

Campaspe Region Visitor Servicing Strategy 2030

Arrive with interest, stay with wonder, leave with delight, return with intention.

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Purpose

This strategy aims to reposition and reinvigorate the approach to servicing visitors of the Campaspe Region.

In meeting the emerging needs of travellers, combined with a strengthened regional position, a renewed focus on supporting visitors across their end-to-end travel journey will deliver resilience, sustainability, and growth for the Campaspe Region's visitor economy.

This strategy looks holistically at the visitor servicing ecosystem in the Campaspe Region to allow all interested stakeholders to be involved, work together and drive the region forward.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Campaspe is the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung, and Yorta Yorta Peoples. We acknowledge all First Peoples and their deep and enduring connection to lands and waterways, upheld through their cultural responsibilities to Country. We pay our respect to Elders past and present for their resilience, sharing of cultural knowledge, and strength in sustaining community and Culture. With a shared commitment to mutual respect, we walk the path of reconciliation together.

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Strategic Context: Beyond 'information'

For many years, visitors have relied on visitor information centres (VICs) to support their travel journey. Studies across regions frequently demonstrate that interactions with this type of support help to grow visitor spend, increase visitor nights and the likelihood of repeat visitation. The adoption, proliferation and access to information has shifted over time, with globally accessible information now available in the palm of the hand. The need for pure 'information' provision is over, as much of this is readily and instantly available, with footfall to traditional VICs reducing year on year, to less than one in ten visitors to a region engaging in the traditional approach.

To maintain relevance, visitor servicing operations requires a wider holistic perspective and innovation to reframe how they can positively support the growth of visitor economies. This starts with understanding what customers need, their changing preferences and being a step ahead. In its simplest form, customers no longer require only 'information' – as they can get this easily – what they need is 'inspiration' that helps them connect and resonate with their desires and goals.

For the purpose of this strategy, visitor servicing encompasses more than just the bricks and mortar VIC, it considers the wider servicing experience that supports and aligns with the customer journey through their five stages of travel – Dreaming, Planning, Booking, Experiencing and Reflecting. The core aim is to create the connection to drive longer stays, greater spends, repeat visitation and stronger region advocacy.

Campaspe Region, economic prosperity and tourism

The Campaspe Region sits in northern Victoria, approximately 180km north of Melbourne. Its northern border is located on the Murray River and features the popular visitor destination of Echuca, which borders Moama in Southern NSW.

It is the closest Murray River location to Melbourne and offers a diverse range of tourism experiences. From regional towns like Echuca and Kyabram to the natural beauty of the Murray River, the area is rich in historical and natural attractions, enhanced by the hospitality and diverse character of numerous small towns.



Alongside the historical and natural wonders of the region, the towns of Kyabram, Rochester, Colbinabbin, Gunbower, Girgarre, Lockington, Rushworth, Stanhope and Tongala offer a range of rural experiences, including attractions (both natural and man-made), dining and local events. Emerging First Nations cultural offerings are also important to the region.

The **value of the visitor economy is $294 million[1] to the local economy,** driven primarily by domestic day-trippers (55%) and domestic overnight stays (44%), travelling for the purpose of holiday (52%), VFR (visiting friends and relatives) (29%) and business (11%).

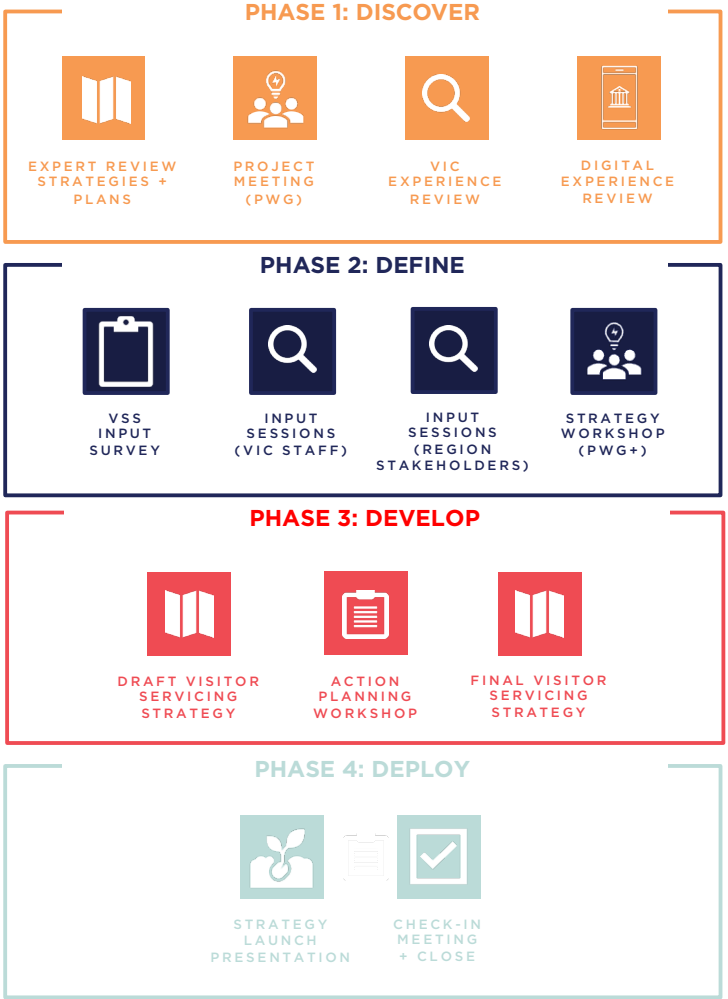
Strategy development process

A clear directive for the development of this strategy was collaboration, engagement and consultation with key industry players across the Campaspe Region, all coming together to put **the customer at the heart of strategic decision making.**

The process was designed to efficiently and effectively get to the heart of the current issues, **collaboratively forge a vision** for the future and outline the **strategic stepping stones and actions** required to make it a reality. In-person sessions, virtual workshops, and online technology enabled deep collaboration across the four stages below.

1 Urban Enterprise, 2024 (TRA 2022/23 average)

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The strategy development process included representatives from:

- Campaspe Shire Council (CSC)
- Murray River Council (MRC)
- Murray Regional Tourism (MRT)
- Local Tourism Associations and groups
- Visitor Information Centres (VICs)
- Local tourism operators including accommodation, tours and attractions.

REVIEW OF RELATED STRATEGIES AND DOCUMENTS

In developing the new Visitor Servicing Strategy to support the growth of the Campaspe Region visitor economy, the following documents were reviewed and are considered central to the main 'library' for reference and input:

- Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2024)
- Campaspe Economic Development and Tourism Strategy Action Plan (2024)
- Echuca Moama Destination Activation Plan (2023-2028)
- Murray Region Visitor Servicing Transformation Project, Visitor Engagement Strategy (2019)
- Murray Region Destination Management Plan (2023)
- Echuca Moama Local Area Plan (2023)
- VTIC Accredited Visitor Information Servicing Guidelines (2018)
- Local Government Health Check Report (2022)
- VTIC Visitor Servicing Toolkit (2019)
- TRA Data Murray Region Tourism (2024)

These documents are available from their relevant source publisher.

As the primary author and architect of visitor servicing transformation work across Victoria including the Murray region, the Customer Frame (CF) team also brought subject matter knowledge and expertise to enrich the width and depth of thinking.

VIC EXPERIENCE REVIEWS

As part of the review, VIC Experience Reviews were undertaken in February 2025 in two VIC locations, Echuca and Rochester. The reviews sought to **determine the visitor experience from a range of perspectives**. Elements analysed include signage and wayfinding, customer service, displays and collateral, using a CF Experience Scorecard process.

Key findings: Echuca

- Wayfinding to the VIC was difficult, with a lack of signage and guidance on entry into and within the town centre, and an incorrect location listed on Google search; the experience was frustrating, time-consuming and confusing with a high likelihood to disengage
- VIC location in the Port of Echuca is central, charming and appropriate for passing visitors; it feels connected to the Port, but disconnected from the rest of the town
- The space is small and fairly closed-in, which may be a deterrent to some visitors. However, as a temporary or ongoing 'satellite' location, it is appropriate and well set out
- Lack of a sense of 'welcome' or 'reason' to enter may limit numbers; clever interactive and invitational efforts may drive greater numbers and improve street presence and vibe
- Current location lacks space for local produce/wares (retail), has no interactive displays and no place for visitors to 'spend time' – it's more a brochure store than interactive VIC
- Liaisons with VIC staff were friendly and informative but when witnessed, lacked a level of positive enquiry of visitor needs, generic advice and a reliance on brochures and maps; this is in line with the limited space and resources available to the team at this time.

Key findings: Rochester

- Wayfinding to VIC was easy due to location, however inconsistent 'i' signage was evident; entry to building was somewhat confusing and provided little sense of welcome
- Interaction with staff, whilst warm and friendly, lacked positive enquiry or relevant, compelling information that couldn't be found on Google; no local secrets or tips
- Information provided by staff was heavily reliant on the visitor going online for further info
- Co-location with the Sports Museum, whilst advantageous, is not promoted or celebrated to its full potential, nor is the VIC's integration with the rest of the town and its offerings.

