Tourism Strategy 2014-2019

Executive summary

This Tourism Strategy outlines the framework for the development of tourism in the City of Whittlesea over a five year period, 2014-2019. Building on the previous Tourism Strategy created in 2002, this plan indicates short to intermediate and long-term actions to be implemented by Council in collaboration with key stakeholders.

The purpose of this revised strategy is to develop an extension of the 2002 Tourism Strategy and provide clear direction for tourism development and growth within the City of Whittlesea, with the primary objective of increasing tourism visitation, length of stay and spend.

The City of Whittlesea Tourism Strategy 2014-2019 outlines five objectives aimed to increase visitation to and within the City of Whittlesea, while building a unified, cooperative and successful tourism industry that fosters tourism growth and meets the needs of its stakeholders.

These objectives are:

1. To create a knowledgeable and well-informed tourism industry characterised by consistent, strong customer service, high standards of business best practice and open communication between industry stakeholders.

2. To increase awareness of and demand for, tourism experiences from both local residents and visitors to the area, while promoting the municipality as a desirable and accessible country-style destination within the Melbourne metropolitan area.

3. To create a unified and coordinated tourism industry that provides industry stakeholders with a collective voice to Council and within the Victorian tourism industry.

4. To increase the range, quality and diversity of existing and new tourism features and events within the City of Whittlesea and to improve the visitor experience, encouraging visitor dispersal and retention, while diversifying the experiences on offer within the municipality.

5. To work cooperatively with other industries within the City of Whittlesea and their related Council departments, to build a stronger and better connected tourism industry.

The Strategy will be viewed as a flexible document that recognises the need for participation and partnerships in order to achieve the desired outcomes. A review process is outlined to ensure that the strategy remains relevant and measurable in the dynamic tourism environment.

Introduction

Foreword

Tourism is an important contributor to the City of Whittlesea's social, cultural and economic vibrancy.

The City of Whittlesea is placed in Melbourne's northern growth corridor, offering a combination of both rural and metropolitan locations, high levels of population growth, quality of life, a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) labour force, quality amenities and access to Melbourne's road transport network. The Hume Freeway, Metropolitan Ring Road, CityLink and other major road networks provide access to the CBD, Melbourne Airport, the docks and rail freight terminals. The extension of the rail line to South Morang, which opened in April 2012, has helped to improve access to the area, although transport and accessibility remains a challenge for the municipality.

The City of Whittlesea incorporates the suburbs of Epping, Lalor, Mill Park, South Morang, Thomastown, Whittlesea Township and part of Bundoora within the urban south. The rural north of the municipality includes the areas of Wollert, Woodstock, Donnybrook, Eden Park, Yan Yean, Humevale, Kinglake West and part of Beveridge.

The City has an excellent supply of high quality commercial and industrial land and the extension of Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary to include the north-west of the municipality has the potential to attract future business investment to the area.

Accommodating a population of approximately 163,000 people, the City of Whittlesea is characterised by its culturally diverse community, natural environment and positive visitor experience. The population is expected to grow 73 per cent by 2031[1], making the City of Whittlesea the second fastest growth municipality in Australia. The original inhabitants of the area and the Traditional Owners of the land are the Wurundjeri Willum people. Whittlesea has the third largest population of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Victoria, with 43 per cent of residents speaking a language other than English at home. More than one third of residents were born overseas, representing 140 different countries.

The region is further characterised by being one of the largest municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne, covering an area of approximately 489 square kilometres. Approximately 70 per cent of the City is rural, and the other 30 per cent is urban. This peri-urban location, together with the strong multicultural populous within the municipality, provides a plethora of opportunities for tourism business growth.

In addition, the City of Whittlesea is home to a number of primary industry businesses and a significant number of café, restaurant, cultural and recreation businesses[2].

Background

The 2002 Tourism Strategy undertook an investigation into the existing tourism businesses, patterns of visitor activity, population growth and industry and stakeholder involvement in the City of Whittlesea. The output of the study was the development of 54 key actions requiring implementation by stakeholders in the municipality including Council, regional groups, local industries and operators.

When the 2002 Tourism Strategy was developed, Council did not have a dedicated Tourism Officer and this was a major limitation to the growth of tourism. In 2010, the industry's contribution to the prosperity of the City of Whittlesea was acknowledged through the appointment of a Tourism Services Officer (TSO) within Council's Economic Development team.

Since then, greater recognition has been given to the value of tourism to the City of Whittlesea's social, cultural, environmental and economic standing and in further acknowledging this value, the 2014-2019 Tourism Strategy has been developed.

This Strategy has been prepared by Council, with input from local tourism operators, tourism associations and representatives from the Victorian tourism sector.

The study approach

To accurately review the outcomes of the 2002 Tourism Strategy and assess its relevance to the tourism industry in the City of Whittlesea, the following industry research was undertaken:

- A focus group discussion with twenty key industry stakeholders

- One-on-one discussions with industry representatives

- Input from internal Council departments affected or contributing to the tourism industry

- Research into tourism activity and planning in surrounding municipalities and other metropolitan growth areas

- Review of industry research, case studies and publications.

A Tourism Industry Forum was held by the City of Whittlesea in 2011, bringing together twenty industry stakeholders from various sectors, including accommodation, events, food/beverage, attractions, arts and culture, conferencing, entertainment and heritage.

The purpose of the forum was to review the achievements of the 2002 Tourism Strategy and to collaboratively identify the priorities for tourism growth in the City of Whittlesea over the next three to five years. Upon conclusion of the forum, Council had:

- Gained an understanding of stakeholder views and perspectives in relation to the current state of tourism

- Gained an understanding of the industry's aspirations for the future of tourism in the City of Whittlesea

- Determined the five main priorities for tourism in the City of Whittlesea

- Explored potential ways to achieve these priorities.

The review of the 2002 strategy concluded that, in general, the directions of the strategy remain relevant. Some adjustments are required to respond to the changing external environment and to achieve future growth potential, particularly in relation to current resources and ongoing innovation.

