



2024 – 2033



*Grampians
Wimmera Mallee
Tourism*

Yarriambiack Shire Local Area Action Plan

Gender Equality Act

Advice or suggestions provided in this document that relate to or are considered or acted upon by a defined entity and are likely to have a direct and significant impact on the public - as described in the Gender Equality Act (VIC) 2020 - should be adopted in line with the requirements set out in the Act.



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Acknowledgement of Country

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism acknowledges the Traditional Owners, Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Dja Dja Wurrung and Gunditjmara and neighbouring First Peoples, who are the traditional custodians of the area where friends and family visit to enjoy everything the Wimmera Mallee region has to see and do. We respect their history, culture, and Elders, past and present, and their continuous connection to Country.

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Part 1: Executive Summary



1.1. Overview

Yarriambiack Shire offers a unique blend of natural wonders and emerging cultural experiences. It features vast open spaces, charming small towns, and picturesque scenery. The Shire is also nurturing a growing arts and culture scene and is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, providing ample opportunities for hiking, boating, birdwatching, and stargazing under some of the clearest night skies in the region.

The Local Area Action Plan

In collaboration with its member councils, GWM Tourism has commissioned Stafford Strategy (Stafford) to develop this LAAP. This LAAP is focused on Yarriambiack Shire (the Shire). The aim is to help guide the development of the Shire's visitor economy while ensuring it reflects the needs and aspirations of the community, First Peoples, industry, and Yarriambiack Shire Council (the Council).

This LAAP is based on independent research and analysis, complemented by consultation with industry representatives, community groups, businesses, council, and various government stakeholders.

The LAAP seeks to strongly align with the Shire's existing Tourism Strategy (at the specific request of the Council) while also directly aligning with the DMP that has been developed concurrently with this LAAP.

About Yarriambiack Shire

Yarriambiack Shire is situated about 300 kilometres, or a 3 hour and 45-minute drive, northwest of Melbourne. It is bordered by the Shires of Northern Grampians and Horsham to the south, Hindmarsh to the west, Mildura to the north, and Buloke to the east. Its picturesque scenery and wide-open spaces make it an ideal destination for those seeking a peaceful retreat from urban life.

The Shire's economy is predominantly based on agriculture, reflecting its rural character and extensive farmland. Primary activities within this sector include cropping and livestock farming, with wheat, barley, and sheep farming being significant contributors.

Key towns in the Shire include Beulah, Hopetoun, Lascelles, Yaapeet, Warracknabeal and Woomelang.

The Shire is well-connected by major roads, including:

- the Wimmera Highway, which links Rupanyup to Horsham and St Arnaud;
- the Henty Highway, which links Warracknabeal to Horsham and travels north to Lascelles, and linking to the Sunraysia Highway, which connects travellers to Mildura; and
- the Borung Highway, which connects Warracknabeal to Dimboola to the west and Donald to the east; and
- the Sunraysia Highway in the north, which links to Mildura.

In 2023, Yarriambiack Shire attracted 156,000 visitors, injecting \$42 million into the local economy. The Shire has a balanced distribution of visitors, with 50% making day trips and 50% staying overnight.

1.2. Strategic framework

1.2.1. The framework

The LAAP’s recommendations and actions have been organised into a framework identifying product priorities and enablers. These are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1: DMP & LAAP Framework









1.2.2. The pillars explained

The LAAP's recommendations and actions have been organised into a framework that identifies both product priorities and enablers. These are outlined in Table 1.

The pillars align with the Experience Victoria 2033 plan and the Grampians DMP themes, with two exceptions:

- Experiences and Tours – This category has been added to support the development of more commissionable nature-based and other guided tour products in the Wimmera Mallee region, which currently lacks such offerings.
- Enablers – This is an amalgamation of Themes 6, 7, and 8 from the Grampians DMP and has been included as a more comprehensive category. It acknowledges that the Wimmera Mallee is at an early stage of tourism development compared to the Grampians and thus requires a stronger focus on these essential building blocks of the visitor economy. It is important that local communities drive the demand for these enablers rather than relying solely on the visitor market

Table 1: The pillars explained

| | | |
|---|--|--|
|  <p>1. Nature (including Waterbodies) Recreation & Wellness</p> <p>Buloke Shire offers diverse outdoor activities, scenic landscapes, and unique natural attractions. Known for its vast open spaces, rich biodiversity, and vibrant ecosystems, it provides numerous opportunities for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers. The region's lakes and waterways enhance its natural beauty, support local wildlife habitats, and provide recreational activities for residents and visitors.</p> <p>Yarriambiack Shire currently provides visitors with a compelling natural setting, though self-guided exploration is required to enjoy it. To enhance this, there is potential to create a range of bookable packages, with guided experiences, that highlight the Shire's birdlife and dark skies experiences.</p> |  <p>2. First Peoples</p> <p>The Wimmera Mallee region has the potential to offer rich and diverse experiences that enable visitors to connect with the deep cultural heritage of the local First Peoples. These experiences need to be developed and led by the region's First Peoples.</p> <p>Yarriambiack Shire has the opportunity to engage with First Peoples on a regular basis and assist, when asked, to assist in activating tourism development opportunities.</p> |  <p>3. Food (Agritourism) & Drink</p> <p>Known for its vast farmlands, the Wimmera Mallee has the potential to grow its profile as an emerging foodie destination, leveraging agri-tourism opportunities and providing visitors with insights into farming practices, local produce, and the daily lives of the farming community.</p> <p>Yarriambiack Shire is expanding its food and drink offerings, which will continue to develop as more visitors and locals frequent key town centres. There is an opportunity to boost agritourism in the region by enhancing the profile and infrastructure of the Mallee Machinery Field Days.</p> |
|  <p>4. Arts & Culture</p> <p>The Wimmera Mallee offers a rich tapestry of arts and cultural tourism products that attract visitors seeking unique and immersive experiences. The region is home to vibrant arts communities, significant historical sites, and contemporary cultural attractions, including the well-known Silo Art Trail, which highlights the region's heritage and creativity.</p> <p>Yarriambiack Shire's arts and culture sector is growing. Initiatives such as expanding heritage rail experiences, implementing the Courthouse project, and introducing a self-drive heritage trail to link the Shire's heritage and cultural products will further strengthen this sector.</p> |  <p>5. Experiences & Tours</p> <p>The Wimmera Mallee offers a growing and diverse range of tourism experiences that cater to various interests, particularly focused on nature and recreational experiences. The opportunity exists to focus on trail and tour-based products to grow dispersal and exploration throughout the region.</p> <p>Yarriambiack Shire offers a diverse array of tourism experiences, many of which are self-guided and have evolved organically. There is an opportunity to explore the development of guided tours in the future to better showcase the Shire's unique features.</p> |  <p>6. Enabler</p> <p>A variety of enablers should be focused on to improve the visitor and local experience in the Wimmera Mallee. These factors facilitate and enhance the development, promotion, and delivery of visitor experiences and services. They play a crucial role in ensuring a destination can effectively attract, accommodate, and satisfy visitors.</p> <p>Several initiatives could enhance the visitor experience in Yarriambiack Shire, including (but not limited to) progressing the Hopetoun Old School Site development, streetscape enhancements for main towns and marketing and positioning of Wyperfeld National Park gateway towns.</p> <p>Enablers include: Accommodation; Advocacy; Data and insights; Events; Governance and leadership; Infrastructure; Marketing and identity; Statutory planning environment; Visitor servicing; and Workforce</p> |

● Product development pillar ● Destination enabler pillar

1.3. The priority LAAP recommendations









The LAAP has identified **14** transformative recommendations (see Section 4.1 for the full list), each thoughtfully chosen to shape a vibrant future and visitor economy for Yarriambiack Shire. These initiatives, varying in size and scope, are poised to meet the LAAP's Strategic Framework targets and align with the Yarriambiack Tourism Strategy 2023 – 2027 at the request of the Council.

Of these 14 recommendations, **8** have been selected as priority recommendations (see Table 1). By harnessing the Shire's existing strengths and acting upon new opportunities, these priority recommendations aim to unlock new visitor markets and significantly boost visitor engagement, driving the Shire toward a new era of growth and prosperity.

Importantly, the LAAP's recommendations are deliberately focused on a local level. The DMP created concurrently with this LAAP identifies regional-level recommendations that benefit the broader Wimmera Mallee regional visitor economy.

Where public land (controlled by Parks Victoria or DEECA) is involved, some form of co- or joint-management arrangement is required with BGLC and the land manager entity. This may have a bearing on the timeframe for when a specific LAAP project can be activated. As a result, the priority LAAP project recommendations need to be reviewed annually to avoid the risk of any undue delay in project implementation.

Table 2: Priority recommendations linked to the pillars/enablers

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
|  <p>Assist Mallee Machinery Field Days to grow as a destination event through infrastructure enhancements and profiling</p> <p>Pillar: Arts and culture</p> <p>Partners: Speed Lions Club, YSC</p> |  <p>Continue to progress the Hopetoun Old School Site development (including accommodation, worker housing and a nature-based playground)</p> <p>Pillar: Enablers – accommodation</p> <p>Partners: YSC, Department of Education</p> |  <p>Continue to progress Yarriambiack's Heritage Trail project to develop a Shire-wide narrative and cross-promotion of heritage attractions</p> <p>Pillar: Arts and culture</p> <p>Partners: Historic attractions, YSC, GWM Tourism</p> |  <p>Continue with the Council's program of streetscape and signage improvements for gateway towns¹</p> <p>Pillar: Enablers – Placemaking</p> <p>Partners: Property owners, YSC</p> |
|  <p>Expansion of heritage railway experience throughout Yarriambiack Shire with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc.</p> <p>Pillar: Arts and culture</p> <p>Partners: Seymour Railway Heritage, 707 Operations Inc., YSC</p> |  <p>Implement the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project (including accommodation development)</p> <p>Pillar: Arts and culture</p> <p>Partners: Monash University and Working Heritage</p> |  <p>Support events that are held in Yarriambiack to become destination events (i.e. attracting visitors from outside the Shire)</p> <p>Pillar: Enablers – Events and infrastructure support</p> <p>Partners: Event operators, YSC</p> |  <p>Support the Stick Shed as a visitor experience and events venue (investment required for design works and change of use)</p> <p>Pillar: Arts and culture</p> <p>Partners: The Stick Shed Committee of Management, YSC</p> |

¹ Rupanyup, Murtoa, Warracknabeal, Yaapeet, Patchewollock and Woomelang



Part 2: Where are we now?

