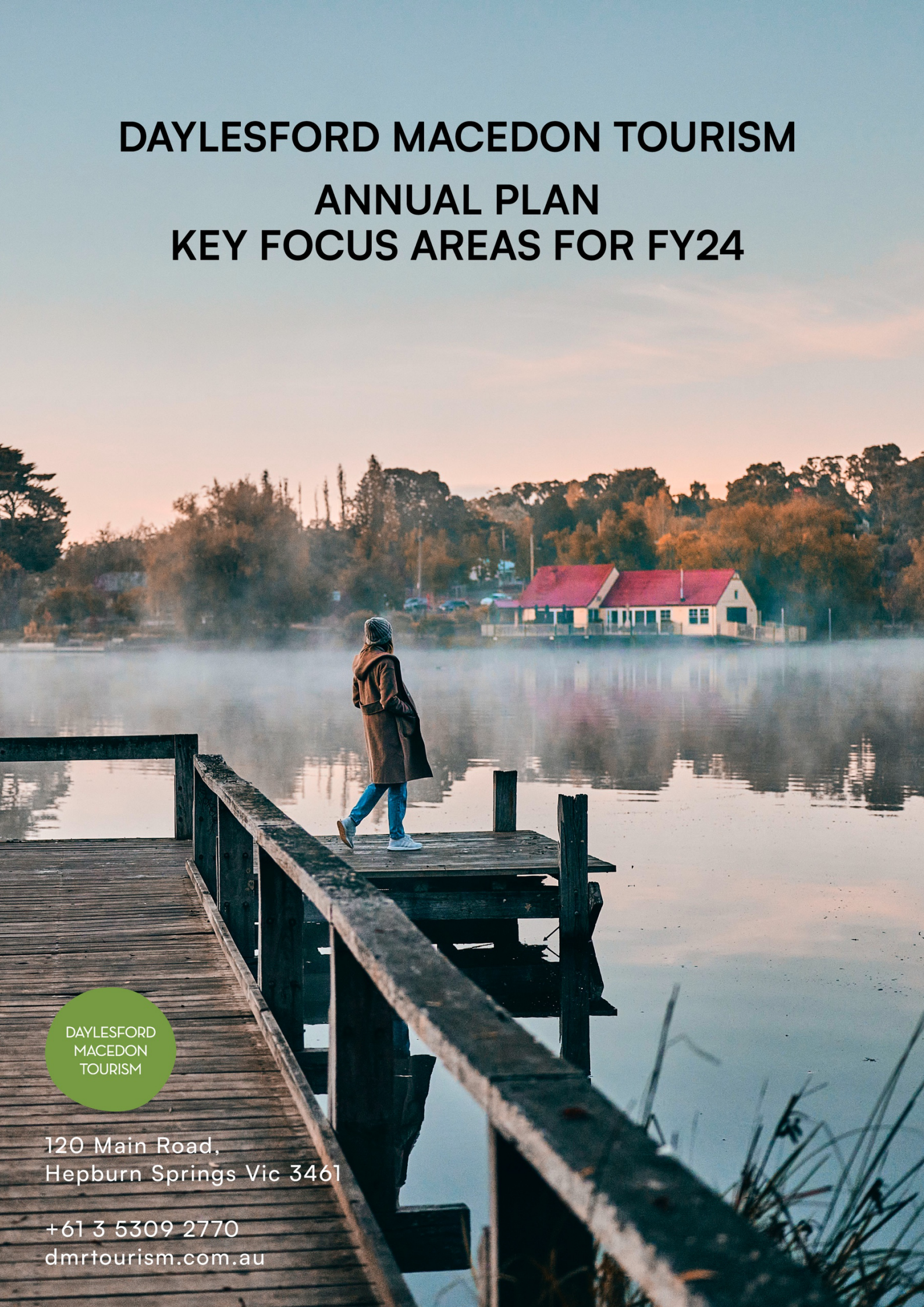


DAYLESFORD MACEDON TOURISM

ANNUAL PLAN

KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR FY24



DAYLESFORD
MACEDON
TOURISM

120 Main Road,
Hepburn Springs Vic 3461

+61 3 5309 2770
dmrtourism.com.au

Introduction

FY23 was a year in which DMT got a lot done and had some great results. Thanks to the team (which includes, of course, the amazing Paul Matthews) and Board. Rolling out a series of activities under the Industry Strengthening, Workforce Development, RTB Strengthening and Destination Planning Funds, DMT continued to punch way above its weight.

Highlights for the year include the launch of the Eat & Drink Guide and the association and distribution with *delicious.* mag, the best Industry Conference yet, brand research that reinforced our view that the magazine is of huge value to visitors and that our brand and customer profiles are on point, and the launch of Borealis and revitalisation of other events. Our marketing continues to shine as our channels and engagement grow, and we have enjoyed much PR success.