As a result of the review, the following recommendations have been considered for the 2014-2019 Tourism Strategy:

- Increase measurement and review throughout the implementation stage to ensure parties are informed and on track

- Increase emphasis on visitor research to inform new and existing businesses

- Increase sector and product development

- Improve industry standards to ensure greater visitor satisfaction

- Attract new investment in accommodation

- Utilise digital media as a marketing tool in response to consumer trends

- Support the development of the events sector across the municipality.

Tourism and its value

What is tourism?

Tourism is "travel for recreational, leisure or business purposes". Tourists are defined as those who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited"[3].

There are many reasons why people visit the City of Whittlesea. For the purpose of this Strategy, the following definitions of tourism have been used:

- Travel to an area for business reasons, leisure purposes, to visit friends and relatives, recreation/sport activities or for education.

- The visitor's purpose of travel is generally to visit or stay in a place, overnight or on a daytrip, which is outside their usual place of residence.

- Travel includes local residents from the City of Whittlesea visiting places and enjoying experiences (e.g. hosting visiting friends and relatives) within their municipality.

As a service industry, tourism has numerous tangible and intangible elements. Major tangible elements include transportation, accommodation, food and wine, shopping and other components of the hospitality industry. Major intangible elements relate to the purpose or motivation for becoming a tourist, such as rest, relaxation, the opportunity to meet new people and experience other cultures, or simply to do something different.

The value of tourism

The economic benefits of tourism to the community are extensive, with increased employment, increased spending in the local area, economic diversification and infrastructure being the most significant.[4]

In 2011-12 the Victorian tourism industry accounted for approximately $16.7 billion (or 5.5 per cent) of the State's economy and generated approximately 201,000 jobs[5].

Tourism also provides a variety of social, cultural and environmental benefits to the local community, including:

- Increased community pride and social inclusion

- Improved engagement between, and awareness and understanding of different social groups and cultures

- Recognition and appreciation of cultural identity

- Protection and preservation of local heritage

- Increased awareness of local issues

- Increased awareness of and investment in areas of significance

- Improved infrastructure.

Tourism in the City Of Whittlesea

The 2002 Tourism Strategy estimated that visitor activity in the City of Whittlesea generates in the order of $14 million annually in visitor expenditure and provides approximately 210 jobs.

Since the publication of the 2002 Tourism Strategy, the City of Whittlesea has changed dramatically. As one of Melbourne's fastest growing municipalities, the population has increased from approximately 120,403 in 2002, with an estimated growth rate of 1.8 per cent per annum, to approximately 163,539 in 2011, with a 2.94 per cent annual growth rate to 2031[6].

Accommodation and food services are the largest sectors of the tourism industry in Australia, accounting for 33 per cent of total tourism income, followed by air, water and other transport services, retail trade and education and training[7]. In the 2002 Annual Household Survey conducted by the City of Whittlesea, accommodation and food services accounted for 4.4 per cent of employment in the City of Whittlesea. By 2012, accommodation and food services employment increased to 6.2 per cent[8]. Considering the substantial growth in population size during this time, the significance of the industry is clear.

The Whittlesea Courthouse Visitor Information Centre is currently the only Visitor Information Centre in the municipality. Managed and operated by a committed team of volunteers, the Centre is the main point of contact for visitors to Whittlesea Township and surrounds. Since 2008, visitor numbers have increased significantly and with the continued growth of the Whittlesea Courthouse as a community and exhibition space, it is expected that visitation will continue to grow.

It must be noted that since the study was undertaken for the 2002 Tourism Strategy, minimal research has been done into visitor statistics and behaviour within the City of Whittlesea. Visitation and enquiry numbers

are recorded through the Whittlesea Courthouse Visitor Information Centre and can be used to give an indication of tourism within the municipality, but this information should be used as a guide only.

Visitation to the Visitor Information Centre has increased significantly since 2008, when there were 1955 visitors. By 2011, this figure had increased to 3660, or by 87 per cent. These figures include people contacting the Visitor Information Centre by telephone.

These visitor numbers do not take into account repeat visitors, visitors to areas other than Whittlesea Township or those who are familiar with the municipality and therefore do not visit the Visitor Information Centre. To give a wider scope of visitor behaviour and source, statistics of visitation to Funfields Amusement Park over a month-long period in 2012 have also been provided.

Processes for more accurate and comprehensive recording of tourist visitation and demographic data will be implemented as a priority of this strategy.

Case Study – Funfields

As accurate visitor data for the City of Whittlesea is limited, a study was undertaken to record visitation to one of the municipality's leading attractions, Funfields.

Located in Whittlesea, Funfields is one of Victoria's leading adventure parks and has played an important role in attracting visitation to the municipality over the past 25 years.

It is important to note that Funfields only represents one segment of the area's visitor market. Visitor data recorded for the month of January 2012 can be used to give a snapshot of the origin of visitors travelling to the municipality.

During this period, 2714 visitor groups were sampled, representing visitors from across Australia. The majority of visitors were from Victoria (98 per cent) and the other 2 per cent were made up primarily of visitors from NSW and several from QLD, SA and WA.

The vast majority (41 per cent of Victorian visitors) were from the northern suburbs of Melbourne (mostly from South Morang, Mill Park, Bundoora, Thomastown, Lalor, Epping, Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park). Visitors from Melbourne's western and eastern suburbs each accounted for approximately 17 per cent of visitors.

If visitor data from Funfields is used to represent general visitation to the City of Whittlesea, it is clear that the primary target market for tourism activity is local residents and those from neighbouring municipalities.

The current industry – snapshot

The tourism industry in the City of Whittlesea is made up of a wide range of stakeholders, including local tourism operators, cellar door operators, restaurant and café owners, Council, the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association, the Whittlesea Courthouse Association, Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, Whittlesea Historical Society, private investors and several volunteer groups.

