunities to participate in visiting journalist and television media familiarisation program.
- Automated accommodation reservation system – telephone, online and in-person booking service
- Promotional opportunities – such as product representation at holiday and travel shows.
- marketing advice and support
- Workshops & seminar opportunities
- Industry networking meetings
- Access to the EMDTA Membership database
- Access to research data

Are there other groups I can join to help my business?

Yes! There are a range of formal and informal groups and associations set up to assist tourism operators.

Some examples include:

- Echuca Moama Accommodation Association
- Rushworth Events
- Kyabram Chamber of Commerce
- Rochester Business Network
- Gunbower Development Committee
- Local District Plan Groups

... plus many individual groups based on industry and niche interests eg creative arts, sports, etc. depending on the location and type of your business. Ask Council's Tourism Support Officer for advice on the best fit for you.

Murray Regional Tourism

Campaspe Shire are part of the Murray Regional Tourism (MRT) board. It assists the region's tourism industry with improvements in the supply and quality of tourism experiences and an increased awareness of destinations, products, experiences and events that occur within the region.

MRT provides an overarching tourism strategy, a clear developmental direction, focused product development and support for infrastructure, plus advocates on our behalf at state and federal levels for funding and opportunities.

MRT's relationship with Council is managed through the Tourism Support Officer. If you have a question or wish to speak with MRT, then let us know and we can assist.

Accreditation

Accreditation exists to regulate the tourism industry.

There are several layers of accreditation to consider when operating a tourism business.

Australian Tourism Accreditation

This body certifies tourism businesses that meet specific quality assurance criteria. It demonstrates their commitment to exceeding consumer expectations with great customer service and the highest standards of business practice:

- Quality
- Reliability
- Professional customer service
- Accuracy in advertising
- Sound environmental practices
- An appropriately licenced and qualified operator
- Adherence to a Code of Ethics

Programs include accreditation, Star Ratings Australia and State/Australian Tourism Awards and quality tourism framework.



Leading Australian tourism operators display the “accreditation tick”. They’ve met specific criteria ensuring they are committed to exceeding your expectations with great customer service and the highest standards of business practice.

Find Quality Tourism accredited business at www.trustthetick.com.au

Star Ratings – accommodation specific



Star Ratings are an internationally recognised symbol for quality accommodation standards. They are used in more than 70 countries worldwide and reflect the cleanliness, quality and condition of guest facilities.

Ecotourism

This program assures travellers that certified products are backed by a strong, well-managed commitment to sustainable practices and provide high quality nature-based tourism experiences.

This program identifies and accredits genuine ecotourism products across Australia across three different levels –



As this accreditation is product specific, a company with more than one tour, accommodation facility or other activity will need to apply for each individually.

Visit their website for more information - www.ecotourism.org.au

SIDE NOTE: User rated sites – Trip Advisor, Google, Facebook

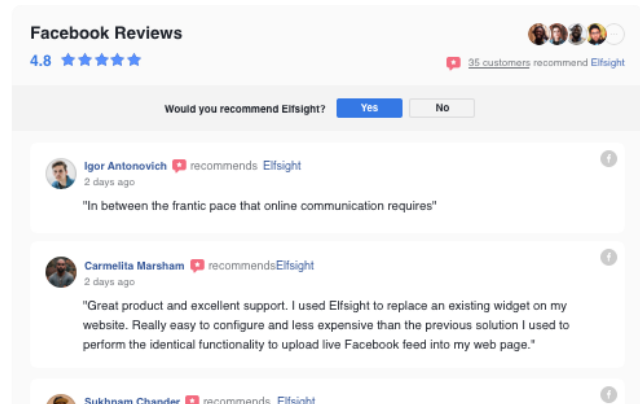
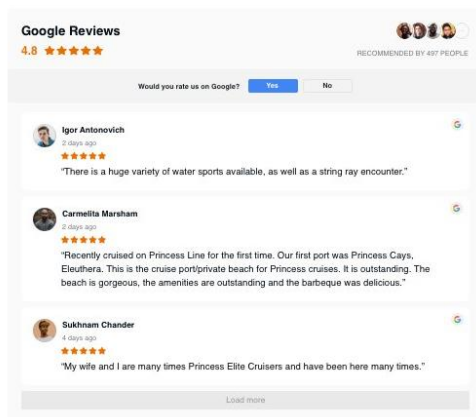
Reiterating the power of word of mouth are user generated review sites, proving that the customer is just as powerful as accreditation, in an age where consumer reviews and digital word-of-mouth reign supreme.