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1. About LAAPs

Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism (GWM Tourism) has developed Local Area Action Plans (LAAPs) for each shire in the Wimmera Mallee region, including Buloke, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, and Yarriambiack Shires. These LAAPs are strategic documents that reflect local aspirations and high-level directions, designed to inform the Wimmera Mallee Destination Management Plan (DMP).

This LAAP has been prepared specifically for Yarriambiack Shire, which is situated within the GWM Tourism region, as shown in Figure 2.

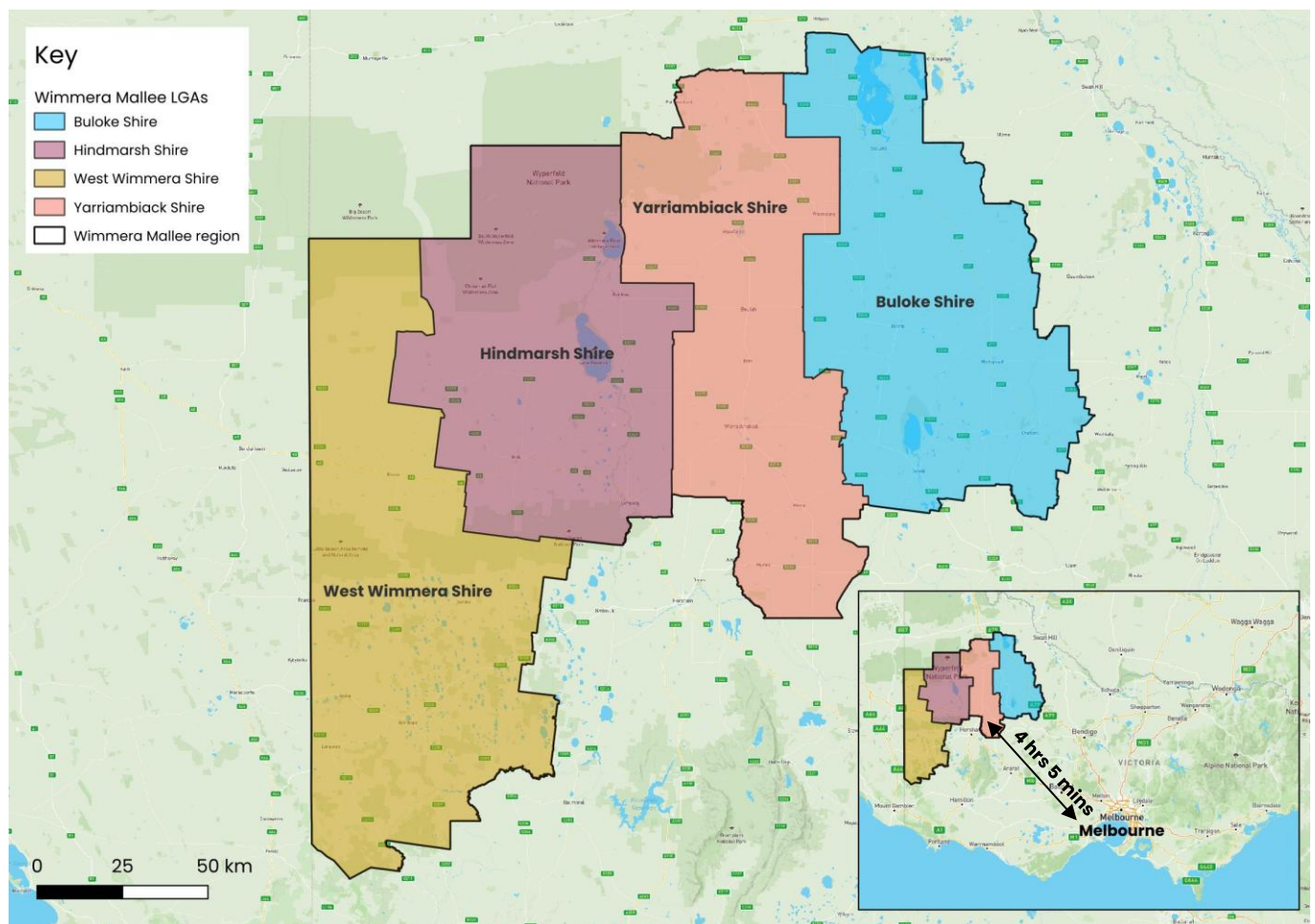
2.1.2. Purpose and intended use of LAAPs

The LAAPs provide the framework for local stakeholders to work collaboratively and in partnership with GWM Tourism and local government towards strengthening the regional visitor economy.

The purpose of the LAAPs is to address the needs and opportunities of the visitor economy through various recommended actions and suggested next steps. Stakeholders are expected to collaborate to further define project specifics and drive outcomes in line with local priorities and resources. The LAAPs are meant to serve as a reference document and a collaborative tool for local stakeholders and partners at the destination level.

Importantly, the LAAPs need to align with local tourism plans and related Council plans.

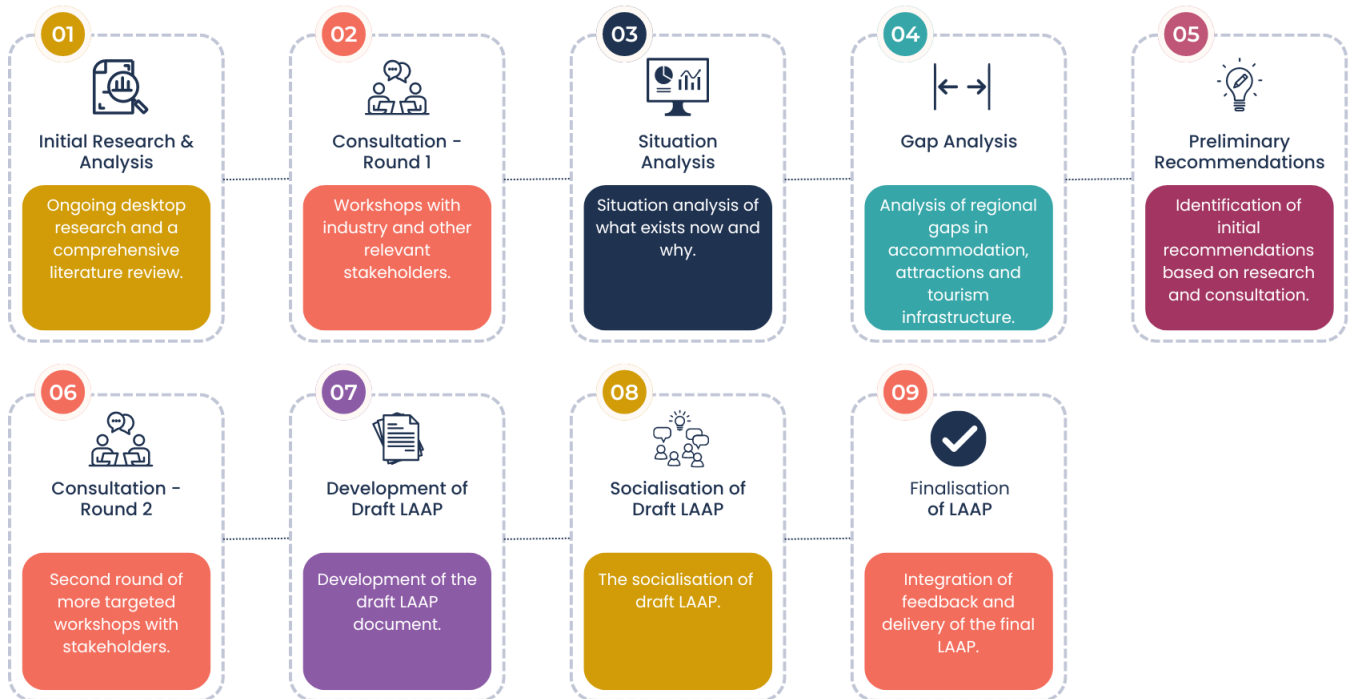
Figure 2: Scope of the LAAP



2.1.3. Methodology

The following nine-stage methodology was followed to inform this LAAP (Figure 3).

Figure 3: LAAP methodology



2.2. About Yarriambiack Shire

Yarriambiack Shire covers an area of approximately 7,158 square kilometres and is characterised by its expansive agricultural land, small towns, and close-knit communities. Its population is just under 6,600.²

Key towns in the Shire include Warracknabeal (the administrative centre which is located 340 km north west of Melbourne) as well as Hopetoun, Murtoa, and Rupanyup. Warracknabeal is known for its vibrant community events and the Yarriambiack Creek, which provides opportunities for fishing, boating, and picnicking. Hopetoun offers access to the nearby Lake Lascelles, a popular spot for camping, swimming, and water sports. Murtoa is known for its historical sites, including the Murtoa Stick Shed, and Rupanyup is known for its Silo Art, showcasing stunning murals on grain silos.

The economy of Yarriambiack Shire is predominantly based on agriculture, with grain production, particularly wheat and barley, being the mainstay. The Shire is also known for its pulse crops and sheep farming, contributing significantly to the region's agricultural output.