Marketing of tourism businesses is primarily done internally by Council and through the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association for those operators who are members of the Association. The Come See Whittlesea and City of Whittlesea websites provide basic listings of tourism operators, restaurants and accommodation providers within the municipality, but there is an emphasis on business listings, rather than experiences, and opportunities for interaction with website visitors are limited. There is currently limited use of social media in the promotion of tourism within the municipality.

The current competitive advantages for the City of Whittlesea as a tourism destination are:

- Accessibility for day trip visitors from the Melbourne metropolitan area
- A variety of natural, built, historic and new tourism attractions and sites
- The second fastest population growth municipality in Australia which supports growth in the Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market
- The opportunity to build niche experiences from existing tourism products and infrastructure.

SWOT analysis

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats outlined have been developed following analysis of the local and global economy, the current direction of relevant government policies and feedback provided by local tourism businesses and stakeholders. This SWOT analysis was conducted at the Tourism Industry Forum in 2011 with input from all industry stakeholders in attendance. It has since been updated to ensure that it accurately represents the current tourism industry in the City of Whittlesea.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Council commitment to the growth and development of tourism and recognition of the value of tourism	Limited signage for product visibility
Proximity to metropolitan Melbourne	Poor gateway and directional signage
Proximity to Melbourne Airport	Lack of awareness amongst visitors and residents of Whittlesea tourism experiences outside of major attractions such as Funfields
Extension of train system to South Morang	Lack of awareness amongst residents of the tourism experiences available throughout the City of Whittlesea
Increase in resident numbers within the municipality and surrounding areas	Lack of awareness of residents in surrounding suburbs as to the experiences available throughout the City of Whittlesea
Australian wildlife in natural settings	Relatively small amount of traditional tourism product

Funfields as a major drawcard	Insufficient levels of accommodation particularly in the north of the municipality
Home to two large established events, the Whittlesea Country Music Festival and the Whittlesea Agricultural Show	Lack of caravan/camping style accommodation within proximity to major events
Home to two large established events, the Whittlesea Country Music Festival and the Whittlesea Agricultural Show	Insufficient major rail and road networks, particularly in the north
The City of Whittlesea's Cultural Heritage Program,offering a plethora of historic and culturally significant events/ activities	Insufficient year-round experiences and activities means that the municipality experiences seasonal fluctuations
Closely positioned to other tourism regions (e.g.Murrindindi, Nillumbik, Hume and Mitchell Shire), some with complementary tourism product and experiences	Lack of local tourism operator involvement in the Tourism Association and activities outlined by the committee
Unique tourism products that heavily self-promote their business and the destination (e.g. Funfields)	Lack of high quality marketing collateral and a significant web presence
Two well-known and established golf courses, Growling Frog Golf Course and Whittlesea Golf Course	The standard of visitor servicing varies across the City of Whittlesea (Whittlesea township is the only location to offer a Visitor Information Centre)
A number of established local produce providers that have cellar door facilities	As the Tourism Association is predominantly made up of volunteers, tourism leadership and cooperative marketing activities are not its primary functions
Extensive parks and gardens and waterways that provide walking and cycling trails throughout the City of Whittlesea	Changes to tourism businesses are not effectively communicated throughout the industry
The start and finish line for the Genovese Kinglake Bike Ride which attracts more than 3,000 riders annually	Tourism products are generally not accessible seven days a week
Reputation amongst the local cycling community	Website content is not updated regularly and causes consumer confusion
The scenic views and country landscape throughout the City of Whittlesea	Some marketing activities undertaken by tourism businesses are not measured

A Tourism Association that represents tourism operators at local and surrounding area events	Lack of awareness from businesses that do not realise that they operate in the tourism industry
High quality conference, meeting and wedding spaces offering unique features (historic buildings,country landscapes)	State zoning regulations limit some tourism activity in the City of Whittlesea
Established Council Events team that have demonstrated capacity to facilitate and host major community events, including City of Whittlesea Community Festival and Carols by Candlelight	Limited cooperation between tourism businesses (e.g. packaging products)
Recent investment in restoring historic sites in the municipality (Carome Homestead, Farm Vigano)	Lack of pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trail connectivity to link the municipality and its tourism products (e.g. Mernda-Whittlesea Rail Trail)
Culturally diverse community	Limited promotion of the City of Whittlesea as a cycling destination
Landscape and natural environment with a high level of environmental significance and ecological diversity	Reliance on volunteers
Proximity to Kinglake National Park which prior to 2009 bushfires received 200,000 visitors per year	Limited range and varying quality of tourism product
Council emphasis on balancing the municipalities'rapid growth with protecting the natural environment.	Limited transport options to support visitation
	Limited interpretive signage specifically at natural assets,historical features and water management areas
	Difficulty in providing a streamlined standard of tourism services across the public and private sector
	Industry does not effectively manage the competing expectations of its many stakeholders.
Opportunities	Threats

Re-examine the main role of the Tourism Association with the aim to assist with linkages between the Whittlesea Courthouse Association and the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association	Climate change and natural disasters can affect the accessibility of some of the area's major attractions and could affect the local produce providers that are active in the tourism industry
Target tourism marketing activity towards local and surrounding residents to capture more of the VFR market	Global financial conditions could result in peaks and troughs in visitation
Build the events sector by increasing the number of small events throughout the year	Strong competition from surrounding regions that are investing heavily in tourism promotion and facilities
Potential to produce cluster tours with existing tourism product (e.g. historical site tours or produce provider tours)	Closure of tourism related businesses due to current economic conditions
Potential to build niche experiences from existing tourism products based on the increasing popularity of food preparation and cooking	Increasing limitations to accessing and travelling through the region as the population grows and traffic congestion increases
Provide more training and development opportunities for tourism businesses	Potential impact of urban growth on regional areas and nature-based tourism activity.
Capitalise on fluctuating global economic conditions and people choosing to travel closer to home	
Improve online content and investigate the benefits of social media	
Collaborate with surrounding municipalities to showcase the north to intrastate, interstate and international visitors. This could be a stand-alone brochure or advertising in the Melbourne Visitors Guide	
Utilise the potential of the Whittlesea Tourism website to increase the profile of the area	
Enhance and expand on the nature-based experiences and activities available for visitors	
Raise the profile of the Visitor Information Centre while increasing the scope of what the Centre can offer visitors	