DIGITAL EXPERIENCE REVIEW

As part of the strategy development, a Digital Experience Review was used to review the pre-travel touch points of the visitor journey including digital platforms, websites and social media, to help **understand the customer experience and identify gaps and opportunities** for improvement.

Key findings:

- Little to no consistency across websites, from region level to town sites, meaning no visual guidance or assurance that the towns and region are connected and related to each other
- Little to no directional wayfinding online such as a top 5 ways to enjoy the region or special interest stand outs that might invite the visitor to spend longer to discover more options
- Visitor must do a lot of the work to find the information needed, to make sense of the detail, to identify the reasons why they should come to the region, rather than overtly being told
- Some use of video across sites and social media; huge opportunity to showcase the region
- On social media, some accounts appear 'sales-y', promoting products and experiences, but not showcasing people 'living' the experiences. Text is dry in some instances, with a sales and information focus, rather than a storytelling, emotive or invitational audience conversation
- Few, if any, social media profiles celebrate volunteers, locals and businesses, missing the opportunity to showcase what it would be like to visit the region and meet the locals
- Websites had minimal reference to 'local secrets' or 'local favourites', which is an opportunity for the region moving forward
- Google search of generic terms such as 'places to go 2.5 hours from Melbourne' yielded little to no results where the region was represented, highlighting a huge opportunity for future region marketing to establish strong keywords and SEO.

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS AND INPUT SURVEY

As a key research tool for the Strategy, a Stakeholder Perception and Input Survey was sent to industry and community delegates across a range of operations and geographies, to **understand the perceptions of where we are today, what's holding the region back in terms of visitor servicing and where to focus effort in the future.**

Key points:

- 45 responses
- Range of perspectives from Visitor Centre team, Council and Local Government, tourism organisations, events and operators (accommodation, attractions, retailers)
- Covered the challenges, strengths, weaknesses, perceptions of the current approach and insights into where the issues are and where to focus next
- Verbatim results indicate inherent negative perspectives with descriptors such as: 'cost-driven, limited, ticking a box, uninformed + naïve, ineffective, not well thought out, disappointing, substandard, difficult to access'
- Some responses gave insight beyond the scope of visitor servicing but are useful to direct plan design.

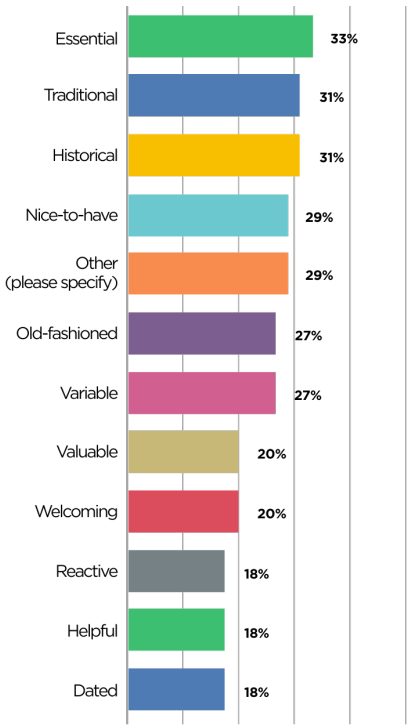


Figure 1: Top 12 words used to describe the visitor servicing approach today

The survey outcomes indicated a range of consistent issues,
some common to other regions whilst others related to specific challenges within the Campaspe Region.

Overall, consensus of stakeholders was that visitor servicing is crucial to the visitor economy, with value in personal service, local perspectives, and sharing a love of the region. However, the existing approach is limited and ineffective and requires improvement to meet the changing needs of visitors. The outcomes from the survey provided a solid foundation for robust discussions in the subsequent interactive 'input' and 'action' workshops.

VIC, REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER AND COUNCIL INPUT WORKSHOPS AND STRATEGY INPUT WORKSHOP

The VIC and regional stakeholder input workshops were conducted in February 2025 with Visitor Centre staff, industry players and local businesses. A dedicated Council workshop was held in March 2025 with Councillors and Executive Leadership Team. The Strategy input workshop was held in March 2025 with key industry representatives from Council, local tourism groups and key partners. These input workshops focused on **understanding where we are today and setting a clear vision for where stakeholders want visitor servicing to be** in the future.



Figure 2: Strategic questions arising from input survey for input workshops

Set within the context of a common vision, the groups discussed the gap between visitor needs and the region's current offering, and the priorities for improvement to close this gap. The Strategy session explored four strategic questions that surfaced from the input survey findings. These outcomes then formed the basis of refining the vision for the Campaspe Region's visitor servicing and the shape of the overall strategy.

STRATEGY ACTION WORKSHOP

The final step of the process, conducted in June 2025, presented the draft vision, strategy focus and strategic initiatives, with which the stakeholder group worked collaboratively to identify the **implications and actions required to close the gap between strategy and reality**.

The outcomes of the workshop formed the implementation actions that are part of this strategy.



Challenges and strategic considerations

Whilst there is a level of positive sentiment towards visitor servicing and its importance in the region economy, throughout the strategy process a range of issues were raised by stakeholders.

These included perceptions of:

- ⊗ Lack of a physical centre with adequate parking and visitor value
- ⊗ Lack of VIC signage and wayfinding to guide visitors and increase visits
- ⊗ Lack of an intentional, planned, consistent approach to visitor servicing across the region
- ⊗ Lack of full-service VIC experience ie. one-stop shop with bookings, retail, dining, local showcases, co-located
- ⊗ Lack of education on surrounding regional attractions and what's outside the towns of Echuca Moama
- ⊗ Duplication of services across multiple channels causes confusion and resource waste
- ⊗ Lack of region coordination across key stakeholders (Councils, the Port, tourism bodies, businesses, towns)
- ⊗ Inconsistent opening hours of local businesses impacts visitor experience
- ⊗ Low awareness of operators and community of region offerings limits region and visitor dispersal
- ⊗ Need for training and support of VIC staff, local businesses and region stakeholders to drive consistency
- ⊗ Missing layer of indigenous culture
- ⊗ Tendency to see Council as solely responsible for visitor servicing, not industry, stakeholders and partners
- ⊗ Lack of curated information tailored to visitor needs and interests
- ⊗ Lack of a centralised website for the whole region that addresses needs of visitor across their travel journey
- ⊗ Lack of local business engagement, service delivery and consistency
- ⊗ Disconnected approach between towns, with inconsistency for visitor
- ⊗ Inefficiencies of effort across region with some sharing happening but not currently formalised or structured
- ⊗ Lack of cross-region special interest themes to drive region dispersal
- ⊗ Low understanding of needs of visitors across customer journey, limited digital/mobile tech to support
- ⊗ Current offering gives little reason for locals to visit or interact
- ⊗ Lack of cross-region itineraries, experiences and stories for visitor
- ⊗ Lack of understanding of who we are as a region + what makes us special

In processing the key findings from the survey and workshops, the perspectives and views were clustered together to present the following topics to be addressed within the plan:

- **Visitor Servicing model** – best solution to support region growth + visitor needs
- **Customer** – know our visitors + what they need to make the most of their visit
- **Destination Marketing** – define our proposition to attract new + repeat visitors
- **Blended engagement** – be where the visitor needs us, when and how they need us
- **Cross-region sharing** – efficiencies, info, visitor experiences, events, marketing
- **Region Dispersal** – driving visitors to visit more towns, stay longer, spend more
- **Joined-up + working together** – VICs, events, industry, businesses, associations
- **Digital and technology** – capitalise on social media, apps, websites, ATDW, Google
- **Industry/VIC education** – meeting visitor needs, showcasing region, driving revenue
- **Consistency in service delivery** – in centre, online + across industry
- **Industry engagement** – to increase support, communication, information

Overall, there is a need to create a strategic **step-change in the approach to visitor servicing, beyond a band-aid solution,** that requires all stakeholders to take part.

What customers need in their travel journey

Customer Frame research indicates that in a customer journey, visitors require differing types of support and outcomes across their travel journey[2].

Across the five stages of travel, customers seek to meet five core needs, as outlined below. The map sets the context for where visitor servicing operations can expand to support the journey.



Source: i2i Visitor Servicing Program, Customer Frame 2020

Visitor servicing has traditionally operated within the 'Experiencing' stage when customers are in-region and requiring information. Some visitor servicing operations have expanded their offerings to include bookings, but these are generally done whilst in this stage, when in region.

As visitor servicing operations are a key resource library and source of local information, the opportunity exists to provide support to customers much earlier in the journey:

- providing inspiration to get onto the 'shopping list' or consideration set of the visitor
- easily accessible and digestible information to support their trip planning
- booking services to reduce the frustration and paradox of choice facing customers

Then later in the journey:

- keeping in contact, thanking them for their stay and asking them to return

There can be significant gaps in the way we provide service to visitors across their journey, but by adjusting the way we deliver visitor servicing, we are well placed to address these gaps. However, it requires a step change and innovation in the types of work traditionally undertaken by VICs. It means going beyond the confines of the old bricks and mortar approach, embracing digital services to increase reach across the customer travel journey.