Tourism is also growing in importance, driven by attractions such as the Silo Art Trail, which draws visitors to the region to view large-scale artworks on grain silos, reflecting the community's history and culture. Lake Lascelles and Lake Corrong provide recreational opportunities and attract wildlife enthusiasts and campers. The Shire also features several parks and reserves, offering walking trails and nature experiences. Historical and cultural sites, such as the Murtoa Stick Shed and The Murtoa Museum Precinct, provide insight into the region's past and its development over the years.

Transport within Yarriambiack Shire primarily relies on an extensive network of roads. Key highways, including the Borung, Wimmera, Henty and Sunraysia, connect the Shire to neighbouring areas and major cities such as Melbourne and Adelaide. Public transport options are limited, making private vehicles the main mode of transportation for residents and visitors alike.

There are also heritage rail excursions that bring visitors into the Shire ex Melbourne, but currently on a very limited basis.



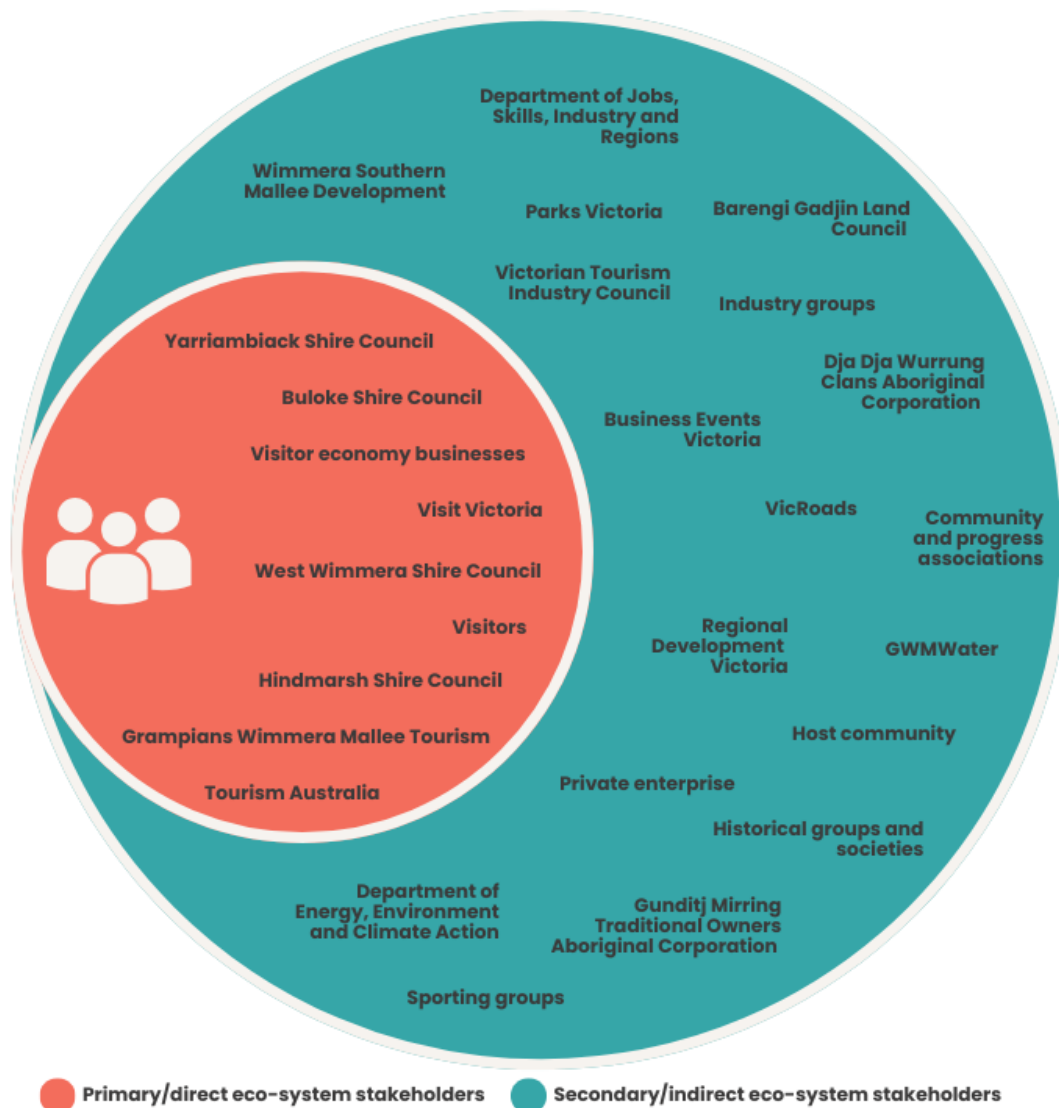
² <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA27630>

2.3. Visitor economy ecosystem

Figure 4 provides an overview of the region's visitor economy ecosystem, highlighting direct and indirect stakeholders.

Although each stakeholder group has its own specific goals and desired outcomes, continuous planning and collaboration will help ensure that the ecosystem operates toward common goals and principles.

Figure 4: Visitor economy ecosystem



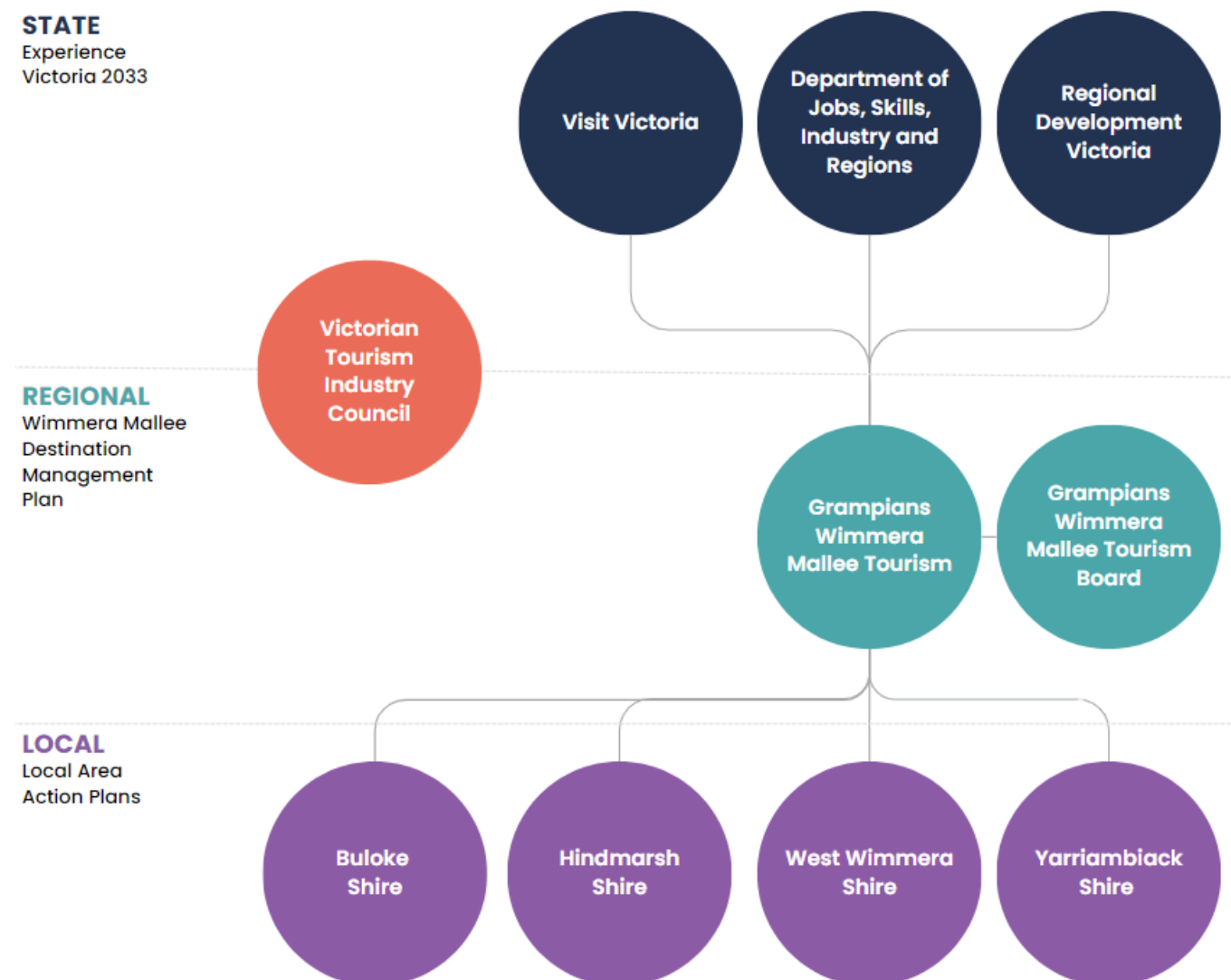
2.4. Governance

2.4.1. Governance overview

Figure 5 illustrates tourism governance at a state, regional and local level. These bodies/agencies are responsible for setting the frameworks, policies, strategies, and practices that guide and regulate tourism development, management, and promotion across the Wimmera Mallee.

Good governance involves the collaboration and coordination of the various stakeholders to ensure that visitor economy activities are sustainable, beneficial, and aligned with broader social, economic, and environmental goals.

Figure 5: Tourism governance summary



2.4.2. Roles and responsibilities

Table 3 outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the region’s visitor economy.