Extend visitor stays with greater accommodation options	
Support a strategic and targeted approach to destination marketing, promotion and industry development	
Improve tourism signage throughout the City (including gateways)	
Investigate opportunities to engage industry in destination marketing activities	
Capitalise on the growth in domestic tourism in Australia	
Support investment in ecotourism and agri-tourism opportunities within the Green Wedge zones	
Implementation of satellite VIC's (key locations where visitors expect information to be) throughout the municipality to strengthen visitor dispersal	
State Government changes to zoning and land use could attract investment in tourism and accommodation.	

Tourism development

Vision

Based on consideration of the 2002 Tourism Strategy and the current outlook the vision for tourism development in the City of Whittlesea is defined as follows;

To grow a vibrant sustainable and accessible tourism destination for visitors and residents alike by increasing local employment and developing existing and new tourism product.

Target markets

The 2002 Tourism Strategy identified five key visitor markets, based on anecdotal information provided by local operators. These visitor markets were Families, Seniors Groups, Motorcycle/Bicycle Riders, Cultural and Arts Enthusiasts and Potential New Residents.

The main purpose of tourism visitation in 2002 was for nature-based activities and only 18 per cent of visitors were residents of the City of Whittlesea. With the constant urban sprawl and population growth within the municipality, the tourism landscape within the City of Whittlesea has changed significantly over the past ten years. Although the municipality is still home to a number of parks, gardens and historic

natural sites, there are a growing number of restaurants, cafés, art exhibitions, local producers and cultural events.

In light of the changing landscape of tourism within the City of Whittlesea, four target markets have been identified for the purposes of this strategy. They are Local Residents, Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR), Day Trippers and Cyclists. A detailed outline of each target market is provided below.

Local Residents

Considering the rapidly growing population in the City of Whittlesea, the primary target market for tourism within the municipality is local residents. With ease of access to tourism sites, the local community can not only experience the many attractions and experiences on offer in the local area, but they can also benefit from investment in their local community, improved social inclusion and increased interaction with their community.

Results from the 2012 Annual Household Survey indicate that approximately 14.4 per cent of the population is aged over 65 years and approximately 19.2 per cent are children under 15 years, which form the two largest segments of the population. These statistics are in line with the range of tourism products on offer within the municipality, which are generally targeted to families and older residents. However, when considering household types, couples without children is the fastest growing group, accounting for 29 per cent of households in 2012.

It is essential that local residents, including those who have recently moved into the municipality, remain a top priority for the promotion of the City of Whittlesea, as they are most likely to participate, promote and benefit from tourism activity within the region.

Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR)

Closely connected to local residents, a major visitor sector for the City of Whittlesea is the VFR market, which accounted for 47 per cent of visitation to Melbourne's north* in 2011[9]. VFR is defined as "a form of travel involving a visit whereby either (or both) the purpose of the trip or the type of accommodation involves visiting friends and / or relatives"[10].

Considerable research has been conducted into this market and its potential for Melbourne's outer municipalities. In 2011, VFR visitors spent an estimated $2.8 billion across Melbourne and stayed for 16.4 million nights. For the same period the 'north' sub-region* was reported to have the highest proportion of visiting relatives, up by 6.5 per cent on the previous year11[11].

Targeting the VFR market can be seen as an extension of the current Council Live Local, Buy Local program, which encourages residents to support local manufacturers and producers. By extending this program to the tourism industry and encouraging residents and their visitors to explore their own local area before travelling further afield, the benefits to the local community and opportunities for economic recirculation and growth will be enhanced.

Day Trippers

A day tripper is defined as "those who travel for a round trip distance of at least 50 kilometres, are away from home for at least four hours and who do not spend a night away from home as part of their travel"[12].

According to Tourism Victoria, "there were 14.3 million domestic daytrip visitors to Melbourne in the year ending December 2010"[13], which was a 3.1 per cent increase on the previous year. Day trip visitors were estimated to have spent an average $103 per person, making up a total of $1.48 billion in 2010.

Given the proximity of the City of Whittlesea to metropolitan Melbourne, the lack of accommodation facilities in the area and the range of tourism experiences on offer, the municipality is primarily a destination for day trippers, rather than overnight visitors.

Cyclists

In 2011 the City of Whittlesea supported the Jayco Herald Sun tour, which highlighted the popularity of Whittlesea as a cycling destination. The local area offers cyclists a variety of on and off-road riding options and with the potential expansion of the local trail network, the future of cycle tourism is very promising.

In recent years the level of interest in cycling across Australia has increased dramatically, with annual bicycle sales growing from $131 million in 2002-2003 to $240 million in 2008-2009. In Victoria, it is estimated that participants in cycle tourism during 2010 contributed as much as $362 million to the economy, which accounts for a significant portion of national expenditure estimated to be $2.4 billion[14].

Cyclist numbers and visitation trends are difficult to measure, it is clear that both cycling and cycling events add value to the local area, and boost the local economy. For this reason the requirements of the cycling community and opportunities for growth in this market should be prioritised.

Priorities

1. To create a knowledgeable and well-informed tourism industry characterised by consistent, strong customer service, high standards of business best practice and open communication between industry stakeholders.