The visitor experience is everyone's business.

[2] Murray Regional Tourism: Customer Journey Map 2019 (Customer Frame)

Vision

“

The Campaspe Region to be renowned as the leader of visitor experience, championing the richness of our region’s offerings and the strength of our stakeholder collective for a stronger, more sustainable visitor economy.



Strategic Approach

Vision, Mission, Goals

The strategic approach for visitor servicing in the Campaspe Region is based on an holistic plan for industry and government to work towards, with a shared vision, mission and goals.

VISION

The Campaspe Region to be renowned as the leader of visitor experience, championing the richness of our region's offerings and the strength of our stakeholder collective for a stronger, more sustainable visitor economy.

The Campaspe Region will be seen as a leader in visitor servicing and experience, having put the visitor at the heart of everything we do to move beyond 'information' to 'inspiration'. Industry stakeholders, local government, businesses and community will connect through this shared vision, each playing their part in delivering a vibrant, sustainable and growing visitor economy that aligns with visitor needs to create long-term connection with the region.

MISSION

Arrive with interest, stay with wonder, leave with delight, return with intention.

Through greater industry collaboration and visitor focus, we create the best visitor experience possible. We surprise even those who believe they know what we do and who we are, immerse them in the magic of our region, and leave them wanting more. Beyond a one-off transaction, we create long-term connection, along the entire visitor journey.

GOALS

Whilst the vision sets out where we are heading, the following five strategic goals underpin the commercial and cultural impacts that need to be met.

1. **Increase repeat visitation** – provide more reasons for day-tripper and overnight visitors to return to the Campaspe Region
2. **Increase visitor spend within the region** – enable greater spend and longer stays by aligning cross-region offerings with visitor needs
3. **Improve customer advocacy** – ensure more visitors leave with positive sentiment towards the Campaspe Region, telling others of their experience to drive greater visitor volumes
4. **Enhance industry collaboration** – reduce complexity, enhance capability and improve partnership initiatives to leverage resources through a shared vision, strategy and common working model
5. **Refine visitor servicing in-region** – provide a cohesive, visitor-centric visitor servicing framework that ensures visitors have all they need to enhance their visitor experience, lengthen stay and increase repeat visitation and spend.

No longer the realm of visitor servicing staff alone, visitor servicing and the visitor experience is everyone's business – stakeholders, local governments, local businesses (tourism and non-tourism) and tourism associations. We all have a part to play in delivering the best experience possible to grow the visitor economy.

Strategy Background

Developing the Strategy

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Our strategic approach is to move visitor servicing operations beyond the confines of a transactional bricks-and-mortar approach, to a wider reaching, dynamic, experiential approach that meets customers where and when they need it. Underpinned by a deep understanding of what they need from visitor servicing, all efforts will have the visitor at the heart.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

- ✓ **Be where customers are** – whenever they're there
- ✓ **Be the curator** – do the hard work + make it easy
- ✓ **Be collaborative** – work together + support each other
- ✓ **Be the destination** – the place they choose, always

Furthermore, the approach extends visitor servicing operations to formally collaborate and work closer with industry to ensure a seamless end-to-end customer experience. The focus is also to build a deeper digital capability that considers the customer needs across the entire customer journey and the five stages of travel.

The strategy will be delivered in line with other relevant council plans and strategies, with strong alignment with the Campaspe Region Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (2024) and the Echuca Moama Destination Activation Plan (DAP) (2023–2028).

Integral to the success of this strategy is the alignment with the Campaspe Region Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, which outlines the plan to grow the region and visitor economy of the Campaspe Region from 2024. Further, alignment with the Echuca Moama Destination Activation Plan, which focuses on the activation of region opportunities within the wider Murray Region is also important. Visitor servicing is a strategic priority in driving regional dispersal and prosperity, as is experience development in enriching the product offerings of the region for the visitor.

The vision of the region's Economic Development and Tourism Strategy is:

> *To create a unique and high-value visitor destination that leverages the Shire's competitive advantages and provides a high-quality experience for new and existing visitor markets.*

The document highlights five strategic goals in driving a unique and successful visitor destination. These are: elevate Echuca as the leading regional visitor destination on the Murray River; foster shire-wide visitor dispersal; establish a strong major regional events calendar; establish a visitor economy of excellence; and establish a recognised brand and destination image.

Further, the document outlines priorities that align with visitor needs, including the Port of Echuca Precinct Plan, cross border collaboration, tracks and trails development, arts trail development, water-based activation, event attraction, development of the night-time economy, fostering a cohesive and collaborative industry, First Nations cultural product development, marketing and specifically, the development of a visitor servicing strategy. The combination of these elements, coupled with this strategy, will set the region up for long-term, sustainable success. These elements have therefore been considered in the preparation of this strategy.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

- ✓ **Cross-river collaboration** – working together, same page, same goals, aligned strategy
- ✓ **Data intelligence** – use data to inform decisions, with clear set performance measures
- ✓ **Direct impact** – convert marketing spend to region visibility + direct bookings
- ✓ **Industry education** – ensure quality delivery through skills + knowledge development
- ✓ **Role clarity** – communicate stakeholder responsibilities to industry for ease of access

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STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

There are several key concepts that contribute to the preparation and implementation of this Visitor Servicing Strategy:

The changing face of visitor servicing and changing customer needs

Things are changing in the world of visitor servicing and remaining relevant and creating connection with visitors is crucial to survival.

Brand recognition of visitor servicing and VICs is imperative to encourage visitor engagement and usage, both for visitors who've used VICs before, and those who have not. The latter provides a huge opportunity to expand the market of VIC users by creating connection and providing value, establishing the VIC as an important element of the visitor's information sources. A blended approach to digital and physical offerings including VICs, mobile, ambassadors and static points is also important.

Offering region information, bookings, advice and an experience you can't get on Google is the secret ingredient to creating a connection with the visitor that could transcend multiple visits. It's this 'something special' that will be the make or break of visitor servicing moving forward.

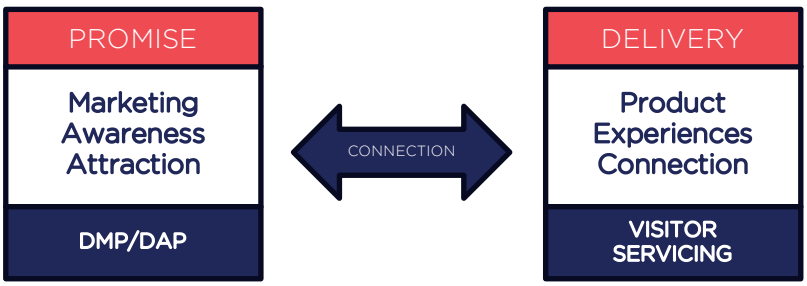
The role of visitor servicing

Marketing and communications are fundamental in driving awareness and interest for regional visitation. But how does visitor servicing fit into the picture? Often misunderstood and undervalued, it plays a pivotal part in the growth and prosperity of regions and visitor economies.

Marketing's role is to attract the visitor with 'this is why you should visit our region, this is how you will feel, this is what you can see and do'. **This is the 'Promise'**.

Visitor servicing is the realisation of this promise. It's the product, the experiences, the connection that the visitor gets when they arrive in our region. **This is the 'Delivery'.**

Without an intentional visitor servicing strategy, the latter becomes accidental. We hope that the visitor gets the experience they were hoping for when they booked or planned their trip. But it's not guaranteed, unless there is a formal plan for how we help the visitor experience the region and fulfil those desires they had in the Booking stage, when they first chose us as a destination.