Table 3: Tourism roles and responsibilities

| Stakeholder/ Partner | About | Key roles/responsibilities |
|--|---|---|
| Visit Victoria | Visit Victoria is the state’s official tourism and events agency. Visit Victoria plays a crucial role in promoting the state as a premier tourism destination and driving economic growth through tourism-related activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination marketing. Guiding regional positioning and development. Supporting industry development. Event attraction and support. Developing partnerships to support tourism development. Distributing research and insights. Promoting and implementing sustainable tourism practices. |
| Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions | The Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) aims to grow Victoria’s prosperity by enhancing the state’s economy. It collaborates with Visit Victoria, focusing on tourism and events to strengthen the visitor economy’s profile, influence strategic reforms, and achieve economic outcomes for the sector. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking research. Providing policy, strategy and industry development advice to the Victoria Government and industry on the visitor economy. Providing governance support and advice to several entities that market the state and secure events. Managing large-scale tourist attractions, precincts, facilities and entertainment venues in Victoria. |
| Regional Development Victoria | Regional Development Victoria (RDV) is responsible for supporting and facilitating economic and social development in regional areas of Victoria. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing funding streams and grant programs, such as the Regional Tourism Investment Fund. Business investment. Industry support. Advocacy. |
| The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action | <p>DEECA is a government department in Victoria that is responsible for various matters related to the environment, energy and climate change. The department was renamed from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning on 1 January 2023.</p> <p>The department is focused on creating a liveable, inclusive and sustainable Victoria with thriving natural environments.</p> <p>DEECA is a major public land manager within the Wimmera Mallee region.</p> | <p>DEECA’s core business is focused on achieving 8 outcomes. These can be summarised as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture and Forestry: Sustainable use of natural resources. Climate Action: Achieve net-zero emissions and prepare the economy and community for climate challenges. Earth Resources: Sustainable development of Victoria’s earth resources. Emergency Management: Minimise the impact of bushfires and other emergencies on people, property, and the environment. Energy: Ensure reliable, sustainable, and affordable energy services. Environment and Resource Recovery: Promote a healthy, resilient, and biodiverse environment. Land Management: Effective and productive land management (Co- or joint-manage public land with BGLC and other Traditional Owners in the region, establish committees of management where required to manage camping sites or similar and maintain existing public infrastructure and update where required). Water: Maintain safe, sustainable, and productive water resources. |
| Parks Victoria | <p>Parks Victoria is a government agency responsible for managing Victoria’s network of parks, reserves, and other protected areas. Established in 1996, it operates under DEECA and plays a crucial role in the conservation of the state’s natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>Parks Victoria is a major public land manager within the Wimmera Mallee region.</p> | <p>The key roles/responsibilities of Parks Victoria are centred on the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation and environmental management Park and reserve management (Co- or joint-manage public land with BGLC and other Traditional Owners in the region, maintaining existing public infrastructure and updating where required and managing tourism operator concession licenses and arrangements on public lands.) Cultural heritage preservation (protection of cultural landscapes) Recreation and visitor services Community engagement and education Fire and emergency management Sustainable land management |
| Victorian Tourism Industry Council | The Victorian Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) is an industry association representing the interests of the state’s tourism operators and businesses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industry advocacy. Policy development (at a state and national level). Industry support and development. Networking and collaboration. Education and training. |

| Stakeholder/ Partner | About | Key roles/responsibilities |
|---|---|--|
| Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism | Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism (GWM Tourism) is the key tourism body for the Grampians Wimmera Mallee region, backed by DJSIR, local governments, and industry partners. It focuses on marketing, product development, and infrastructure investment to enhance the region's profile, increase visitor numbers, and extend stays through destination marketing and capacity-building efforts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Destination management planning. ▪ Destination development. ▪ Crisis planning and response management. ▪ Industry support and strengthening. ▪ Advocacy on behalf of industry and local government. ▪ Destination marketing and regional conversion. |
| Local government | In Victoria, local government plays a key role in supporting the visitor economy. The four local government areas in the Wimmera Mallee all deliver services that contribute significantly to the development and growth of the region's visitor economy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local tourism promotion and marketing. ▪ Provision of visitor information services, often via VICs. ▪ Development and maintenance of tourism-related infrastructure that enhances the visitor experience. ▪ Event support. ▪ Engaging with communities to align tourism development with local values. ▪ Coordinating crisis/emergency responses for the tourism sector. ▪ Regulatory functions related to tourism, including land use planning and zoning. |
| First Peoples/ Traditional Owner Groups | Traditional Owner groups in the region include Barengi Gadjin Land Council (BGLC), Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) and Gunditj Mirring Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation (GMTOAC). These groups are key partners and need to lead Traditional Owners' and First Peoples' stories and land use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To guide and inform Councils on strategic land use of culturally sensitive land owned by Council and State Government. ▪ Initiate projects in sensitive State Government Land areas, such as national parks, waterways and lakes. This includes trails and walks that encompass or transverse such areas. Initiate TO stories and signage requests. ▪ All engagement must conform with each council's Local Government Engagement Strategy and Reconciliation Action Plan (if applicable) and follow the endorsed Recognition and Settlement Agreements. |
| Industry | The tourism industry comprises businesses and organisations established to meet visitors' wants and needs. The sector is broad and includes economic sectors such as transportation, accommodation, entertainment and attractions and food and beverage services. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Product development. ▪ Marketing and promotion. ▪ Upskilling and training. ▪ Product delivery. ▪ Customer service. ▪ Delivery of events. ▪ Adopting sustainable business practices. |
| Volunteers | Most visitor attractions and major events throughout the region rely heavily on volunteer support to operate. Governance requirements have become far more demanding, which is diminishing volunteer interest in joining committees to run attractions and major events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Responsibility for managing and operating visitor attractions and major events and continuation of this ▪ Streamlining volunteer compliance requirements (police checks, documentation requirements, etc.) is required. ▪ Professional curatorial support and major event coordinator required to support volunteer involvement. |

2.4.3. About Victoria's Visitor Economy Partnerships

The Visitor Economy Recovery and Reform Plan released in April 2021 outlined the transition from Regional Tourism Boards (RTBs) to Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs).

Under this new model, each VEP will:

- Have a clear sense of purpose and defined responsibilities.
- Encourage local and industry leadership with senior local government, industry and skills-based board membership.
- Include all regions, with boundaries co-designed and agreed upon in collaboration with local government authorities.
- Leverage the benefits of scale.
- Have local ownership and flexibility with the broad geographic coverage to deliver region-wide initiatives.

2.4.3.1. Core responsibilities

The VEP framework provided by the DJSIR very clearly outlines the core responsibilities of the VEPs, which include to:

- Deliver enhanced leadership and collaboration at a regional level.
- Tailor industry strengthening support to address regional needs.
- Encourage increased community support for tourism.
- Facilitate enhanced visitor dispersal and experiences.
- Undertake collaborative destination marketing and regional conversion.
- Provide insights and investor connections that inform a strengthened pipeline and product development.
- Provide regional context and insights to inform government policy development, decision making and investment priorities.
- Ensure continued crisis preparedness and support relative to the visitor economy.

2.4.3.2. Core benefits

The VEP framework also outlines the four core benefits of the VEP model, which include:

- Official recognition, increased clarity and collaboration with government.
- A more transparent funding model.
- Enhanced operational support.
- Access to data, insights and tools to track outcomes.

2.4.3.3. Key features

VEPs need to include the following essential elements and align with other VEPs across the state:

- Ensure clear roles and responsibilities, including developing a sustainable regional destination management plan. The DMP should be reviewed and updated in three years.

- Establish solid governance with a broad skill-based board and a legal organisation with a clear constitution.
- Encourage regional collaboration by engaging.

Designed to strengthen and grow the Grampians Wimmera Mallee visitor economy, GWM Tourism is the conduit between the four local government areas, the state government and the tourism industry. It supports its industry partners through business initiatives, the creation of visitor economy experiences and tourism products, and marketing and industry development.

2.4.4. About the Grampians Wimmera Mallee VEP

GWM Tourism, a newly formed VEP, is the peak tourism body in the Grampians Wimmera Mallee region. It is directly supported by DJSIR, along with the Shires of Buloke, Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians Shire, the rural cities of Ararat and Horsham and over 300 industry partners. While GWM Tourism focuses on both the Wimmera Mallee and Grampians regions, they are marketed and branded as unique and independent sub-regions.

Formerly Grampians Tourism, GWM Tourism aims to deliver a coordinated approach to destination marketing, product development, industry growth and infrastructure investment.