    1.1. Facilitate development and growth opportunities for businesses and individuals servicing visitors to increase industry capability
    1.2. Provide relevant local, national and international information about networking, promotion and business opportunities
    1.3. Facilitate the opportunity for businesses to strengthen ties across the industry
    1.4. Support ways to acknowledge and recognise achievements within the local tourism industry, particularly in relation to high standards of service and innovation
    1.5. Improve the visitor experience and the quality of information available to visitors
    1.6. Implement a process of accurately measuring tourism activity and trends within the City of Whittlesea

2. To increase awareness of and demand for tourism experiences from both local residents and visitors to the area, while promoting the municipality as a desirable and accessible country-style destination within the Melbourne metropolitan area.

    2.1. Identify opportunities for involvement in industry research and development
    2.2. Provide opportunities for tourism businesses to collectively market their business as part of a destination

2.3. Develop opportunities for the industry to participate in, collaborate on and contribute to marketing activities

2.4. Increase the use of digital media in promoting the City of Whittlesea as a tourism destination

2.5. Leverage off the VFR data produced by Destination Melbourne and inspire members of the local community to become ambassadors for the City of Whittlesea

2.6. Increase awareness and use of the 'Come See Whittlesea' brand

2.7. Advocate for the improvement of tourism signage across the municipality

3. To create a unified and coordinated tourism industry that provides industry stakeholders with a collective voice to Council and within the Victorian tourism industry.

3.1. Improve coordination between Council, tourism stakeholders and operators

3.2. Increase involvement of business operators in guiding the future of tourism

3.3. Develop greater alignment of the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association Inc and the Whittlesea Courthouse Association Inc

4. To increase the range, quality and diversity of existing and new tourism features and events within the City of Whittlesea and to improve the visitor experience, encouraging visitor dispersal and retention, while diversifying the experiences on offer within the municipality.

4.1. Create a supportive industry that encourages new business

4.2. Support the development and growth of major and minor events that reflect the core brand of the destination

4.3. Position the City of Whittlesea as an optimal cycling destination

4.4. Support the development and promotion of trails

4.5. Support the development of a range of accommodation options in the City of Whittlesea

5. To work cooperatively with other industries within the City of Whittlesea and their related Council departments, to build a stronger and better connected tourism industry.

5.1. Maintain open communication channels with stakeholders across the events, business, arts and heritage industries

5.2. Support new strategies and initiatives across related industries

5.3. Support the development and promotion of arts and cultural trails

5.4. Identify and promote opportunities for cross promotion of tourism and related industries

5.5. Ensure timely promotion of all City of Whittlesea events through the Visitor Information Centre

Implementation and action plan

The Plan

This implementation and action plan provides a framework for initiating change. As with all plans, change will be a gradual process and will require the support of many stakeholders.

All actions have been given a priority status, based on their importance, timeliness and the extent to which they rely on the achievement of other actions. It should be noted that the successful implementation of some action items will be dependent on the availability of additional funding and/or resources.

Bushfire Management in the City of Whittlesea

The bushfires of 2009 remain a consideration for all future planning for the City of Whittlesea. Four years after the bushfires caused significant destruction in the north of the municipality and surrounding areas, the recovery process remains ongoing. The Victorian Government's proposed planning zone reforms will provide opportunities to increase and diversify tourism development in Whittlesea's green wedge. The benefits of these reforms must be balanced with recognition that the outcomes could attract more local residents and visitors into locations and landscapes that are prone to bushfire attack. The City of Whittlesea is currently exploring the implications of these reforms to identify strategic planning policy responses. This will ensure that future tourism development in the municipality does not unnecessarily jeopardise people's lives or investments. Any changes that are implemented as a result of this investigation will be taken into account when planning for future tourism development.

1. Industry development

To create a knowledgeable and well-informed tourism industry characterized by consistent, strong customer service, high standards of business best practice and open communication between industry stakeholders.

High (1-2 years), Medium (2-4 years) or Low (4-5 years)

Strategy 1.1

Facilitate development and growth opportunities for businesses and individuals servicing visitors to increase industry capability.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.1.1	Undertake a comprehensive survey of tourism and tourism-related businesses within the City of Whittlesea, to establish needs and opportunities for growth.	High	Council	Within existing resources	At least 30% of operators participate in survey, with representation from different business types.
1.1.2	Run a series of networking events, allowing stakeholders to connect with Council and one another in a productive and informal environment.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Twice yearly networking events are held, with representation from at least 15 businesses at each event.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.1.3	Increase attendance of tourism operators at existing City of Whittlesea business events and seminars.	High	Council	Within existing resources	At least two tourism representatives attending events each quarter.
1.1.4	Based on industry demand, expand the business events schedule to include events specifically targeting the tourism industry. The program will be based on tourism trends and skills training.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Two tourism-specific events run each year, with at least 60% of places filled.

Strategy 1.2

Provide relevant local, national and international information about networking, promotion and business opportunities

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.2.1	Distribute a bi-monthly tourism e-newsletter to maintain contact with stakeholders, provide updates on industry and identify external opportunities for funding and professional development.	High	Council	Within existing resources	Bi-monthly newsletter distributed to all tourism and tourism related operators in the City of Whittlesea. Increase tourism mailing list by 10% annually.
1.2.2	Promptly distribute relevant research data to increase knowledge of market information and trends.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	Tourism stakeholders are informed of state and national tourism trends and opportunities via the bi-monthly newsletter.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.2.3	Collate and distribute annual visitor statistics from industry to ensure a clear picture of the local market.	Medium	Council, operators and Whittlesea Courthouse Association'	Within existing resources	Annual report distributed to key industry stakeholders.

Strategy 1.3

Facilitate the opportunity for businesses to strengthen ties across the industry

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.3.1	Develop a familiarisation program for business operators within the City of Whittlesea.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	At least five tourism operators scheduled to host the first familiarisation program.
1.3.2	Identify opportunities to work with neighbouring municipalities to encourage visitation to Melbourne's north.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	Organise biannual meeting with Tourism Officers from neighbouring Councils.
1.3.3	Promote opportunities for tourism operators to undertake collaborative marketing with businesses in neighbouring municipalities.	Low	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Identify two potential tourism collaborations per annum via site visits.
1.3.4	Identify opportunities to work with Parks Victoria and Melbourne Water to encourage sustainable use of the municipalities' natural attractions.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	City of Whittlesea meets with key representatives from Melbourne Water and Parks Victoria annually to discuss opportunities.