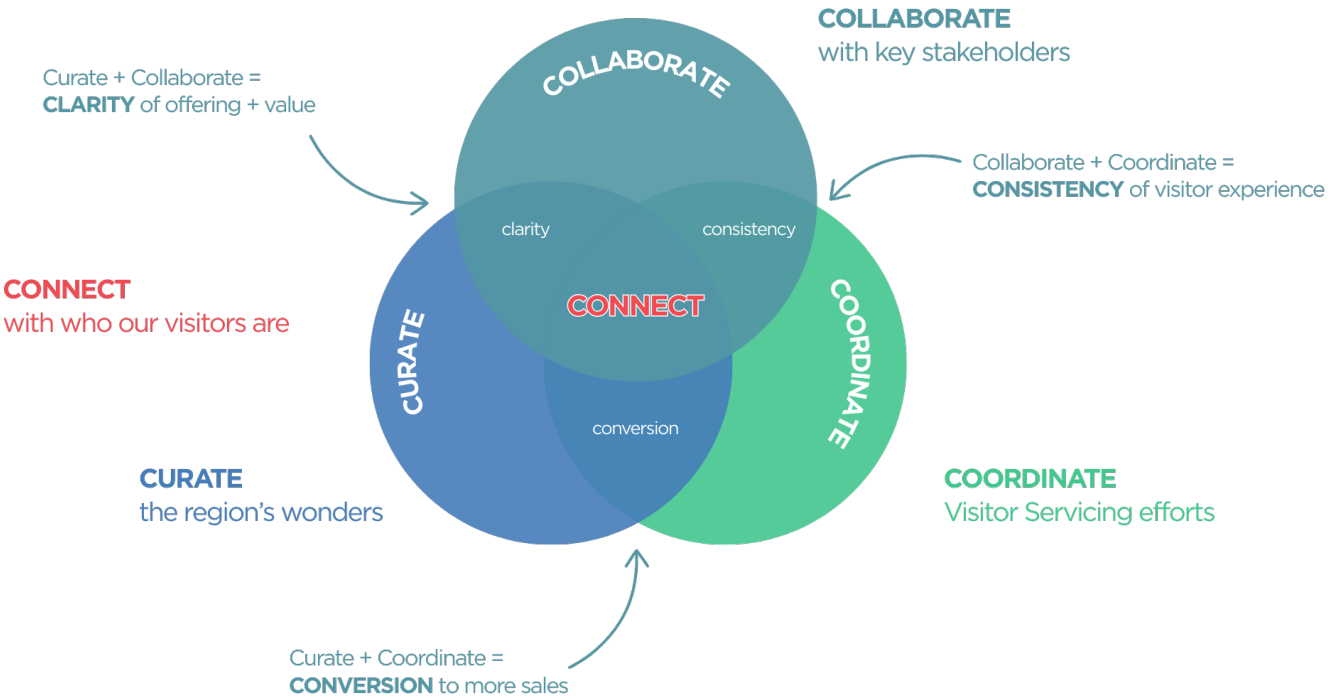




Campaspe Region Visitor Servicing Strategy

To realise the vision, a transformational strategy is required to revolutionise the existing approach, address the key issues raised by stakeholders and close the gap between what visitors need across their end-to-end travel journey and what is currently being delivered.

The strategy is focused on four core pillars to help invigorate the growth of the visitor economy across the short, medium and long-term.



For success, the strategy requires a new level of thinking within existing resources, whilst providing for targeted and focused investment to fill the gaps that meet visitor needs and drive cross region prosperity. It presents a range of new opportunities, founded in a greater level of collaboration, partnership and industry participation. It is a reinvention of sorts, with each element coming together to drive collective growth and success. All with the visitor at the heart.

Specifically, the four strategy pillars are focused on:

1. CONNECT WITH WHO OUR VISITORS ARE	*Understanding who our visitors are to deliver the best experience* Delve into the region's visitors, why they come to the region and how best to deliver to their expectations to create connection
2. CURATE THE REGION'S WONDERS	*Curation of the region's experiences to drive visitor connection* Make it easy for visitors to understand what's possible, beyond 'product' and connect to the richness of the region
3. COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS	*Industry engagement and cross-region collaboration to ensure success* Engage and partner with key players to connect and strengthen visitor servicing and the overall region experience
4. COORDINATE VISITOR SERVICING EFFORTS	*Delivering the region's visitor servicing to meet visitor needs* Broaden reach beyond the physical bricks and mortar, to be where visitors are and engage with them earlier in their visitor journey

1. CONNECT with who our visitors are



Understanding who our visitors are to deliver the best experience

Understanding current and potential visitors' needs, behaviours, and expectations to inform priorities and create true connection

Responding to stakeholder feedback of: *low understanding of needs of visitors across customer journey; lack of intentional, planned, consistent approach to visitor servicing across the region; lack of curated information tailored to visitor needs and interests.*

As the foundation piece of the plan, the CONNECT pillar establishes the visitor at the heart of region growth and prosperity. By understanding who our visitors are and what they need from visitor servicing and the visitor experience, we set the standards for the strategy and the actions.

Things are changing in the world of visitor servicing at a rate of knots that few can keep up with. Remaining relevant and creating connection with visitors is crucial to survival.

The first step and intentional heart of the plan, **the underlying premise of CONNECT is that all stakeholders must value and work together to prioritise the visitor for the strategy to succeed.**

There is strong evidence that stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of who the current or potential visitor to the region is, and what they need from their experience. This includes the visitor demographic, their visitor servicing needs, where else they're travelling, and their psychographics and attitudes. This detail must be prioritised to fulfil their needs and help them make the most of their region visit to ensure they return and advocate to others.

Existing research and data is available to support this priority pillar and does not require an extensive research budget to fulfil. Utilising the data available to the region as a starter will enhance the understanding of the visitor to best align the remaining strategic pillars for success.

In terms of the visitor, it is essential that we create a connection between potential and existing visitors and our visitor servicing offering if we are to remain relevant and valuable within the wider visitor economy. **Giving the visitor what they want, when they want it and how they want it,** is crucial in engaging with wider visitor audiences to create positive visitor experiences and deliver economic prosperity to the region. Understanding these elements is the crucial first step.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic pillar is to:

- Define who our visitors are, existing + potential, + what they need across their journey
- Understand where our visitor servicing efforts are meeting, and not meeting, expectations
- Set the intention for how to deliver visitor servicing in a consistent, formalised manner
- Understand how best to create a long-standing connection with our visitors

KEY INITIATIVES

The four key initiatives that sit under CONNECT are:

- Capitalise on region visitor profiles to drive connection and engagement
- Define our customer experience to align with visitor needs
- Use data to inform decisions and inform future opportunities
- Define our customer service standards to foster connection

CONNECT with who our visitors are

Understanding who our visitors are to deliver the best experience



Understanding current and potential visitors' needs, behaviours, and expectations to inform priorities and create true connection

1.1 CAPITALISE ON REGION VISITOR PROFILES TO DRIVE CONNECTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Knowing who our visitors are and what they need from us is a critical factor for success. Instead of being everything to everyone, an understanding of how we can best service our visitors will generate greater success than treating everyone the same.

By focusing our efforts on who current and potential visitors are, our visitor servicing efforts will have greater impact, generating greater economic benefit and creating a stronger reliance on the visitor servicing brand. It creates less waste, greater return on investment and more positive sentiment and advocacy in the visitor. It will also create greater efficiencies and bridge the divide between destination marketing and the region's experience delivery.

1.2 DEFINE OUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE TO ALIGN WITH VISITOR NEEDS

Getting intentional about the experience we give the visitor through our visitor servicing offerings – and wider region experiences - is a critical component of success. Through matching our value proposition with what is important to the visitor, a clear vision for the customer experience can be defined.

Elements such as the steps staff should take to facilitate visitor interactions, and the tools needed to support these interactions should be defined and form the basis of operational investment, staff training and development. Shifting from a region-view to a visitor-view, fundamental changes are required to match visitor expectations with in-region delivery.

Setting clear intentions as to how we want our visitors to feel and how to best design the experience is part of this initiative and is informed by a deeper understanding of their needs and how best to activate engagement.

1.3 UTILISE VISITOR SERVICING EXPERIENCE INSIGHTS TO INFORM OUR PRIORITIES

Creating a connection between the visitor and our visitor servicing effort is imperative to remain relevant and valuable within the wider visitor economy. Shifting from a mindset of 'accidental', where we hope that our efforts are effective, we must become intentional in our efforts to drive efficiencies and long-term impact.

Taking a visitor-led viewpoint of current efforts, over an operational or supply view, will effectively inform best practice to maximise engagement of the visitor.

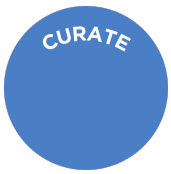
An understanding of how well our current efforts fulfil visitor needs, on all channels at all stages of their journey, is a must. Further, the impact of efforts on region dispersal such as visitor numbers and spend, is crucial to the identification of cross-region gaps and priorities.

1.4 DEFINE OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS TO FOSTER CONNECTION

Real customer care and good customer service are important aspects of visitor servicing. Beyond a friendly wave or answering the phone within three rings, defining the way 'we do' customer service is next level. Through staff who are confident, focused, personable and knowledgeable, the vision for our visitor servicing customer experience can be realised. Visitors who attend a VIC or seek information via phone not only find the information they desire, but a meaningful, pleasurable interaction with the visitor servicing team. They leave with a sense of what it's like to hang out with us, as a region, and create connections that can last a lifetime, driving higher spends, encouraging repeat visitation and creating customer advocacy that all regions aspire to.

2. CURATE the region's wonders

Curation of the region's experiences to drive visitor connection



Make it easy for visitors to understand all that the region has to offer, beyond 'product' and the 'Top 3', to connect more deeply with the richness and diversity of the region

Responding to the stakeholder feedback of: *Lack of understanding of who we are as a region + what makes us special, lack of curated information tailored to visitor needs and interests, lack of cross-regional itineraries, experiences and stories, missing layer of indigenous culture.*

In a world of endless information and choice, **curation of our region's wonders and attractions is the least we can do for our visitors,** particularly if we want them to engage with our communications, visit our region, spend time and money whilst they're here, and return.