We have also embarked on the development of a much-needed Destination Management Plan supported by Local Area Action Plans for each council. We've also seen some movement in the transition to a Visitor Economy Partnership (VEP) and as the incumbent RTB, our influence is crucial. The success and reputation of DMT puts us in a good position as we work through this process and, of course, our eye is firmly on the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the potential to raise awareness of our region and enjoy a period of strong visitation and spend.

Lastly, it's worth remembering that our visitation and spend growth in 2022 was at or near the top of the table, underlining the great work that DMT, the LGAs and our operators have achieved. 2022 saw much higher visitation and spend compared to pre-pandemic levels.

In this plan, we outline the key focus areas for FY24 for:






	Operations		Product Development
	Marketing		Industry
	Destination Management		

Table of Contents

<u>OPERATIONS (STAY IN BUSINESS)</u>	4
VEP TRANSITION	4
CEO SUPPORT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT	4
DMT ADVOCACY	5
<u>MARKETING (GROW VISITOR NUMBERS)</u>	6
DIGITAL	6
PRINT	6
STAKEHOLDERS	7
PR	7
INTERNATIONAL MARKETING	8
OTHER	8
<u>DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (A.K.A. 'THE BLUEPRINT')</u>	9
<u>PRODUCT AND EVENTS (INCREASE LENGTH OF STAY)</u>	9
CROSS-REGIONAL	9
NATURE BASED TOURISM (NBT)	10
<u>INDUSTRY (HELPING ENHANCE PARTNERS' CAPABILITY)</u>	11
COMMUNICATIONS	11
PROGRAMS	12
INDUSTRY EVENTS	12
STAKEHOLDERS	13
<u>ACTIONS SUMMARY</u>	14

Key Focus Areas for FY24



Operations (stay in business)

Two key DMT functions are industry support and regional marketing. It's imperative that DMT continues to operate at full capacity, as FY24 is looming to be a challenging year due to deteriorating economic conditions. Partners will likely need greater support, and it's important to ensure we grow market share so we must keep our foot on the gas with marketing activity particularly in lean times.

VEP transition

A process commenced, in June 2023, that will look at the optimal VEP model for our region. DMT in its current form is performing well, so any new model needs to better service LGAs and industry.

The CEO and Board will oversee a transition to a VEP that ensures industry, staff and stakeholders are in a better position than the existing RTB model.

Key actions:

- CEO will sit on VEP transition committee.
- DMT to ensure operators and existing partner Councils are supported by new model, and regional marketing expertise is maintained.

Desired outcomes:

- Maintain a regional office under any new model.
- Ensure no drop off in terms of operator support and engagement.
- Regional brand is not compromised (e.g., the existing region can't be split).
- The expertise of the DMT staff is retained (staff retain their jobs).

CEO support and Project Management

Paul Matthews has provided invaluable support to DMT over the last two years and has become integrated with the team. With uncertainty around the CEO's health, need to continue projects, and value of Paul's expertise, DMT will maintain Paul's engagement.

Key actions:

- Carry program funds into Q1 FY24 (RTB Strengthening and Industry Strengthening).

- Other funded programs are, or will, be released, including those under the Visitor Servicing Fund.
- Engage Paul as Project Manager on new programs including Visitor Servicing Program.

Desired outcomes:

- Having applied for funding under the Visitor Servicing fund in June 2023, it is likely that a Visitor Servicing program will be rolled out in FY24.
- CEO support continues.
- Paul is engaged as Project Manager with new programs (e.g., Visitor Servicing).

DMT Advocacy

As the future structure of the RTB/VEP remains unclear, and industry support remains crucial, promoting the success of DMT through various channels, to various stakeholders is more important than ever.

Key Actions:

- Promote DMT using existing Advocacy Strategy.
- More PR about DMT/VE results e.g., visitor numbers.
- CEO to work with advocacy groups on key projects that are of concern to LGAs and community, thereby providing localised support, strengthening the value of DMT.

Desired outcomes:

- DMT's reputation amongst all levels of Government, industry and community continues to grow.
- Promotion of DMT's successes via key channels including digital (LinkedIn) and through face-to-face advocacy with key stakeholders.
- At least four media releases during FY24, promoting activities or results achieved by DMT.
- Produce Annual Report.



Marketing (Grow Visitor Numbers)

As the post-lockdown visitation bubble deflates, international travel opens, and cities draw visitors, competition for regional travel will be fierce in FY24. To ensure our region gets our share of the market, these activities will take place:

Digital

Enhancements to our visitor website will make trip planning easier, and email marketing will ensure engagement amongst our database, supporting partners and promoting content.

Key actions:

- Using funding provided under the Industry Strengthening fund progress daylesfordmacedonlife.com.au ('visitor website') site enhancement, featuring improved mapping and trip planning.
- eDM marketing activity: Partner eDMs and Solus eDMs.
- Acquisition strategy to offset email attrition.