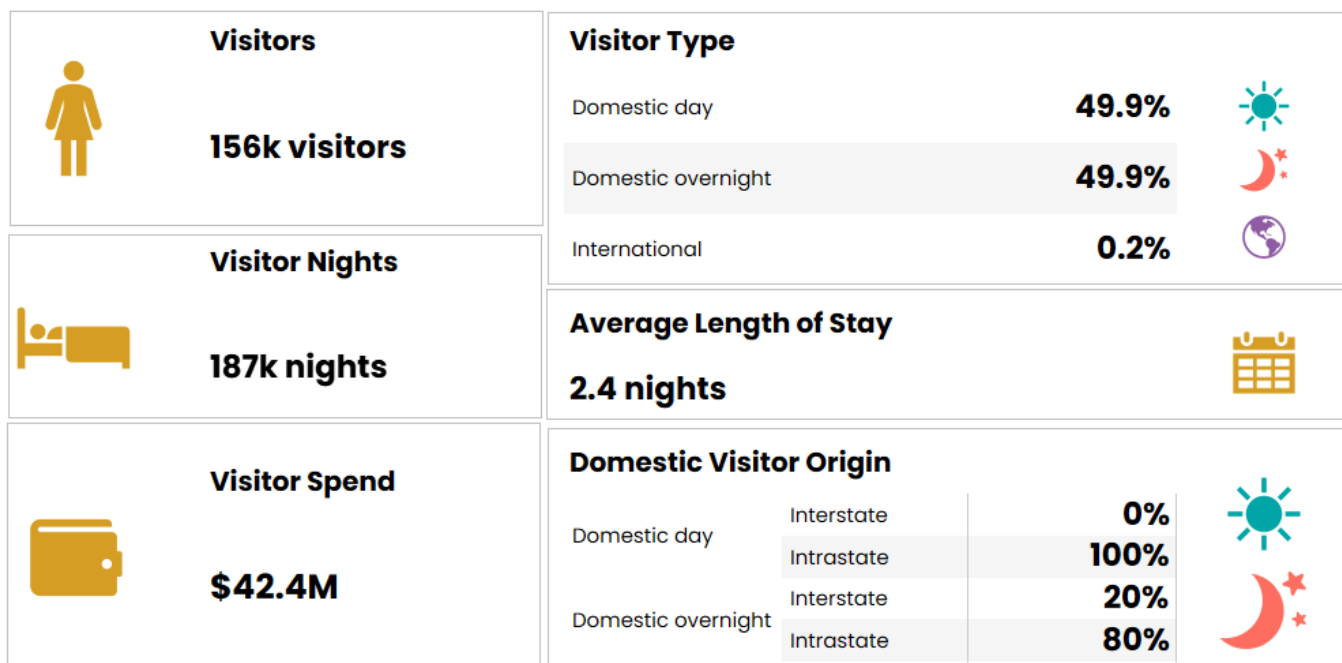
2.5. Visitation to Yarriambiack Shire

2.5.1. Snapshot (2023)

In 2023, Yarriambiack Shire attracted 156,000 visitors, of which the vast majority were domestic day trippers (49.9%), the other half were domestic overnight visitors (49.9%), and a very small share (0.2%) were international visitors. The domestic market is very much the bread and butter visitor market for the region and is likely to be for the foreseeable future. And within this market, the intrastate market comprises the largest share of visitation.

Together, visitors contributed over \$42.4 million to the Shire's economy, with domestic overnight visitors contributing the most (\$33.8 million). This demonstrates the value of the overnight visitor to the region; while they only comprised 50% of visitation, they generated 80% of the total spend.

Figure 6: Yarriambiack Shire visitation summary - 2023³



2.5.2. How visitor data has been compiled

Data has been sourced from the National and International Visitor Survey (NVS and IVS) published by Tourism Research Australia (TRA). The geographic boundary used covers the various SA2s that fall within the Yarriambiack Shire. By utilising the NVS and IVS data, a historic summary of visitors is able to be compiled that provides not only the number of visitors to the region but also a profile of visitors is able to be obtained including origin, demographic information, spending data etc.

December YE data (unless otherwise specified) has been applied as this is the most recent iteration of data released by TRA via the NVS and IVS at the time of report writing. As per the methodology applied by TRA for LGAs⁴ visitation data is averaged across three-year periods rather than provided on an annual basis. This minimises the impact of variability in estimates from year to year and provides more robust estimates. The exception to this is the period 2020 to 2023, where annualised data has been used due to the impact of COVID-19.

³ Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Survey. Data is December YE.

⁴ <https://www.tra.gov.au/research/regional-tourism/local-government-area-profiles/local-government-area-profiles>



Part 3: Where do we want to be?

3.1. Strategic framework

To achieve a strong alignment between this LAAP and the regional DMP, the LAAP adopts the same strategic framework as the DMP. The LAAP's recommendations and actions, which are specific to Yarriambiack Shire, have been organised into the framework that identifies both product priorities and enablers (see Figure 7).

The regional vision is a forward-looking, aspirational, and collaboratively developed statement articulating stakeholders' long-term goals and desired outcomes. So, while it is a regional vision, it is also applicable at a local level.






Figure 7: DMP & LAAP Framework



3.2. Measuring success

The following metrics will be applied to measure the success of this LAAP over the next 10 years.

Table 4: Metrics of success

| Metric/Measure | 2024 | Growth | 2033 |
|---|-------|-------------------------|-------|
|  Visitation | 155k | +20%⁵ | 201k |
|  Overnight visitation | 78k | +34%⁶ | 104k |
|  Visitor spending | \$42m | +78%⁷ | \$75m |
|  Visitor economy jobs⁸ | 33 | +25% | 41 |
|  Average length of stay (nights) | 2.4 | +10% | 2.6 |



⁵ Determined from visitor growth forecasts in Section 3.4.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Determined based on a ratio of jobs currently generated per visitor, applied to 2033 visitation forecast data.

3.3. Target markets

Six target market segments have been identified, which are outlined in Table 5 and further explained in Table 6. Some of these are existing markets, while others have been identified as opportunity markets to target because of their potential to drive visitation and yield. Targeting each market with offerings that align with their unique preferences and interests will be essential going forward.

Common preferences amongst all market segments that align with the product pillars include food (agritourism) and drink, as well as outdoor experiences and tours.

The VFR, event, and nature-based segments are the key existing markets. They are already attracted to the area and are interested in the product offering. The opportunity lies in understanding how to extract more yield from this market.

Visit Victoria's identified target markets include the following market segments: Lifestyle Leaders and High-Value Travellers. It is important to ensure alignment with Victoria's primary target markets. Table 6 provides this alignment.

- Victoria's Lifestyle Leaders market segment is the primary domestic target market. This audience consists of progressive, educated, professional individuals seeking new experiences. This market shares characteristics with the short-break, nature-based, sports and events and special interest markets.
- The High-Value Travellers market is the primary international target market and has a strong preference to visit Australia. Key drivers for visitation include food and wine, aquatic and coastal, and nature and wildlife experiences. This target market shares characteristics of Wimmera Mallee's special interest market.

Table 5: Wimmera Mallee target markets and related growth opportunities

| Target market | Visitor Origin | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| | Melbourne and Surrounds | Regional Victoria | Interstate (SA and NSW) | Interstate (Rest of Aus) | International |
| Short break | ● | ● | ● | | |
| Nature-based | ● | ● | ● | ● | |
| Sports and events | ● | ● | ● | | |
| VFR | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Special Interest (agritourism, heritage and arts) | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Family market | | ● | ● | | |

● = strong marketing investment ● = medium marketing investment ● = lower marketing investment

Table 6: Wimmera Mallee’s target markets explained and opportunities for growth

| Market Overview | Estimated Market Size to Wimmera Mallee (2023) ⁹ | Alignment to Visit Victoria’s Market Segments | Alignment with Strategic Product Pillars | Opportunity |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Short break</p> <p>The short break visitor market consists of individuals or groups taking brief Wimmera Mallee trips, typically lasting between 2 to 4 days. These visitors seek quick getaways to various destinations, often to relax, explore, or enjoy specific activities or events. Short-break travellers tend to take multiple trips each year, often during weekends or public holidays.</p> | n/a | Lifestyle Leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ First Peoples ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink ▪ Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) ▪ Wellness | There is an opportunity to capture a larger market share, especially from metro areas like Melbourne, by increasing awareness of Wimmera Mallee’s attractions and events. Targeted marketing can highlight the region’s accessibility and diverse experiences within a short travel time from major centres. |
| <p>Nature-based visitors</p> <p>There are just over 100,000 nature-based visitors already travelling to the Wimmera Mallee. These visitors travel primarily to engage with nature and undertake activities such as hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, 4WDing and other outdoor adventure activities.</p> | 113,000 | Lifestyle Leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ | A significant proportion of the visitor market is relatively unexplored by the Wimmera Mallee. Targeted campaigns could be considered for Melbourne and surrounding markets and interstate markets to showcase what the region offers in terms of nature-based and eco-tourism experiences. |
| <p>Sports and events</p> <p>An estimated 93,000 visitors travelled to the Wimmera Mallee and attended some form of event in 2023. The market includes a broad age range, from young adults to older adults, depending on the type of event. Interest groups include sports enthusiasts, fans of specific teams or athletes, cultural event followers, and general event-goers.</p> | 93,000 | Lifestyle Leaders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink | The region hosts several destination events that attract locals and visitors alike. The opportunity exists to further promote these destination events with targeted campaigns in key source markets such as Melbourne. To support these, there is a need to increase accommodation availability and diversity and the visitor infrastructure offered within towns. |
| <p>VFR (visiting friends and relatives)</p> <p>The VFR market is one of the largest target markets for the Wimmera Mallee and represents a “low-hanging fruit” opportunity.</p> | 181,000 | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink ▪ Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) ▪ Wellness | There is an opportunity to undertake a targeted campaign to promote local products and experiences and increase local residents’ awareness of them. |
| <p>Special Interest</p> <p>Special interest markets include agritourism, heritage and arts visitors, and other smaller niche markets such as bird watchers.</p> | 94,000 | Lifestyle Leaders, High-Value Travellers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ First Peoples ▪ Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) | Targeted social media campaigns and the use of influencers should be considered for the special interest market. |
| <p>Family market</p> <p>A segment of visitors who travel with their family members, including parents, children, and sometimes extended family such as grandparents. They typically prefer destinations that offer a variety of activities suitable for different age groups.</p> | 56,000 ¹⁰ | - | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experiences and tours ▪ Arts and culture ▪ Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) ▪ Food (agritourism) and drink | The region should consider investing in family-friendly accommodations and experiences. To attract more visitors, the family market needs larger, self-contained lodging and higher-quality tourist parks. Targeted investment in these areas will boost family market visitation. |

⁹ Note, market sizes are non-unique. i.e. one visitor could belong to several target markets.

¹⁰ Only includes domestic and international overnight visitors as travel group data is only available for domestic and international overnight visitation.

3.4. Visitor forecasts

Yarriambiack Shire’s visitor economy is projected to experience growth through 2033, with visitor numbers anticipated to reach nearly 680,000 and tourism spending expected to increase to \$245 million. This increase underscores the Shire’s growing appeal and economic potential.

Forecasts are based on State Government projections and historic growth rates for the region. Importantly, they do not consider macroeconomic impacts such as recession and cost-of-living pressures that may impact leisure travel in the short to medium term.