Strategy 1.4

Support ways to acknowledge and recognise achievements within the local tourism industry, particularly in relation to high standards of service and innovation

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.4.1	Establish and implement benchmarking guidelines and criteria for business within the tourism industry and distribute to tourism operators throughout City of Whittlesea.	Medium	Council and industry leaders	Some additional resources required (industry assistance)	100% of local Tourism operators, as recorded on the electronic database, are informed of the guidelines and made aware of Council assistance to implement.
1.4.2	Introduce a process of recognizing industry leaders and achievements.	Medium	Council and industry leaders	Some additional resources required (funding)	Yearly assessment and recognition of tourism achievements

Strategy 1.5

Improve the visitor experience and the quality of information available to visitors

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.5.1	Audit existing Visitor Information Centre (VIC) customer service standards and evaluate the current model.	Medium	Council and Whittlesea Courthouse Association	Some additional resources required	The customer service model is reviewed and opportunities for improvement are identified.
1.5.2	Investigate best practice customer service systems and implement where possible.	Medium	Council and Whittlesea Courthouse Association	Some additional resources required	Guidelines are produced on customer service best practice, for industry use.
1.5.3	Hold annual training events for Courthouse volunteers.	High	Council and Whittlesea Courthouse Association	Within existing resources	Annual training event is attended by volunteers, providing updates on industry, customer service and visitor recording.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.5.4	Organise site visits/familiarization tours of new tourism sites and events within the municipality for Courthouse volunteers, Tourism Association members and local operators.	Low	Council, Tourism Association and local operators	Within existing resources	Annual volunteer familiarisation tour held in September/October. New site familiarisations conducted as required.
1.5.5	Create guidelines for industry familiarisation events.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	Guidelines available for local operators planning a familiarisation event for industry stakeholders.
1.5.6	Undertake usability testing of the website and identify priorities for website change/re-design.	Medium	Council	Some additional resources needed	Usability testing completed and key findings and recommendations identified to guide future development of the website, resulting in an annual increase in website traffic.
1.5.7	Create a website to promote tourism in the City of Whittlesea to residents, aimed at growing the VFR market.	Medium	Council and stakeholder groups	Some additional resources needed	New/re-designed website launched with emphasis on tourism experiences and attracting the VFR market.

Strategy 1.6

Implement a process to accurately measure tourism activity and trends within the City Of Whittlesea

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
1.6.1	Undertake a review of existing data collecting processes.	High	Council	Within existing resources	Analysis of current data collecting processes has been undertaken and areas for improvement have been identified.
1.6.2	Establish a straightforward and streamlined process for	High	Council	Within existing	Visitor data requirements are identified and new

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
	VIC data collection.			resources	processes implemented.
1.6.3	Identify and work with industry leaders to encourage data collection across a range of key locations within the municipality.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Several key locations across the municipality become core locations for visitor data collection. Data collection is streamlined across the industry.
1.6.4	Conduct annual review of visitor trends and processes.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Annual report distributed to stakeholders outlining visitor statistics, trends and changes.

2. Marketing and Communications

To increase awareness of, and demand for, tourism experiences from both local residents and visitors to the area, while promoting the municipality as a desirable and accessible country-style destination within the Melbourne metropolitan area.

High (1-2 years), Medium (2-4 years) or Low (4-5 years)

Strategy 2.1

Identify opportunities for involvement in industry research and development

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.1.1	Source and utilise market research to support future marketing activity.	Medium - High	Council	Some additional resources needed	Future marketing activities are supported by industry research.
2.1.2	Identify opportunities for involvement in state or local research by the City of Whittlesea and tourism operators.	Medium - High	Council	Within existing resources	The City of Whittlesea is involved in the development of future destination research and regional marketing initiatives.

Strategy 2.2

Provide opportunities for tourism businesses to collectively market their business as part of a destination

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.2.1	Identify industry sectors that could benefit from collaborative marketing activities.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	The tourism survey (1.1.1) identifies operators who rely on, or who could benefit from, collaborative marketing opportunities.
2.2.2	Create packages and suggested itineraries for promotion on tourism website and through tourism operators.	Low	Tourism Association	Within existing resources	At least three packages or itineraries are promoted on the tourism website and through the Visitor Information Centre.
2.2.3	Promote and support cross-selling by tourism operators and industry stakeholders.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	When conducting a site visit ensure local operators are aware of potential opportunities for cross selling through online promotions, website links and packaging.

Strategy 2.3

Develop opportunities for the industry to participate in, collaborate on and contribute to marketing activities

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.3.1	Encourage local businesses to leverage off the VFR campaign.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	At least ten tourism businesses actively promote VFR campaign on-site and through their website.
2.3.2	Conduct regular site visitations for use in case	High	Council	Within existing	One site visit completed each month, with regular tourism features

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
	studies.			resources	in business and tourism newsletters.
2.3.3	Include marketing updates in bi-monthly tourism e-newsletter, to keep industry informed.	High	Council	Within existing resources	Tourism e-newsletter includes summary of recent and upcoming marketing activity undertaken by Council and the Tourism Association.

Strategy 2.4

Increase the use of digital media in promoting the City of Whittlesea as a tourism destination

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.4.1	Where appropriate utilise social media to market the destination.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Social media is utilised at least four times per annum through the Discover Your Own Backyard campaign in promoting the destination.
2.4.2	Continue to maintain and improve the tourism section of the Council website.	High (ongoing)	Council	Within existing resources	Unique page views of the 'things to see and do' page increases from 3260 (September 2011 to September 2012) by ten per cent per year.
2.4.3	Ensure the distribution of the Tourism DVD to local businesses and surrounding visitor information portals to be played at their venues.	Low	Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Tourism DVD is played at 10 businesses/ public buildings with DVD capabilities.