When visitors are overwhelmed with information, they tend to revert to what they know.

What does this mean? It means that, marketing and communication efforts in general, attempt to make regions attractive, but overwhelm visitors with too many reasons to visit or options for how to do so. Or, they rely on mainstay products to attract visitors, with little exposure to the wider region that provides more reasons to visit. **There are often so many options that the visitor can't make sense of them, so they don't come at all, or if they do, only scrape the surface of what is on offer.** Beyond brochures and marketing, curation brings to life all that the region has to offer in a simple, easily digestible, manageable format that makes choosing the region easy for the first-time and repeat visitor.

Through rich stories and themes such as 'Locals Live, Locals Love' and 'Special Interests', we can provide the visitor an insight into what it's like to visit. **By sharing who we are and what's special about us, beyond product alone,** over competing destinations, we transcend the brochure sales spiel to bring authenticity and believability to our communications, helping overcome customer cynicism to create true connection.

Given a key driver is to create visitor connection with the richness and diversity of our region, the premise on which this strategic pillar must be based is to go **beyond generic information and must-dos, to who we are as a region and what makes us special,** in line with unique visitor needs, interests and motivations. We must go beyond the sameness of 'vanilla' and step into our uniqueness if we are to be memorable and distinguishable to current and potential visitors. We must also make it easy for our visitor to explore our region to discover these unique qualities.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic pillar is to:

- Clearly define the reasons why visitors should choose our region over others
- Provide visitors with seamless, whole-of-region experiences tailored to their needs
- Create cross-region efficiencies in experience development, packaging and product
- Provide more reasons for visitors to spend time in-region, driving more return visits, higher spend and greater advocacy for the region, through curated itineraries
- Develop tools that make it easy for the visitor + our teams to find what they need

KEY INITIATIVES

The four key initiatives that sit under CURATE are:

- Define our region identity to better portray why visitors should choose us over others
- Create a one-stop information shop that transcends all channels and journey stages
- Become custodians of local stories that showcase the uniqueness of our region
- Create immersive itineraries that encourage cross-region travel and longer stays

CURATE the region's wonders

Make it easy for visitors to understand all that the region has to offer, beyond 'product' and the 'Top 3', to connect more deeply with the richness and diversity of the region

2.1 DEFINE OUR REGION IDENTITY

Defining who we are as a region and why people should visit, is the first step in attracting visitors. Without a clear definition of what makes us special, we fail to effectively communicate to new and past visitors, why they should choose our region over others. We must know ourselves first before expecting visitors to connect with us.

Traditionally a marketing-owned task, it is important that the wider region stakeholders – beyond marketers – are involved in the process to truly tap into the breadth and depth of the region offerings, our unique selling proposition and experience delivery.

2.2 A ONE-STOP INFORMATION SHOP

The problem in the information age is the volume of information available and its (sometimes questionable) authenticity. Consistency and quality of information is key to ensuring a visitor has a positive region experience, made easily accessible through a centralised reliable, trustworthy source.

As the true source of authenticity beyond the brochure blurb, visitor servicing should become the central point of information for industry, visitors and the community, bringing to life the region's experiences in the form of authentic local stories, tracks and trails, itineraries and indigenous culture.

By positioning visitor services in this way, stakeholders will understand where to go to share (push) or consume (pull) information. Additionally, visitor servicing is best placed to be the conduit for this new sharing approach given its access to local businesses, community and tourism product. In this way, visitor servicing becomes the connector between parties. At a strategic level, visitor servicing should support regional brand marketing messages developed via the region's Destination Activation Plan, 2023-2028).

To be successful, this must be supported by stakeholders and industry across the region.

2.3 CUSTODIANS OF LOCAL STORIES

Visitor centre teams + local ambassadors are the gatekeepers of visitor inspiration and insights that only locals know. To connect beyond just functional needs, visitors need stories to bring a destination to life.

In the 'Dreaming' and 'Experiencing' stages of the customer journey, local stories help set the region apart from other destinations. Beyond a simple library of products and brochures, visitor servicing operations can refocus effort to capture local stories and secrets, sharing them with the world.

Stories of the region's indigenous culture must be captured through local elders and community to engage visitors and develop unique multicultural visitor experiences.

The visitor servicing team would become responsible for collecting and crafting a repository of local stories, to be accessed, leveraged and shared by other stakeholders. New marketing angles and experiences can be developed, and a deeper emotional connection created to bring the region to life and make it more memorable for visitors.

2.4 CREATE IMMERSIVE ITINERARIES

Promoting tourism products one by one is a transactional approach, where the visitor is expected to connect the products up to create a complete experience. Visitor servicing can help to connect assets into themed, off-the-shelf itineraries that make it easy for visitors to engage with and enjoy.

These itineraries require tapping into local knowledge and stories, whilst integrating the commercial offerings of tourism operators. With a range of itinerary options, visitors will have more reasons to return, tell others and explore wider than they may have without it.

Further, themed itineraries will engage new markets in special interest tourism, such as food and wine, fishing, history and heritage, photography, cycling and hiking, sporting and events to name just a few.

3. COLLABORATE with key stakeholders



Industry engagement and cross-region collaboration to ensure success

Engage and partner with key players to connect and strengthen visitor servicing across the region and the overall region experience

Responding to stakeholder feedback of: *lack of education on surrounding regions, duplication of effort, lack of region stakeholder coordination or consistent approach, lack of centralised website, disconnected approach, lack of local business engagement, low stakeholder awareness.*

Campaspe Shire Council is in the early days of managing visitor servicing and to-date, has established some strong stakeholder relationships with the potential to align, share and create efficiencies across a range of initiatives.

Despite this, it is still early days and visitor servicing doesn't yet have the required profile with key stakeholders to maximise success. Engagement efforts, education and partnerships will improve the current situation and position visitor servicing as an important component in region prosperity and growth.

Understanding and communicating how visitor servicing integrates into local government priorities, and the value it provides to community, local business and region economics, is an imperative and will help build a strong foundation for long-term success.

Further, establishing and maintaining visitor servicing as a priority for these key players through integration into their priorities and plans, will help achieve our goals. Strategic and functional partnerships are another ideal way to establish and maintain engagement within the visitor servicing economy and ecosystem, as is local business engagement and participation.

Closer to home, the visitor servicing team must fully understand their role in the delivery of quality, engaging experiences that drive visitors to stay longer in the region, spend more money, do more and advocate to others to visit. As the frontline to the visitor, the team are crucial to success and, if we are to deliver visitor servicing in this new age, must step up to the challenge.

In order to achieve this, shifts must occur for real and impactful change, including in the areas of:

- Open mindset – beyond 'my patch' or 'what I know' to the wider region and its wonders
- Impactful delivery – beyond brochures and basics, to deeper conversations and impact
- Beyond product – beyond features and benefits to experiences and heart
- Celebrate local – beyond the top 5 things to do, to what it is to live and love our region

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic pillar is to:

- Clarify Council's role in delivering visitor servicing and destination marketing
- Drive awareness and engagement of key stakeholders to support visitor servicing success
- Increase efficiencies of effort across the region and stakeholder landscape
- Ensure consistency of excellence in visitor experience delivery by key stakeholders
- Create partnerships that drive regional dispersal, longer stays and higher spends

KEY INITIATIVES

The four key initiatives that sit under COLLABORATE are:

- Establish Council's role in the region's visitor servicing
- Review + refine the visitor economy stakeholder landscape
- Community and local business relations
- Indigenous community engagement

NB. Using the outputs from the CONNECT pillar, we will create the impetus for cross region collaboration and partnerships through compelling messaging and benefit-led engagement.

COLLABORATE with key stakeholders



Engage and partner with key players to connect and strengthen visitor servicing within the region

3.1 ESTABLISH COUNCIL'S ROLE IN THE REGION'S VISITOR SERVICING

In the early days of the Council's remit to manage the region's visitor servicing, great inroads have been made. To continue this success, it is crucial that Council leadership and their teams have a firm understanding of their roles and responsibilities in growing and sustaining the region's visitor economy. From local business support to community development, infrastructure priorities to economic development initiatives, the inclusion of visitor servicing in the Council's remit has now made it everyone's business.

With a focus on cross-organisational sharing and engagement, key departments including Economic Development and Planning should be considered, alongside KPI deliverables, strategic priorities and investment planning. By communicating the economic value of tourism and visitor servicing, we establish their awareness, buy-in and continued engagement so crucial to our success.

3.2 REVIEW AND REFINE THE VISITOR ECONOMY STAKEHOLDER LANDSCAPE

The stakeholder landscape is complex and requires intentional structures and governance to support the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy, Destination Activation Plan and visitor servicing as a whole of region priority.

This initiative maps out the existing stakeholder landscape (regarding visitor servicing), seeking to improve cross-region working through new action groups, a tiered stakeholder engagement plan and ongoing communication networks.