It is also important to note that the development of new visitor economy products and experiences and further promotion of the region will impact visitor growth projections for the region. For example, growing the accommodation stock within the region (as recommended in this LAAP and the regional DMP) will support overnight visitor demand to the region. As overnight visitor spend is often 4x that of day visitors, this can have significant economic uplift for the Shire’s visitor economy.

Supporting data for these forecasts are included in Appendix 1.

Figure 8: Visitor forecasts

Total visitation Yarriambiack Shire is projected to grow from 167,000 in 2024 to 201,000 in 2033.¹¹

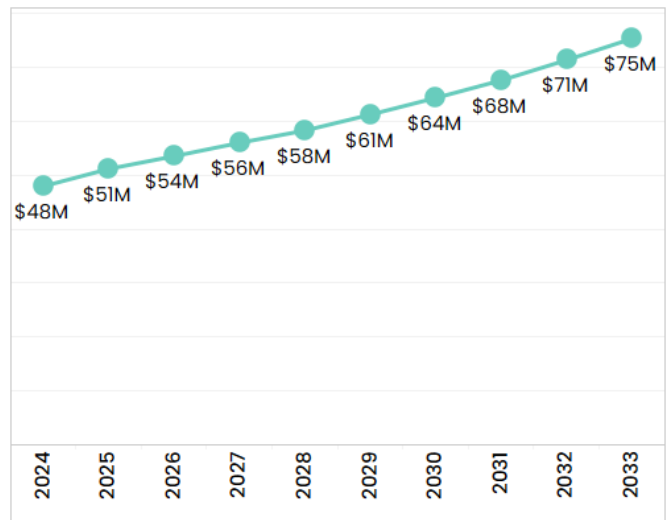
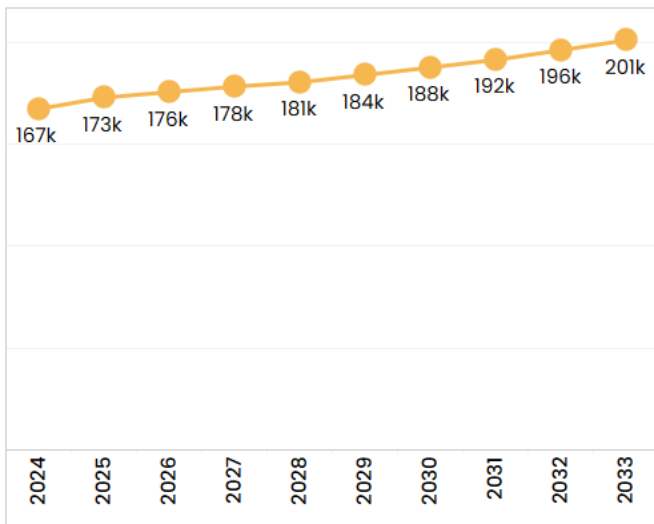
Growth to the Shire is projected across all visitor markets.

Domestic visitors are projected to continue to account for the largest share of visitors in the region, with an estimated 97,000 domestic day trip visitors and 104,000 domestic overnight visitors expected in 2033.

Total visitor spending in Yarriambiack Shire is forecast to grow from \$48 million in 2024 to \$75 million by 2033.¹²

Visitor spending in the Shire is projected to be 209% above the pre-pandemic level by 2033, generating an additional \$51 million in spend (up from \$24.4 million in 2020).

The domestic overnight market, which is anticipated to increase by just under \$22 million from 2024 to 2033, is anticipated to generate much of this spending growth.



¹¹ Ibid
¹² Based on Tourism Forecasts for Victoria, Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (https://tourism.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/2233942/Victorias-Tourism-Forecast-for-2023-to-2028.pdf) and historic average visitor spend data inflated by 3% per annum, compiled by Stafford



Part 4: How will we get there?

4.1. Recommendations

4.1.1. About

In total, 14 recommendations have been identified as part of this LAAP. At the request of the Council, the majority of these recommendations align directly with the Shire’s Tourism Strategy.

The recommendations have been linked to the strategic product pillars and destination enablers in the LAAP’s strategic framework (see Section 3.1) which carefully aligns with the State Government’s desired outcomes. The recommendations differ in size and scale and have been identified because they will assist in meeting the targets outlined in the LAAP’s strategic framework.

This LAAP is focused on shire-level recommendations. The regional DMP includes broader regional recommendations that apply to multiple or all shires in the Wimmera Mallee.

4.1.2. Action plan framework

4.1.2.1. Projects vs Strategic Initiatives

These recommendations have been categorised according to whether they are Projects or Strategic Initiatives:

- **Projects** reflect physical projects such as new or enhanced accommodation, tourism attractions or events (for example).
- **Strategic Initiatives** reflect those recommendations that are the building blocks to support a visitor destination and, while not being major “ribbon-cutting” projects, they are necessary to ensure a successful destination management approach is achieved (such as marketing initiatives, workforce planning, statutory planning, infrastructure upgrades etc.).

4.1.2.2. Council role

The role of the Yarriambiack Shire Council is outlined for each action. It specifies whether the role is primarily to deliver the action, as a project partner or as an advocate.

4.1.2.3. Partners

Key partners have been identified for each of the recommendations. The existing roles and responsibilities of these stakeholders are identified in Section 2.4.2 of this LAAP.

4.1.2.4. Timing

The following timeframes have been applied within the action plans:

- Short-term (S): within the next 1-2 years
- Medium-term (M): the next 3-4 years
- Long-term (L): 5+ years
- Ongoing (O)



4.1.3. Summary of the recommendations

Figure 9 provides a summary of the LAAP recommendations and a breakdown of the priority recommendations that have been identified.

As priority recommendations, arts and culture initiatives make up the largest number of projects (4), three are enablers, and one is a food and drink recommendation.

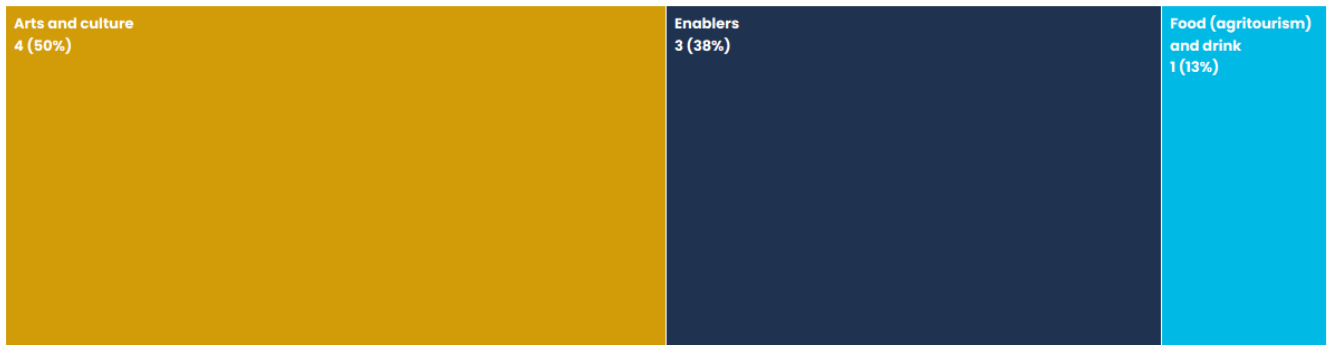
It demonstrates that arts and culture comprise the largest share of recommendations identified (43% of recommendations identified), followed by arts and culture recommendations (29%).

Figure 9: The LAAP recommendations (categorised by Pillar/Enabler)

All LAAP Recommendations for Yarriambiack



Priority Recommendations



List of the Priority Recommendations (in alphabetical order)

- Assist Mallee Machinery Field Days to grow as a destination event through infrastructure enhancements and profiling
- Continue to progress the Hopetoun Old School Site development (including accommodation, worker housing and a nature-based playground)
- Continue to progress Yarriambiack's Heritage Trail project to develop a Shire-wide narrative and cross-promotion of heritage attractions
- Continue with Council's program of streetscape and signage improvements for gateway towns (Rupanyup, Murtoa, Warracknabeal, Yaapeet, Patchewollock and Woomelang)
- Expansion of heritage railway experience throughout Yarriambiack Shire with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc.
- Implement the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project (including accommodation development)
- Support events that are held in Yarriambiack to become destination events (i.e. attracting visitors from outside the Shire)
- Support the Stick Shed as a visitor experience and events venue (investment required for design works and change of use)

Pillar Group
■ Arts and culture
■ Enablers
■ Food (agritourism) and drink



4.1.4. Nature and recreation (including waterbodies and lakes) recommendations

The Wimmera Mallee offers diverse outdoor activities, scenic landscapes, and unique natural attractions. Known for its vast open spaces, rich biodiversity, and vibrant ecosystems, it provides numerous opportunities for nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers. The region's lakes and waterways enhance its natural beauty, support local wildlife habitats, and provide recreational activities for residents and visitors.

Yarriambiack Shire currently provides visitors with a compelling natural setting, though self-guided exploration is required to enjoy it. To enhance this, there is potential to create a range of bookable packages, with guided experiences, that highlight the Shire's birdlife and dark skies experiences.

4.1.4.1. Action plan

Table 7 provides the action plan for recommendations that fall under the nature and recreation pillar. Those marked with a '★' are priority recommendations.