Strategy 2.5

Leverage off the VFR data produced by Destination Melbourne and inspire members of the local community to become ambassadors for the City of Whittlesea

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.5.1	Conduct a community survey to identify what tourism experiences the local community value and where locals take visiting friends and relatives.	Medium-High	Council	Within existing resources	Community survey completed and an attractions audit is established, ranking attractions by theme, seasonality and popularity.
2.5.2	Invite local tourism product to be involved in the campaign.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	At least twenty business owners and or events are involved in first year of campaign (five for each season).
2.5.3	Develop a VFR campaign to promote local tourism experiences to the local community.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Campaign plan developed based on survey results, outlining annual campaign schedule.
2.5.4	Promote the campaign through local media outlets.	Medium	Council	Funding required	Quarterly advertising features in local papers and online through City of Whittlesea website.
2.5.5	Produce promotional collateral to accompany the campaign.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Campaign collateral produced and distributed to local residents.

Strategy 2.6

Increase awareness and use of the 'Come See Whittlesea' brand

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure

2.6.1	Undertake a review of the 'Come See Whittlesea' brand to ensure it remains current, relevant and representative of the industry (possibly in conjunction with 2.5.1).	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Industry stakeholders, visitors and Council provide input into 'Come See Whittlesea' brand and how it can be strengthened.
2.6.2	Update the image library particularly in relation to cycling, landscapes, events and dining.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	The tourism image library is updated and all images used in City of Whittlesea marketing are current and depict the strengths of the area.
2.6.3	Identify ways that businesses can incorporate the 'Come See Whittlesea' brand into their own marketing activity (possibly in conjunction with 1.1.1).	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	The business survey identifies whether the businesses can incorporate the 'Come See Whittlesea' brand into existing marketing activities.

Strategy 2.7

Advocate for the improvement of tourism signage across the municipality

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
2.7.1	Assist tourism operators to secure effective signage for major arterials and municipal roads.	Low (as required)	Council	Within existing resources	Signage enquiries and issues are addressed promptly and to the satisfaction of operators.
2.7.2	Be involved in the interpretive signage at key locations frequented by visitors.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	Clear and informative signage exists throughout the municipality.

3. Greater coordination and stakeholder unification

To create a unified and coordinated tourism industry to provide industry stakeholders with a collective voice to Council and within the Victorian tourism industry.

High (1-2 years), Medium (2-4 years) or Low (4-5 years)

Strategy 3.1

Improve coordination between Council, tourism stakeholders and local operators

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
3.1.1	Clearly establish role and responsibilities of each industry group.	High	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Each group takes ownership of its pre-determined responsibilities and tasks, with a focus on achieving industry goals.
3.1.2	Identify projects that require input from all industry groups.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Opportunities for industry development are identified and worked on collaboratively.
3.1.3	Survey members to identify their priorities and how the groups can collectively achieve these priorities (crossover with 1.1.1).	High	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	30% response rate to member survey. Survey results presented back to members for future planning.

Strategy 3.2

Increase involvement of business operators in guiding the future of tourism

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
3.2.1	Identify ambassadors/ leaders in the industry who have demonstrated leadership and industry knowledge, who others can learn from.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Five or more ambassadors are identified and promoted to the tourism industry.

Strategy 3.3

Develop greater alignment of the Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association Inc and the Whittlesea Courthouse Association Inc

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
3.3.1	Identify the benefits of greater cohesion between the two associations for the ultimate benefit of the industry they serve.	High	Council, Tourism Association and Whittlesea Courthouse Association	Within existing resources	A plan is formed in consultation with the two associations to increase cohesion

4. Product development

To increase the range, quality and diversity of existing and new tourism features and events within the City of Whittlesea and to improve the visitor experience, encouraging visitor dispersal and retention, while diversifying the experiences on offer within the municipality.

High (1-2 years), Medium (2-4 years) or Low (4-5 years)

Strategy 4.1

Create a supportive industry that encourages new business with local positive social outcomes

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.1.1	Identify new and potential businesses within the municipality.	High (ongoing)	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Contact is established with new businesses and Council support is provided as required.
4.1.2	Encourage communication between new business owners, Tourism Association and existing operators.	High (ongoing)	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	New business operators are invited to attend WPVTA meetings and are connected with other local operators.

Strategy 4.2

Support the development and growth of major and minor events that reflect the core brand of the destination

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.2.1	Continue to support major events through industry marketing activity.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Industry is actively involved in promoting major events within the City of Whittlesea.
4.2.2	Support the development of smaller events which can draw crowds from surrounding areas.	Low (as required)	Council	Within existing resources	Support is provided to local tourism operators and stakeholders looking to set up small events within the municipality.
4.2.3	Continue to support the Cultural Heritage Program	Medium	Council/Industry Stakeholders	Within existing resources	Local operators are encouraged to be actively involved in the Cultural Heritage Program.

Strategy 4.3

Position the City of Whittlesea as an optimal cycling destination

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.3.1	Utilise a variety of communication tools to promote cycling activity in the City of Whittlesea.	High	Council	Within existing resources	At least two cycling promotions per annum.
4.3.2	Investigate the needs of the cycling tourist and the current travel patterns.	High	Council	Funding and external support required	A clear picture of the current travel patterns of cycling tourists is developed and areas for growth are identified.
4.3.3	In conjunction with the Whittlesea Bicycle Plan establish means of measuring cycling activity within the municipality.	High	Council	Funding and external support required	Cycling volume is measured and analysed annually.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.3.4	Explore the needs of the cycling community and identify ways to improve accessibility, safety, facilities and amenities for this market.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Open communication is maintained with the cycling community and issues affecting accessibility, facilities and amenities are dealt with promptly.
4.3.5	Influence the development of infrastructure that meets the needs of this market.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Bicycle and walking paths/ trails continue to be improved and developed throughout the municipality. An investigation is carried out into the costs and application of a phone app and bike path/trail map.
4.3.6	Undertake marketing activities to meet these needs, with a focus on digital media.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Utilise online presence of the Whittlesea Bicycle Users Group, Bicycle Network Victoria and other cycling groups to build the profile of City of Whittlesea as a cycling destination.