Encouraging involvement from key government agencies in visitor servicing is crucial to success and a high priority. Specifically, the working relationships with key government departments including Visit Victoria, VTIC, Parks Victoria, Catchment Management, VIC Fisheries, Public Transport Victoria, VLINE, Regional Roads Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and other parties, as well as local tourism associations, industry associations, tourism bodies and local groups.

3.3 COMMUNITY AND LOCAL BUSINESS RELATIONS

Connections with local businesses and community will help secure the integral information and service quality needed to deliver on our region promise. From opening times to community events, new products to local markets, connection with the local community is key to providing a rich, local visitor experience.

Establishing a new VIC as a hub of activity for business and community through events, launches and networking nights will motivate local partners to get more involved, stay in touch and provide the information needed.

Creating skill development and training opportunities for local operators via wider Council initiatives will not only enhance skill levels of businesses, but improve the visitor experience through region knowledge, quality experiences and consistent service.

3.4 INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The region has a deep indigenous history that is somewhat yet to be told. Leveraging the other strategic initiatives, visitor servicing can extend its curation role to engage with local First Nations communities to integrate their stories, helping to share the complete experience for visitors.

An engagement framework with First Nations groups can be created to allow groups to decide and communicate how they want to be involved in visitor servicing and how the regions' existing and future efforts can support their self-determined tourism aspirations.

4. COORDINATE visitor servicing delivery



Delivering the region's visitor servicing to meet visitor needs

Broaden reach beyond the physical bricks and mortar, to be where visitors are and engage with them across their entire journey

Responding to the stakeholder feedback of: *lack of full-service VIC experience, lack of a physical centre, lack of intentional, planned, consistent approach, lack of centralised website, disconnected approach between towns, inefficiencies of effort cross-region.*

The coordination of visitor servicing delivery across the region is a vital component of the plan. In defining how visitor servicing is delivered, we can be more intentional about the experience our visitors receive in their interactions with us, regardless of where, when or how.

Putting the visitor at the heart of the strategy is a brave move and one that will set the Campaspe Region's visitor servicing approach apart from the rest.

The simple fact is that the VIC (and its associated components) must be somewhere people want or need to go to encourage visitation and engagement. If we don't give people what they want and need, they simply won't engage. Worse still, those who do engage in physical visitor centres today, will engage less over time if their needs are not met. Similarly with our mobile and digital offerings, providing value must be the key imperative to ensure ongoing engagement with the visitor servicing brand and channels.

The most complex of the strategic pillars, the COORDINATE pillar has a number of moving parts that must be considered in its delivery, including but not limited to how the components of the network come together for a consistent visitor experience; physical VICs and information points and their place in the ecosystem; roving and mobile options to be where the visitors are; and digital information provision to help us step into the modern age and engage across the entire customer journey.

The driving force is the need to understand where we are today from a visitor's perspective, to help identify the gaps between our current position and the future. By taking the view of the visitor instead of the functional delivery viewpoint, we can better diagnose what's working and what's not working and set priorities that will make the biggest difference to visitor connection.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategic pillar is to:

- Design a blended engagement model that best serves the visitor and our visitor economy
- Create efficiencies in cross region operations to provide a seamless visitor experience
- Minimise waste and improve the effectiveness of the current visitor servicing network
- Deliver the best possible region and visitor experience to drive connection and advocacy
- Develop skills in service delivery, sales and region knowledge in VS teams + operators

KEY INITIATIVES

The four key initiatives that sit under COORDINATE are:

- Review past performance to set up for future success
- Create inspiration centres
- Develop mobile assets
- Embrace digital

COORDINATE visitor servicing delivery

Broaden reach beyond the physical bricks and mortar, to be where visitors are and engage with them across their entire journey

REVIEW PAST PERFORMANCE TO SET UP FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

A strategy is one thing, implementation is quite another. By understanding how our current efforts are (and aren't) fulfilling visitor needs and how they compare to industry standards, we can best understand the priorities that will give us the greatest impact and set us up for success in the future. Further, knowing our own numbers and how we're performing against best practice holds us accountable for delivering to our strategic priorities and KPIs. These elements must also be in line with accreditation guidelines.

Elements for consideration include:

- Revise customer reviews and feedback
- Audit current needs for visitor servicing
- Formalise data capture and monitoring

4.1 Revise customer reviews and feedback

Insights from Trip Advisor reviews and VIC customer feedback, as well as Visitor Centre visitation and activity data, can provide a view of our current performance and the priority areas for improvement. Through identifying what is and isn't working for the visitor, we can create a pragmatic list of improvements that will have direct impact on the visitor experience. Best practice visitor servicing is also useful in designing our next steps.

Insights into the gaps in visitor servicing provision across the region from a visitor perspective would also be useful in informing potential locations for static information points to support the VICs. This might include customer feedback and reviews on key locations they required, but did not receive, the support they needed to make the most of their visit to the region.

These insights are closely linked with our CONNECT pillar in terms of understanding visitor needs and how best to deliver them.

4.2 Audit current needs for visitor servicing

Understanding at what physical points across the region the visitor most needs information and inspiration, is key to the success of this strategy. Doing what we've always done will no longer serve us or our visitors.

An audit of current key locations that might serve as effective information points is an important step. The audit would analyse footfall figures, location and propensity to drive dispersal to neighbouring towns and regions, and ongoing maintenance requirements.

Findings may include co-locating visitor information pods in local businesses and attractions, as well as roadside information points, covered in the mobile and digital initiatives of this strategic pillar.

4.3 Formalise data capture and monitoring

Formalising data capture and analysis is crucial to monitoring the outcomes and success of the strategy over time. A shared data capture system used across the region would allow the VICs to compare numbers at key times of the year, identify ways of working together for regional dispersal and contribute to the case for VICs to remain open and serving visitors. Data would include walk-ins to the VICs, email and phone enquiries, social media engagement, bookings, marketing responses etc. Ideally linked with a centralised CRM, these insights would allow the teams to communicate with customers at multiple points in their customer journey, on topics that interest them and inspire them to visit.

CREATE INSPIRATION CENTRES

Unlike neighbouring regions, the Campaspe Region lacks a large hub VIC within its central destination of Echuca. The wider physical network of VICs across the region are also inconsistent in their format, function and delivery to visitors, with an opportunity to become more visitor-led in their offering, service and structure, regardless of size.

Skill development (including customer service, accreditation, know your customer), visitor experience design, and visitor-centred marketing and communications, combined with up-to-date information and tools will form the basis of success, linking back to the CONNECT pillar within this strategy.

Elements for consideration include:

- Establishment of a physical hub VIC
- In-VIC region operations and experience
- Visitor Servicing team development and engagement

4.4 Establishment of a physical hub VIC

The loss of the former established Echuca VIC has left a sizeable gap in the provision of a primary visitor servicing hub to drive network functionality and efficiency, full regional representation and visitor dispersal.

A co-located, multipurpose location is necessary to maximise engagement with the visitor and provide a crucial primary one-stop shop that will not only enhance the visitor experience and drive region dispersal but scaffold overall region servicing efforts.

4.5 In-VIC region operations and experience

Beyond the people and the information, the physical experience of the VIC is a big contributor to the overall visitor impression of a region. From brochure and collateral presentation to the ability to book product in-store, the merchandising available to purchase, the presence of interactive elements to tell the story and sell the region, all impact on how long the visitor stays in the VIC and ultimately, how long they stay in the region. Clever presentation of brochures, the use of iPads and consultation stations and child-friendly interactive displays are some ways to enhance the experience.

One of the great things about a local region is the unique products and talents. By becoming more of a retail storefront for local artisans and creators, regardless of size of VIC, similar to neighbouring regions such as Greater Shepparton and Mildura, the VIC opens up another connection for visitors to engage local. Renewing the region's VIC spaces with a revolving calendar of exhibits and interactive displays would create interest, a level of exclusivity and time-based urgency, and a new link with local businesses and community to share in the space.



Infrastructure considerations for all physical sites, including signage, wayfinding, parking and facilities, must be addressed to enhance the visitor experience and maximise engagement with key audiences. Co-location opportunities for small towns are also key.

4.6 Visitor Servicing team development and engagement

The visitor servicing teams are a lead strategic partner in the delivery of visitor servicing in the region. Already highly engaged with a love of serving visitors and showcasing the region, they are ripe for knowledge development, with a focus on providing a consistent, valuable visitor experience across the region.

Development in the areas of customer service delivery, positive enquiry sales skills, product awareness, social media and content creation, the value of accreditation, cross-region product, and insights into what visitors want from visitor servicing, will serve to improve their service delivery and confidence in showing up for visitors.

By developing a program of interactions spanning training, famils, regular meetings and information sharing, the visitor servicing staff will close the gap in visitor experience delivery, fulfilling the strategic aspirations of our new world of visitor servicing.

Further, training in the concepts of appreciative enquiry (AI) which affords more natural, customer-led interactions, and intentional experience (IE) which sets out the feelings and emotions you want to arouse in visitors, will enrich service delivery.

It is recommended that training is made available for local operators to improve service delivery, region knowledge and visitor experience (see 3.3).