Trip Advisor is the original review site, started by reviewers listing business they had visited. This has now turned into a business-operator model whereby businesses can 'claim' their listings, add photos and update listings, respond to reviewers and even sponsor ad placements!

Trip Advisor now has its own *Certificate of Excellence* logo which limited hospitality businesses are designated over time that have consistently achieved great reviews and a minimum number of reviews over the past year. There is no application process for the Certificate of Excellence, and the achievement is earned over time by consistently excelling.



Since then, Google and now Facebook have all installed review functions too, in a version of star ratings:



However the rise of 'fake reviews' on behalf of the business has risen obviously to push the positives to the tops.

User generated reviews will always make you question – who to trust? But these verification sites DO give you piece of mind from peer to peer and are worth their weight in gold.

Sector specific info

Agritourism

It's widely recognised that the food and beverage of a geographic area is a reflection of the local culture, traditions and legacies that have connected people and communities for generations.

Visitors are increasingly seeking local bespoke experiences that are immersive and central to the identity found in their destination of choice. Food has become a primary vehicle to relate to the people and places they explore. Globally, these experiences have gained rapid appeal, with greater awareness of produce traceability and provenance.

Late in 2019 the City of Greater Bendigo and region was recognised by the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Gastronomy, joining 245 other creative cities around the world.

The designation – *the first of its kind in Australia* - recognises our region's diverse food culture and our community's commitment to local, sustainable, delicious and creative produce.

City of Greater Bendigo are encouraging all regional partner Councils to celebrate this designation, using it as a genuine value add and a 'feather to your bow' – through aligning with an international audience, increasing attractiveness to economic investors, stakeholders and visitors alike, building momentum on creativity in the sector, drawing like-minded groups and individuals together on joint events and common projects and many, many more.

WANT MORE? Please contact Council's Tourism Support Officer.

Farm 2 Plate is a strategic project coordinated by Murray Regional Tourism that plays in the agritourism space, with next steps of making this project operational currently in discussion:

https://www.murrayregionaltourism.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/Central-Murray-F2P-Cluster-Plan_FINAL_08Nov18.pdf

The Murray Farm Gate Trail is a product that emerged from this project through Moira Shire, and is worth a look - <https://www.facebook.com/murrayfarmgatetrail/>

AirBnb, holiday rental & farm stays

Every so often, an industry can become disrupted by an innovative idea or different approach to providing services in order to match customer demand. One such is Airbnb which has rapidly grown as an alternative to hotels for booking accommodation. Airbnb has been heavily scrutinised as it is largely unregulated but with growth the company is knuckling down on requirements for responsible hosting.

Diversifying into tourism is becoming an attractive option for some rural property holders and agribusinesses – eg farm gate tours, masterclasses, weddings and functions, retreats, etc.

If the option to increase the viability of your property through tourism is something you have thought of it is worth looking at some of the variables – cost, risk, but also *opportunity!*

Moora Station, Perricoota Station and Echuca Holiday Holmes are a few of local examples to investigate.

Attractions

There are two types of attractions; built and natural.

If you are considering creating an attraction as part of your tourism business it will be important to properly scope whether that attraction will interest enough visitors to make the business viable. To do so, you may require assistance with economic modelling or forecasting – give us a call and we can assist.

Tourism ride operators

Council adopted a policy for tourism ride operators within the Port Precinct in 2020.

Encouraging locals and visitors to linger longer in the precinct is a priority for Council. Council recognise that events and activation activities add to the vibrancy of the precinct and enhance the experience for visitors and locals.

The provision of tourism ride operators is encouraged within the precinct and includes bike hire, horse drawn carriage rides, pedicab rides/tours, motorbike rides/tours and heritage vehicles. The operators must fit within the policy guidelines and are encouraged to contact the Council's Economic Development team for advice.

Winery & cellar door tourism

Wine tourism is becoming increasingly important to Campaspe Shire and a major drawcard into the region.

The southern area of the Shire (from south of Rochester in the north, Corop in the East and to the southern and western borders of the Shire) forms part of the well-known Heathcote Wine District. Did you want to mention the Mt Camel Winery network?

Wineries considering setting up cellar doors in this area should contact the Heathcote Wine Growers Association - www.heathcotewinegrowers.com.au

Contact:

Campaspe Shire
Tourism Support Officer

☎ (03) 5481 2200

✉ shire@campaspe.vic.gov.au

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