Strategy 4.4

Support the development and promotion of trails

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.4.1	Advocate for the Mernda-Whittlesea Rail Trail providing a shared path for walking/cycling/horse riding.	Medium	Council and Stakeholder groups (Bicycle User Group BUG), community groups)	Funding and Additional resources required	Funding secured and initial environmental and heritage studies completed. Appropriate signage and public art considered.

| 4.4.2 | Establish a rail trail steering group to generate community support for the project. | Medium | Council and Stakeholder groups (BUG, community groups) | Within existing resources | Rail Trail steering group established. |

Strategy 4.5

Support the development of a range of accommodation options in the City of Whittlesea

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
4.5.1	Advocate for investment in accommodation facilities.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Opportunities for investment are identified and adequately supported by Council.
4.5.2	Work with other Council departments to assist with barriers facing potential new investors.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Comprehensive information on planning and Council requirements relating to accommodation facilities is readily available to developers and investors.
4.5.3	Actively seek information on State Government changes relating to tourism development in Melbourne's north.	Low-Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Council and industry remain up-to-date on policy changes affecting accommodation in regional Melbourne.

5. Industry engagement and cooperation

To work cooperatively with other industries within the City of Whittlesea and their related Council departments, to build a stronger and better connected tourism industry.

High (1-2 years), Medium (2-4 years) or Low (4-5 years)

Strategy 5.1

Maintain open communication channels with stakeholders across the events, business, arts and heritage industries

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
5.1.1	Participate in consultation sessions and strategy events for all arts, events, business and heritage strategies and action plans.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Tourism Services Officer attends all relevant consultation and strategy sessions for related departments.
5.1.2	Promote local events in conjunction with tourism attractions and operators.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Events in the City of Whittlesea are promoted on the Tourism Association website and at key tourism sites.
5.1.3	Incorporate Council events schedule into bi-monthly newsletters to industry stakeholders.	Medium-High	Council	Within existing resources	Newsletters feature 'events' section with upcoming local events.

Strategy 5.2

Support new strategies and initiatives across related industries

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
5.2.1	Actively seek out and support new initiatives by Council and local stakeholders.	Low	Council	Within existing resources	The tourism industry is aware of and involved in new initiatives throughout the City of Whittlesea.

Strategy 5.3

Support the development and promotion of arts and cultural trails

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure

5.3.1	Link with organised arts and cultural activities across the City of Whittlesea as outlined in Council's relevant strategies.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Establish at least two tourism business links annually with the City of Whittlesea Culture & Arts program.
5.3.2	Explore the needs of the local arts community and investigate possible opportunities to boost the exposure of the local arts industry.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	The local arts community is represented in tourism marketing and events.
5.3.3	Explore alliances with adjoining municipalities.	Low-Medium	Council	Within existing resources	City of Whittlesea tourism businesses are promoted at relevant events and key tourism sites in neighbouring municipalities.

Strategy 5.4

Identify and promote opportunities for cross promotion of tourism and related industries

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
5.4.1	Identify and promote opportunities for local operators to participate in, and host, local events.	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	Tourism sites are regularly utilised for arts and community events.
5.4.2	Promote attendance of local operators at major events.	Medium	Council and Tourism Association	Within existing resources	Local operators are represented at major events.
5.4.3	Provide ongoing support to tourism operators looking to utilise their premises for alternative purposes (art exhibitions, events, markets, etc).	Medium	Council	Within existing resources	At least one operator hosts a new cultural event per year.

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
5.4.4	Establish a network of satellite information points (virtual centres) at core tourism locations throughout the municipality.	Medium	Council, Tourism Association and businesses	Some additional resources required	At least three satellite information points operating' at key sites within the City of Whittlesea, which are maintained by the Tourism Association and Council.
5.4.5	Identify and promote opportunities for packaging golf experiences in the municipality.	Medium-High	Council/Industry Stakeholders	Within existing resources	At least two operators are packaging golf experiences.

Strategy 5.5

Ensure timely promotion of all City of Whittlesea events through the Visitor Information Centre

Ref	Action	Priority	Responsibility	Resources	Measure
5.5.1	Provide the Whittlesea Courthouse volunteers with bi-monthly updates on upcoming events within the City of Whittlesea.	High	Council and Whittlesea Courthouse Association	Within existing resources	Volunteers receive bi-monthly updates on upcoming events within the municipality.

Monitoring and review

To ensure the currency and relevance of this strategy, an annual review of its objectives and outcomes will be conducted. Given the changing nature of the tourism industry and continued growth of the municipality, it is expected that modifications will occur annually, to ensure the strategy remains relevant, achievable and measurable.

Council's Tourism Services Officer will organise a yearly review workshop with relevant parties, to discuss the ongoing implementation and results of the strategy, while allowing for the addition of actions and adjustment of priorities where required.

The review will incorporate:

- A discussion of the industry's progress against the strategies and actions outlined in the Tourism Strategy
- Acknowledgement of industry achievements and recognition of ambassadors
- A review of visitor numbers and trends within the municipality
- A discussion of industry trends and changes which may impact the strategy

- Review of stakeholder roles and responsibilities
- Consideration of upcoming actions and their implementation.

Council will be briefed annually on the progress of the Tourism Strategy, following the review process.

Appendix

Acronyms

VFR – Visiting Friends and Relatives
EDU – Economic Development Unit
WPVTA – Whittlesea and Plenty Valley Tourism Association
WCHA – Whittlesea Courthouse Association
VIC – Visitor Information Centre
TSO – Tourism Services Officer
BUG – Bicycle Users Group

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Photos courtesy of Philip O'Brien and Marshall Dwyer.

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