Table 7: Action plan – Nature and Recreation (including waterbodies and lakes)

| Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|--|--|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|---------------------|--------|
| | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Develop packages of Yarriambiack's bird-watching hotspots in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes (including at Lake Lascelles, Beulah and Patchewollock) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct an assessment of prime bird-watching sites within Yarriambiack, focusing on Lake Lascelles, Beulah, and Patchewollock. ▪ Document the bird species, habitats, and optimal viewing times at each location. ▪ Collaborate with local ornithologists, bird-watching clubs, and wildlife experts to gather insights and recommendations. ▪ Involve local guides and enthusiasts in the planning process to ensure authentic and informed experiences. ▪ Create themed bird-watching packages based on different interests, such as rare bird species, migratory patterns, and photography-focused tours. ▪ Design packages to cater to various levels of bird-watching expertise, from beginners to experienced birders. ▪ Map out detailed tour routes that connect the key bird-watching hotspots, ensuring ease of navigation and optimal bird-watching opportunities. Include directions, estimated travel times, and points of interest along the routes. ▪ Partner with local accommodation providers, restaurants, and transport services to enhance the packages. | Project | | ✓ | | YSC, GWM Tourism | O |

| Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|--------------------|--------|
| | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a targeted marketing strategy to promote the bird-watching packages, using social media, bird-watching forums, travel blogs, and partnerships with tourism agencies. Highlight the unique bird species and pristine natural environments of Yarriambiack in promotional materials. | | | | | | |
| Develop packages of Yarriambiack's night time economy, dark sky and sunset experiences in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct an inventory of prime locations within Yarriambiack for dark sky viewing, sunset spots, and nighttime activities. Highlight natural landmarks, scenic viewpoints, and existing facilities suitable for these experiences Consult with local tourism operators to identify potential partnerships and to gauge interest in being included in the packages, including accommodation, transport and food and beverage operators. Create themed packages based on different aspects of the nighttime economy, such as astronomy tours, sunset dinners, and nocturnal wildlife experiences. Utilise social media, local and regional advertising, travel blogs, and partnerships with tourism agencies to market the packages. | Project | | ✓ | | YSC | S-M |
| Investigate the creation of motorsport events and initiatives in the Shire that leverage existing motorsports facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a comprehensive audit of all existing motorsports facilities within the Shire. Evaluate the current condition, capacity, and suitability of these facilities for hosting various types of motorsport events. Identify and engage with key stakeholders, including local motorsports clubs, facility owners, and community groups. Analyse successful motorsport events in similar regions to identify best practices and potential opportunities. Develop a concept for a potential motorsport event(a), including race types, formats, and target audiences and which leverage existing facilities. Ensure that all proposed events comply with safety regulations and standards. Identify potential partners and sponsors to support the motorsport events. | Project | | ✓ | | Motor sports clubs | S-M |

4.1.5. Food (agritourism) and drink recommendations

Known for its vast farmlands, the Wimmera Mallee has the potential to grow its profile as an emerging foodie destination, leveraging agri-tourism opportunities and providing visitors with insights into farming practices, local produce, and the daily lives of the farming community.

Yarriambiack Shire is expanding its food and drink offerings, which will continue to develop as more visitors and locals frequent key town centres. There is an opportunity to boost agritourism in the region by enhancing the profile and infrastructure of the Mallee Machinery Field Days.

4.1.5.1. Action plan

Table 8 provides the action plan for recommendations that fall under the food (agritourism) and drink pillar. Those marked with a '★' are priority recommendations.

Table 8: Action plan – Food (agritourism) and drink

| Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|---|--|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|------------------|--------|
| | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Assist Mallee Machinery Field Days to grow as a destination event through infrastructure enhancements and profiling ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In partnership with Speed Lions Club, conduct an evaluation of the existing infrastructure at the Mallee Machinery Field Days site to identify areas needing improvement or expansion. ▪ Identify grant funding streams that may assist in upgrading essential facilities, including an amphitheatre, restrooms, parking areas, and food and beverage stations to enhance visitor comfort and convenience. ▪ Ensure the site is accessible to all visitors, including those with disabilities, by adding ramps, clear signage, and transportation services. ▪ Encourage the Speed Lions Club to introduce interactive exhibits and demonstrations to engage visitors and provide hands-on experiences. ▪ Utilise social media platforms to build awareness and engage with potential visitors, exhibitors, and sponsors. ▪ Assist the Speed Lions Club to form partnerships with industry associations, agricultural organisations, and educational institutions to broaden the event's appeal and enhance its offerings. | Project | | ✓ | | Speed Lions Club | S |

4.1.6. Arts and culture recommendations

The Wimmera Mallee offers a rich tapestry of arts and cultural tourism products that attract visitors seeking unique and immersive experiences. The region is home to vibrant arts communities, significant historical sites, and contemporary cultural attractions, including the well-known Silo Art Trail, which highlights the region’s heritage and creativity.

Yarriambiack Shire's arts and culture sector is growing. Initiatives such as expanding heritage rail experiences, implementing the Courthouse project, and introducing a self-drive heritage trail to link the Shire’s heritage and cultural products will further strengthen this sector.

4.1.6.1. Action plan

Table 9 provides the action plan for recommendations that fall under the arts and culture pillar. Those marked with a ‘★’ are priority recommendations.

Table 9: Action plan – arts and culture

| Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|---|--------|
| | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Continue to progress Yarriambiack’s Heritage Trail project to develop a Shire-wide narrative and cross-promotion of heritage attractions ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the current status of the Heritage Trail project, including completed phases and outstanding tasks and continue to progress it (noting the Shire has recently gone out for EOI to complete the project). Develop a comprehensive digital map of all heritage attractions on the trail. Assess the potential to host events, such as heritage tours, educational workshops, and historical reenactments, to promote the Heritage Trail and engage visitors. Establish a system for tracking visitor numbers, feedback, and the overall effectiveness of the project. | Strategic Initiative | ✓ | | | Heritage attractions | O |
| Expansion of heritage railway experience throughout Yarriambiack Shire with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc. ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate discussions with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc. to explore collaboration opportunities. Identify potential new days, times and routes (if any) that can be incorporated into the heritage railway experience. Assess the potential to create a series of bookable packages that train passengers can pre-book and undertake when in the Shire. Work with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc. to create joint marketing and promotional campaigns. | Project | | | ✓ | Seymour Railway Heritage, 707 Operations Inc. | S |

| Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
| | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Implement the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project (including accommodation development) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support and advocate for the completion of the project, including the development of self-contained accommodation. Utilise social media, local tourism websites, and travel platforms to attract and market the Courthouse and its accommodation. Once the accommodation is developed, ensure it is listed on the ATDW. | Project | | ✓ | | Monash University and Working Heritage | S |
| Support the Stick Shed as a visitor experience and events venue (investment required for design works and change of use) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the Committee by identifying potential investors, including government grants, private investors, and philanthropic organisations. Once funding is sourced, work with the Committee to ensure they align with requirements. Work with Committee to obtain the necessary change of use approvals for the Stick Shed once upgrades are implemented. Undertake a visitor experience assessment of the Stick Shed to assess enhancements that can be made to the experience, including enhanced interpretation signage and digital VR guides (to complement in-person guides) etc. | | | ✓ | | The Stick Shed Committee of Management | S-M |

4.1.7. Enabler recommendations

A variety of enablers should be focused on to improve the visitor and local experience in the Wimmera Mallee. These factors facilitate and enhance the development, promotion, and delivery of visitor experiences and services. They play a crucial role in ensuring a destination can effectively attract, accommodate, and satisfy visitors.

Several initiatives could enhance the visitor experience in Yarriambiack Shire, including (but not limited to) progressing the Hopetoun Old School Site development, streetscape enhancements for main towns and marketing and positioning of Wyperfeld National Park gateway towns.

4.1.7.1. Action plan

Table 10 provides the action plan for recommendations that fall under the enabler category. Those marked with a '★' are priority recommendations.

Table 10: Action plan – Enabler

| Enabler | Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|---------------|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|-------------------------|--------|
| | | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Accommodation | Continue to progress the Hopetoun Old School Site development (including accommodation, worker housing and a nature-based playground) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to progress the project, including grant funding streams to support the implementation of the project's various components. Identify all potential funding sources, including government grants, private investors, and community fundraising initiatives. | Project | ✓ | | | Department of Education | M |
| Placemaking | Continue with the Council's program of streetscape and signage improvements for gateway towns (Rupanyup, Murtoa, Warracknabeal, Yaapeet, Patchewollock and Woomelang) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to implement the various streetscape masterplans Council has developed for Rupanyup and Yaapeet. Evaluate current streetscape and signage conditions in Murtoa, Warracknabeal, Patchewollock, and Woomelang. Rank projects based on impact, urgency, and available resources. Hold consultation sessions with residents, business owners, and community groups to gather input and ongoing suggestions. Explore funding opportunities such as government grants, regional development funds, and private investments. Execute the planned streetscape projects in phases, starting with the highest-priority areas. Organise events to celebrate the completion of major streetscape and signage projects. | Project | | ✓ | | Property owners | M-L |

| Enabler | Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|-----------------|--------|
| | | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Events infrastructure & support | Support events that are held in Yarriambiack to become destination events (i.e. attracting visitors from outside the Shire) ★ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile a list of existing events held within Yarriambiack Shire that could attract visitors from outside the region. ▪ Collaborate with event organisers to understand their needs, challenges, and aspirations. ▪ Work with organisers to enhance event offerings, including entertainment, activities, and amenities. ▪ Identify and address any infrastructure needs, such as transportation, parking, and signage, to accommodate larger visitor numbers. ▪ Ensure events are listed on the ATDW and on the Wimmera Mallee events calendar. ▪ Create targeted marketing campaigns to promote the events to broader audiences, utilising social media, local and regional advertising, travel blogs, and tourism websites. ▪ Seek sponsorships and partnerships with regional and national brands to increase the event's profile and financial support. | Strategic Initiative | | ✓ | | Event operators | O |