DEVELOP MOBILE ASSETS

Beyond bricks and mortar, we must reach visitors where they are, with what they need and how they need it. Breaking the rules of traditional visitor servicing, it is imperative that we understand how to reach visitors in a mobile capacity, be it at events, at transport hubs, in high traffic sites across the region, or in local businesses or attractions.

Embracing new ideas and opportunities to reach the visitor is key, as is flexibility. The fact is, the visitor doesn't care about the rules of visitor servicing, they care about getting their needs fulfilled in exploring the region and having the best experience.

Elements for consideration include:

- Pop-ups, mobile assets and roving ambassadors
- Kiosks, interpretive signage and interactive screens

4.7 Pop-ups, mobile assets and roving ambassadors

Being where customers are also means 'taking the show to them'. Roving visitor inspiration vehicles, pop-ups and mobile assets are effective ways to tactically deploy visitor servicing agents into areas of high customer traffic and volumes[3]. These roving assets are more than just a functional 'brochure library on wheels', they're a moving interpretation of our region and what it's like to live like a local and engage on a deeper level. .

They are an innovative way to showcase the region and pull through the specific personality of the Campaspe Region. Being mobile with visitor servicing also activates touch points at all stages of the customer journey inside and outside of the region, creating new opportunities to reach customers in the earlier stages, such as the Dreaming stage, helping put the Campaspe Region firmly into the customer's consideration set for their next destination to visit, and if in-region, to stay longer or do more.

Whilst deep knowledge and expertise is maintained through employed visitor servicing agents, to extend customer reach, available resources, engage the community and help build civic pride, a roving volunteer program should be developed.



These region ambassadors are drawn from various parts of the community[4], educated on the purpose, offerings and key stories and brought together to help drive the visitor economy. They are 'on-tap' and can be deployed during peak periods, at new locations and to support specific events

4.8 Kiosks, interpretive signage and interactive screens

We can't physically be everywhere the visitor is, 24 hours a day. That's where kiosks, interpretive signage and interactive screens can help. These tools provide information and inspiration to the visitor at key locations in the region where physical visitor servicing is simply not an option. These can include region gateways, national parks, attractions and other high traffic sites where information may enhance or extend the visitor's stay.

With a diverse geographic region, it is possible that many of the region's wonders are missed as visitors traverse to the town centres. To capture interest and engage customers, a network of static interactive solutions should be developed along key routes and at popular locations to shift these behaviours.

A simple but effective solution, easily identifiable and engaging interpretive boards can be installed at key points to reveal the hidden treasures of a particular area. Each board can also depict the wider network of information to refer customers onwards to another place of interest, or through to active visitor servicing nodes for further assistance, inspiration and support. These static solutions would need to be supported by adequate road signage that invites visitors to stop and engage. Technological advances such as solar driven kiosks are being adopted by numerous regions and are a cost-effective, sustainable option that should be explored.

[3] The VisitScotland Coo-van concept provides an excellent, proven example of this

[4] Phillip Island Ambassador program engaged with over 400 students as well as traditional 'retirees'

EMBRACE DIGITAL

Digital channels are the ideal way to engage with visitors across their entire customer journey. They provide an opportunity to engage with and influence visitors from the moment they begin dreaming of a holiday, until well after they get home.

By presenting the region on these channels through curated content, local stories and a personable approach, visitor servicing can have a far-reaching impact on region visitation, length of stay, visitor spend and advocacy. Further, the connection created in-region with the visitor can be maintained and developed via ongoing communications.

Over 70% of travellers have done travel research on mobile[5]. It is essential that visitor servicing is mobile friendly and functionable. Additionally, an opportunity exists to create a comprehensive in-region app that holds elements such as itineraries, trip planners, booking functionality and location activated prompts. Mobile devices also hold a range of intelligence that will enable a deeper understanding of customer flow, their customer profile and track engagement and spend. Use of QR codes for ease of linkages is also key to good customer experience.

Elements for consideration include:

- Regional web presence (one place)
- Social media and content creation

4.9 Regional web presence (one place)

The need to 'be where customers are' extends to the digital realm, with further development of the VisitEchucaMoama.com platform a priority. Beyond pretty pictures and pages of text, the website must reflect visitor needs via curated, themed content that inspires, excites and incites action. Led by Council and supported by the VS teams.

Live chat and online booking functionality are core to influence decisions and make it easy to book and choose the Campaspe Region. Live chat brings the human element, where visitor servicing agents use their skills normally limited to face-to-face meetings to understand customer needs and direct/ influence them to align with region offerings.



Online booking as a one-stop-shop makes it easy for visitors. A unified platform that enables customers to search with real-time availability could be the deciding factor when choosing between two regions for their trip. By making it as easy and frictionless as possible, this service adds to the overall Campaspe Region proposition.

Furthermore, this functionality provides a revenue stream to offset the costs of visitor servicing, keeping the spend in-region rather than on booking channels such as booking.com.

4.10 Social media, marketing, content creation

Social media channels are now a major part of the entire customer journey, delivering content from Dreaming to Reflecting. As such, it is a core capability to effective visitor servicing operations and requires dedicated resources, coordination and focus.

To have a voice, Campaspe Region must increase both the frequency (volume) and relevance (inspiration) of social media content, moving to a coordinated and unified approach. This initiative focuses the efforts of cross-industry resources with a shared plan into specific channels, instead of the current dispersed approach.

By establishing repeatable #hastags and @handles for use by all industry bodies and operators, the region will build the 'mass' to cut through and hold its own voice in the marketplace. Once established, this can be amplified through planning and leveraging digital marketing budgets.

Further, content creation that reflects the local nature of visitor servicing in the region, is imperative to create connection with the visitor across their customer journey. From 'locals love' lists to favourite fishing spots, best places to watch the sunset with a glass of wine, to the best coffee in town, real-life, authentic content will always win over static brochure blurb. The more real we can be, the greater the connection, the more social media shares and the better our reputation as a place people want to visit.

NB Further detail will be provided in the action component of the strategy for recommendations as to the service delivery of the VIC network and associated mobile and digital assets.

[5]Source: Google Consumer Insights

Implementation for action

The following Action Plan outlines the priority implementation of critical success initiatives for the Campaspe Region Visitor Servicing Strategy to be enacted. It is intended as a working document that is regularly reviewed and updated.

This Strategy is ambitious in nature to drive the best outcomes for visitors to the region. It is acknowledged that existing visitor servicing resources and budgets will need to be adjusted to align with the recommendation and actions of this Strategy. Budget and resource requests will be proposed annually as part of budget processes. Further to this, methods for future funding models for implementation of the strategy will be investigated.

TIMEFRAMES

The timeframes used for the suggested implementation actions are based on three primary timing groups:

- Short-term 2025 - 2026
- Medium-term 2027 - 2028
- Long-term 2029 - 2030

Notionally based on calendar year, these timeframes overlap to enable compatibility with Council and other partner budgetary cycles. The Long-term planning window enables greater flexibility for actions that are much further in the future and subject to greater estimation and unintended impacts.

CRITICAL STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR SUCCESS

1. CONNECT WITH WHO OUR VISITORS ARE	2. CURATE THE REGION'S WONDERS	3. COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS	4. COORDINATE VISITOR SERVICING EFFORTS
Capitalise on region visitor profiles to drive connection and engagement Define our customer experience to align with visitor needs Use data to inform decisions and inform future opportunities Define our customer service standards to foster connection	Create a compelling region identity Create a one-stop information shop Become custodian of local stories Create immersive itineraries	Establish Council's role in the region's visitor servicing Review the visitor economy stakeholder landscape Strengthen community and local business relations Foster indigenous community engagement	Review past performance to set up for future success Create inspiration centres Develop mobile / region assets Embrace digital

ABBREVIATIONS + DESCRIPTIONS

MRC – Murray River Council
MRTB – Murray River Tourism Board
CPE – Campaspe Port Enterprise
EMAA – Echuca Moama Accommodation Assoc
VV – Visit Victoria
VTIC – Victorian Tourism Industry Council
Local VS Teams – paid and volunteer staff
VS – Visitor servicing

The Who Involved column identifies potential partners Campaspe Shire Council should work with to help facilitate the action.