| Enabler | Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|----------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|-------------------|--------|
| | | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Marketing and distribution | Create online digital itineraries of Yarriambiack's antique and second-hand shopping experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compile a comprehensive list of antique and second-hand shops within Yarriambiack Shire. ▪ Collect detailed information about each shop, including location, hours of operation, unique items, and contact details. ▪ Reach out to shop owners to inform them about the digital itinerary initiative. Gather their input, promotional materials, and any special features they wish to highlight. ▪ Organise shops into categories such as antiques, vintage clothing, furniture, collectibles, and specialty items. Create themed itineraries based on these categories to cater to different interests. ▪ Develop engaging digital content for each itinerary, including shop descriptions, high-quality images, and interactive maps. Incorporate features like GPS navigation, user reviews, and sharing options. ▪ Utilise social media, tourism websites, travel blogs, and partnerships with GWM Tourism to profile the itineraries. | Strategic Initiative | ✓ | | | Antique/opp shops | S |
| Marketing and distribution | Position Hopetoun and Yaapeet as gateways to Wyperfeld National Park | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analyse Hopetoun's and Yaapeet's current roles in relation to Wyperfeld National Park. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for positioning these towns as gateways. ▪ Develop and upgrade key infrastructure such as signage, information centres, and transport links to facilitate easy access to Wyperfeld National Park from these towns. ▪ Install clear and informative signage along major routes leading to Hopetoun and Yaapeet, as well as within the towns themselves. Ensure signage highlights the connection to Wyperfeld National Park and provides directions to key points of interest. | Strategic Initiative | | ✓ | - | | S-M |

| Enabler | Recommendation | Action | Project or Strategic Initiative | Council Role | | | Partners | Timing |
|---------------|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------|--|--------|
| | | | | Deliver | Partner | Advocate | | |
| Accommodation | Support the refresh of existing infrastructure and amenities at Lake Lascelles to help the sustainability of the precinct ¹³ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assist the Committee by identifying potential grant funding opportunities that could support the refresh of existing infrastructure and amenities upgrades. ▪ Create a sustainability plan that outlines goals for environmental conservation, resource efficiency, and long-term maintenance for the precinct. ▪ Identify and prioritise key projects based on urgency, impact, and available funding. | Project | | | ✓ | Lake Lascelles-Corrong Committee of Management | M |

¹³ Lake Lascelles offers one of the most popular destinations for visitors across the Wimmera Mallee region. The lake offers numerous powered and unpowered caravan and camping sites along with different forms of cabin accommodation and supporting infrastructure. The facilities are managed by a volunteer committee who note that at peak times of the year, the area suffers from too many visitors and loses the very appeal it has to offer visitors a stunning experience. As such, future support for this destination needs to focus on funding the upgrades and enhancements required to maintain the facilities to a high standard. This also means maintaining visitor capacity at its current levels, if not slightly less, to avoid overcrowding and the risk of environmental degradation. This approach will ensure that the lake and its facilities remain sustainable and are able to offer an ongoing attractive and desirable experience.

4.1.8. Recommendations alignment with the Shire’s Tourism Strategy

As previously mentioned, Council specifically requested that the LAAP align with their current 2023 – 2027 Tourism Strategy. Table 11 below demonstrates how this alignment can best be achieved, by indicating next to each LAAP recommendation, the existing Strategy that it aligns with from the Yarriambiack Tourism Strategy.

Table 11: Recommendations alignment with the Shire’s Tourism Strategy

| LAAP Recommendation | Link to Yarriambiack’s Tourism Strategy |
|--|--|
| Assist Mallee Machinery Field Days to grow as a destination event through infrastructure enhancements and profiling | Strategy 3.3 - Develop Australia’s largest ‘outdoor performing arts stage’. Facilitate a calendar of events that connect organisations in each town across Yarriambiack, where their Progress Associations, Committees of Management, Historic Societies or Service Clubs are responsible for holding one event per year. |
| Continue to progress the Hopetoun Old School Site development (including accommodation, worker housing and a nature-based playground) | Strategy 1.2 - Implement the findings of Wimmera Mallee Tourism’s feasibility project on redeveloping more eclectic accommodation (adding to the example set by Hopetoun’s Powerhouse artist-in-residence and self-contained apartment) including the delivery of the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project. Proactively search for funding opportunities to support identified projects, including historic railway stations and pub hotels. |
| Continue to progress Yarriambiack’s Heritage Trail project to develop a Shire-wide narrative and cross-promotion of heritage attractions | Strategy 2.2 - Enhancing historic and heritage attractions across the Shire by facilitating connection between organisations and venues. Provide these groups with data and statistics to inform a collaborative approach. |
| Continue with the Council’s program of streetscape and signage improvements for gateway towns (Rupanyup, Murtoa, Warracknabeal, Yaapeet, Patchewollock and Woomelang) | Strategy 4.5 - Continue with Council’s program of streetscape and signage improvements, focusing on: consistency and theming in signage and main streets beautification native vegetation. |
| Create online digital itineraries of Yarriambiack’s antique and second-hand shopping experiences | Strategy 2.1 - Develop packages of Yarriambiack attractions in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes. Utilise existing hero attractions including, but not limited to Silo Art, Waterways, Historical and Heritage Attractions and Local Sporting Facilities to form anchor points of trails to celebrate Yarriambiack’s tourism potential. |
| Develop packages of Yarriambiack’s bird-watching hotspots in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes (including at Lake Lascelles, Beulah and Patchewollock) | Strategy 2.1 - Develop packages of Yarriambiack attractions in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes. Utilise existing hero attractions including, but not limited to Silo Art, Waterways, Historical and Heritage Attractions and local Sporting Facilities to form anchor points of trails to celebrate Yarriambiack’s tourism potential. |
| Develop packages of Yarriambiack’s night time economy, dark sky and sunset experiences in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes. | Strategy 2.1 - Develop packages of Yarriambiack attractions in a way that enables visitors to pre-plan and book by type of experience and by tour routes. Utilise existing hero attractions including, but not limited to Silo Art, Waterways, Historical and Heritage Attractions and Local Sporting Facilities to form anchor points of trails to celebrate Yarriambiack’s tourism potential. |
| Expansion of heritage railway experience throughout Yarriambiack Shire with Seymour Heritage Rail and 707 Operations Inc. | Strategy 3.4 - Pursue the potential to work with Seymour Heritage Rail to schedule rail trips to Yarriambiack Shire, with itineraries that include linking visitor servicing activities and initiatives across the shire. Identify optimal timing based on existing Yarriambiack event calendar |
| Implement the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project (including accommodation development) | Strategy 1.2 - Implement the findings of Wimmera Mallee Tourism’s feasibility project on redeveloping more eclectic accommodation (adding to the example set by Hopetoun’s Powerhouse artist-in-residence and self-contained apartment) including the delivery of the Warracknabeal Courthouse Project. Proactively search for funding opportunities to support identified projects, including historic railway stations and pub hotels. |
| Investigate the creation of motorsport events and initiatives in the Shire that leverage existing motorsports facilities | Strategy 3.1 - Support all events that are held in Yarriambiack so that event organisers meet required compliance obligations, such as traffic management plans, signage, local laws permits, planning permits and Place of Public Entertainment requirements. Provide additional support for registered events through undertaking radio advertising, newspaper and social media advertising and additional waste services |

| LAAP Recommendation | Link to Yarriambiack's Tourism Strategy |
|---|--|
| Position Hopetoun and Yaapeet as gateways to Wyperfeld National Park | Strategy 4.5 – Continue with Council's program of streetscape and signage improvements, focusing on: consistency and theming in signage and main streets beautification native vegetation. |
| Support events that are held in Yarriambiack to become destination events (i.e. attracting visitors from outside the Shire) | Strategy 3.1 – Support all events that are held in Yarriambiack so that event organisers meet required compliance obligations, such as traffic management plans, signage, local laws permits, planning permits and Place of Public Entertainment requirements. Provide additional support for registered events through undertaking radio advertising, newspaper and social media advertising and additional waste services |
| Support the refresh of existing infrastructure and amenities at Lake Lascelles to help the sustainability of the precinct | Strategy 1.3 – Encourage and support all visitor servicing businesses within Yarriambiack to adopt a service culture of giving visitors a positive experience and structuring their operations to take account of visitor's expectations. Mentoring, industry forums, workshops and short courses for new staff are possible mechanisms for implementation. |
| Support the Stick Shed as a visitor experience and events venue (investment required for design works and change of use) | Strategy 3.1 – Support all events that are held in Yarriambiack so that event organisers meet required compliance obligations, such as traffic management plans, signage, local laws permits, planning permits and Place of Public Entertainment requirements. Provide additional support for registered events through undertaking radio advertising, newspaper and social media advertising and additional waste services |



Part 5: Appendices

Appendix 1 Forecast supporting data

Table 12: Forecasts supporting data

Visitor Forecasts – Yarriambiack

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Domestic day | 80,826 | 83,126 | 84,518 | 85,708 | 86,941 | 88,680 | 90,454 | 92,263 | 94,569 | 96,933 |
| Domestic overnight | 86,133 | 89,363 | 90,699 | 92,162 | 93,026 | 94,887 | 96,785 | 98,720 | 101,188 | 103,718 |
| International | 484 | 506 | 534 | 547 | 560 | 571 | 583 | 594 | 609 | 624 |
| Total | 167,443 | 172,996 | 175,751 | 178,418 | 180,528 | 184,138 | 187,821 | 191,577 | 196,367 | 201,276 |

Visitor Spending Forecasts – Yarriambiack

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Domestic day | \$8.9m | \$9.5m | \$9.9m | \$10.3m | \$10.8m | \$11.4m | \$11.9m | \$12.5m | \$13.2m | \$14.0m |
| Domestic overnight | \$38.6m | \$41.2m | \$43.1m | \$45.1m | \$46.9m | \$49.3m | \$51.8m | \$54.4m | \$57.4m | \$60.6m |
| International | \$453k | \$487k | \$530k | \$560k | \$590k | \$620k | \$651k | \$684k | \$722k | \$763k |
| Total | \$48.0m | \$51.2m | \$53.5m | \$56.0m | \$58.3m | \$61.3m | \$64.4m | \$67.6m | \$71.4m | \$75.4m |