1. CONNECT WITH WHO OUR VISITORS ARE Aim: Understanding current and potential visitors' needs, travel behaviours and expectations to inform priorities and create true connection					
INITIATIVE	**ACTION**	**WHO INVOLVED**	**SHORT**	**MEDIUM**	**LONG**
1.1 Capitalise on existing visitor profiles to better understand visitor needs + how to deliver the best visitor experience	1.1.1 Share Campaspe Region's formal visitor profiles with the wider industry including stakeholders, local businesses and VS staff to maximise visitor empathy	Destination Marketing Plan (DMP) Consultant MRC			
1.2 Define our customer experience to align with visitor needs	1.2.1 Apply our understanding of visitor profile needs and desires to design the visitor experience and our visitor servicing initiatives and priorities.	DMP Consultant MRC			
1.3 Use data to inform decisions + identify future opportunities for visitor servicing, product development + marketing	1.3.1 Review and benchmark the Echuca Moama Visitor Information Centre and Visit Echuca Moama digital experience on an annual basis to maintain quality and inform improvements	CPE, MRC Region stakeholders Local VS teams			
	1.3.2 Create data capture tools (in-person surveys, events, online, customer feedback, Google reviews) for visitor, local and operator feedback to audit current visitor experience	MRC Accom providers Local businesses C4EM MRT Stakeholders Event holders			
1.4 Define our customer service standards to foster connection and deliver the best visitor experience possible	1.4.1 Formalise VS delivery standards for all customer touch points including pop-ups, mobile, ambassadors etc across Campaspe Shire to set and maintain visitor experience	CPE VTIC standards			
	1.4.2 Create an industry development and training program to raise visitor servicing standards across Campaspe Shire, beyond customer service to experience delivery	CPE, MRC Local businesses Community			

2. CURATE THE REGION'S WONDERS

Aim: Make it easy for visitors to understand all that the region has to offer, beyond 'product' and the 'Top 3', to connect more deeply with the richness and diversity of the region

INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHO INVOLVED	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
2.1 Create a compelling regional identity to help our visitors understand what's special about us + why they should choose us over other destinations	2.1.1 Share Campaspe Region Identity Kit with region stakeholders, local businesses, community groups, locals and region partners to create a common, unified position that sets the tone and delivery of the visitor experience	DMP Consultant MRC MRT Marketing/Communications Teams		■	
	2.1.2 Identify five priority regional themes that promote cross regional product and experiences to create longer stays, higher spends and more return visitors	DMP Consultant MRC Marketing/Communications Teams	■		
2.2 Create a one-stop information shop that transcends all channels + journey stages – the central point of information for industry, visitors + the community, to bring to life the region's experiences + offerings	2.2.1 Continue to develop the Visit Echuca Moama website to showcase the region to visitors and deliver trusted visitor information	MRC Destination Marketing Plan (DMP) Consultant Region stakeholders	■	■	■
	2.2.2 Develop a regional industry toolkit with best practice tips and tools to be shared via the industry hub (ref. 3.3.1)	MRC DMP Consultant Local VS Teams		■	■
	2.2.3 Encourage local businesses and operators to join ATDW to raise the profile and awareness of the region	MRC, MRT Local businesses and tourism operators Media	■	■	
2.3 Capture local stories + experiences, driving authenticity (online + offline) for immersive content creation	2.3.1 Work with key region stakeholders including First Nations, local businesses and locals to capture local stories/favourite spots that will enrich the visitor experience, curated into identified themes	DMP Consultant MRC, MRT, Stakeholders Local businesses and community Community groups First Nations Special interest groups (eg. Historical Society)	■	■	
	2.3.2 Produce regular content that can be shared with industry via the Murray Regional Tourism asset library	MRC, MRT Local VS Teams Marketing/Communications	■	■	
2.4 Create Immersive Itineraries	2.4.1 Develop a series of themed itineraries and blogs based on customer needs + profiles that cover off the natural + commercial product of the region, unearthing the region's hidden gems to showcase the diversity of the region	MRC DMP consultant Community, local businesses Region stakeholders Special and local interest groups MRT	■	■	
	2.4.2 Develop an itinerary template to encourage new content from operators, industry, events, neighbouring LGA,s regional tourism bodies and other stakeholders.	MRC Local VS Teams Web Development/ Marketing Teams Local businesses Region stakeholders		■	

3. COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Aim: Engage + partner with key players to connect + strengthen visitor servicing + the overall region experience

INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHO INVOLVED	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
3.1 Establish Council's role in the region's visitor servicing	3.1.1 Strengthen collaborative relationships with Murray River Council to achieve cross-border visitor servicing excellence	MRC	■	■	
	3.1.2 Undertake regular (at least annually) Council internal communications with appropriate departments to support the VS strategy, raise awareness of the importance of visitors and tourism and create empathy for tourism and local business development	Council Departments including Economic Development; Tourism and Events; Planning; Infrastructure; Environmental Health; Communications	■		
3.2 Review the visitor economy stakeholder landscape	3.2.1. Identify key stakeholders (incl govt agencies, associations and businesses) + create a plan for ongoing engagement + collaboration	MRT, CPE VV, VTIC EMAA	■		
3.3 Strengthen community + local business relations	3.3.1 Create an 'industry hub' on the Visit Echuca Moama website to share the role and value of VS, provide professional development opportunities and events (online and in-person) for businesses	MRC, MRT, VTIC	■		
3.4 Foster Indigenous community engagement to deliver on the region's rich cultural history	3.4.1 Encourage partnership with the regions' Traditional Owner groups. Begin with engaging our traditional owner groups so they are across broader tourism initiatives and introduce them to VS activities and initiatives, simplify processes to maximise engagement	MRC Local VS Teams RTBs Traditional Owner groups CSC First Peoples Engagement Officer Tourism operators First Nations		■	

4. COORDINATE VISITOR SERVICING EFFORTS

Aim: Broaden reach beyond the physical bricks and mortar, to be where visitors are and engage with them across their entire journey

INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHO INVOLVED	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
REVIEW PAST PERFORMANCE TO SET UP FOR FUTURE SUCCESS	Gather insight into where we are today to inform future priorities for the greatest impact on the visitor + the visitor economy				
4.1 Understand how our customers perceive our performance to identify what matters most to them + how we can improve	4.1.1 Create a review framework that captures and reviews visitor feedback across all touch points (eg. mobile, VIC, pop-ups) and journey stages to inform continuous improvement efforts and ensure consistent delivery of service and experience	CPE Local VS Teams Internal Communications Teams			
4.2 Audit current needs for visitor servicing	4.2.1 Undertake a region audit of locations for possible information points across the region, based on footfall data, visitor feedback, region demands and current high-traffic locations	MRC			
4.3 Create and formalise a unified approach to data capture + processing to gain insights for effective decision making	4.3.1 Identify existing systems used by operators and stakeholders to capture data and formalise a data sharing framework to industry to improve visitor experience	Stakeholders and businesses			
	4.3.2 Better leverage regional and local data provided by Murray Regional Tourism and State bodies to inform future visitor servicing activities	MRC			
	4.3.3 Implement in-centre feedback mechanisms including technology such as QR codes, signage, iPads and feedback buttons to actively ask visitors to leave a review	CPE, CSC, MRC,			
CREATE INSPIRATION CENTRES	Be the go-to inspiration centres that visitors want to engage with + spend time in, to increase dispersal, spend, length of stay + advocacy				
4.4 Explore the establishment of a physical hub VIC	4.4.1 Undertake analysis as to feasibility + location options + the desired experience of a flagship information centre	MRC, MRT, CPE, VTIC			
4.5 Ensure the physical set-up of the VICs provides the best visitor experience possible	4.5.1 Review current VICs for quick wins to improve the visitor experience in line with visitor needs eg. staff skills training, additional technology, interpretative displays, improved merchandising and multi-language offerings	MRC, CPE Local VS Teams			
	4.5.2 Survey staff/volunteers on an annual basis to ensure staff and visitor needs are met and feedback is actioned	CPE			
4.6 Enhance visitor servicing team's service and experience delivery through training	4.6.1 Explore and deliver ongoing training and professional development opportunities to key VIC staff	CPE			

INITIATIVE	ACTION	WHO INVOLVED	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG
DEVELOP MOBILE / REGION ASSETS	Reach visitors where they are, with what they need + how they need it, outside of the physical bricks + mortar VICs				
4.7 Secure the tools, equipment + resources required to take visitor servicing to the visitor, wherever they are (events etc) to encourage engagement, conversation + inspiration	4.7.1 Review opportunities for mobile activations including at events, festivals, industry events creating an annual VS activation calendar	Regional VS Leader Team Local VS Teams Council Event Teams			
4.8 Design a system of passive information provision that allows visitors to engage with visitor servicing 24/7 within the region	4.8.1 Develop a tourism signage program to improve visitor experience	CPE, operators, all abilities groups			
	4.8.2 Investigate technology solutions for best-fit information provision at key visitation points across the region	Local VS Teams Local businesses			
EMBRACE DIGITAL	Engage with the visitor across the entire customer journey through digital				
4.9 Develop the Visit Echuca Moama website to become the one-stop shop for visitors to the region	4.9.1 Digital literacy workshop for industry to understand how they can use it better and leverage from the VEM website capability	MRC, MRT			
	4.9.2 Identify gaps in digital delivery online including live chat, itinerary builders, booking functionality etc to prioritise and facilitate the best online visitor experience	Local VS Teams Web Development Teams			
4.10 Coordinate social media + content creation	4.10.1 Engage industry and locals to contribute to region's social media plan to provide authenticity, engagement and interest in the region, including special themes	Social media contractor Local VS Teams Marketing/Communications Teams Local businesses and community			

Developed in collaboration with industry
for + on behalf of:

Campaspe
Shire Council

By the team at:

CUSTOMER FRAME

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