Desired outcomes:

- Site enhancements complete by October 2023.
- Achieve budget for cooperative digital marketing activity.
- Achieve agreed targets (open rates, CTR etc) for partners with coop activity.
- Grow Social Media channel following by 10%.
- Maintain current levels of engagement.

Print

While all research supports the effectiveness of DML magazine and other collateral, increased paper costs mean we must be prudent in terms of what we produce to manage costs. Early insights provided by the DMP work suggest that additional content will improve the visitor experience. As such, we will produce additional collateral, although this might be digital only.

Key Actions:

- Produce (existing, proven) collateral:
 - Eat & Drink Guide.
 - Visitor Guide.

- Tasty Little Touring Map.
- Bi-annual DML magazine.
- Produce (new) collateral.
 - Gravel cycling guide.
 - Mineral Springs map.
 - No fewer than six new online itineraries.
 - Affordable stays itinerary

Desired outcomes:

- Produce collateral to a high standard, on budget.
- Create and promote new content.

Stakeholders

DMT has built strong relationships with stakeholders. Ensuring that these relationships continue to grow means we can leverage the relative strengths of these organisations.

Key actions:

- Maintain close working relationship with Visit Victoria.
- Develop and promote low-cost marketing options to industry (eDMs, campaigns).
- Maintain close working relationship with our LGAs.
- Enter Hepburn Shire towns into Victorian Tourism Towns Awards in 2024.

Desired outcomes:

- Four famil's with Visit Victoria.
- Two own-sourced famil's.

PR

DMT has an excellent PR Manager, Madeleine Blake. For the first time, she has been given a (small) budget to operate journo familiarisations. We also work very closely with Visit Victoria's PR team and have always been quick to jump on opportunities and provide support, meaning we are seen as a 'go to' RTB for famil's.

Key Actions:

- Run two self-generated familiarisations with journalists.
- Leverage Visit Victoria's PR capacity and develop a series of famil's throughout FY24.

Desired outcomes:

- Four families with Visit Victoria.
- Two own-sourced families.

International Marketing

DMT primarily works with two entities for international marketing (noting that VV also performs this function): Great Southern Touring Route and Tourism Australia. GSTR costs \$10,000 p.a., T.A. costs nothing. As the FY24 is tight, the GSTR cost seems like an easy cut, but they do a lot for the region.

Key Actions:

- Reduce/offset GSTR cost while maintaining presence.
- Continue to leverage T.A. relationship by working closely with the Industry Manager (promoting new produce etc).

Desired outcomes:

- Maintain presence in GSTR activity.
- Meet (online) monthly with T.A. and promote new product, support agent families.

Other

The DMT Board that suggested an opportunity to generate revenue and raise awareness of the region by producing merchandise. Could be linked with insights from the DMP such as Mineral Spring opportunities. We will investigate this. .

Key Actions:

- Investigate opportunities for merchandise sales and deliver a proposal to the DMT Board by 30 September 2023.

Key Outcomes:

- None at this stage.



Destination Management Plan (a.k.a. ‘the blueprint’)

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) will be complete by August 2024. It will form the basis for strategic planning in FY24 and beyond. It will also guide our operational actions. The DMP is currently a WIP, although key actions can be articulated.

Key Actions:

- Seek funding for infrastructure/investment pipeline that the DMP highlight support from Local, State, and Federal Governments for the Wellness Rail Trail and support for the Hanging rock Masterplan and a Nature-based Tourism Strategy.
- Ensure Local Area Action Plans are designed to assist with Council planning, such as zoning.
- Visitor Servicing: act on recommendations on how to inform visitors and use findings to inform Visitor Servicing Strategy (assuming our bid for funding under VERRP’s \$3m Visitor Servicing Fund is successful).
- Investment prospectus: Seek funding from LGAs and develop internally (\$5k x 2 LGAs).

Key Outcomes:

- These will be determined once the DMP is complete, and the plan updated to that point.



Product and Events (increase length of stay)

The DMT region has one of the lowest lengths of stay (LOS) numbers of any region at about 2.2 nights. However, it has the highest spend per person per night. An increase in LOS would have a strong multiplier effect on visitor yield. One way to do this, is to increase the product offering and number and quality of events.

Cross-Regional

Collaboration across the DMT region and with neighbouring tourism regions is key to DMTs success, particularly as our boundaries are likely to expand and several projects cross at least three distinct regions.

Key Actions:

- Finalise Food & Drink event planning, engage a qualified event management company and deliver event late 2024 or 2025.
- Commonwealth Games: Work with Councils and RDV to develop a Visitor Economy plan for Commonwealth Games including:
 - Visitor Servicing strategy.
 - Events pre, post and during Games to maximise length of stay and spend.
 - Work with operators to develop packages for visitors.
- Maintain engagement in Goldfields World Heritage bid process.
- Work with DEECA and Land Managers to develop a Mineral Springs Plan (based on actions detailed in draft Mineral Springs Masterplan) including:
 - Development of touring map with notes on springs (tasting, values, benefits).
 - DMT site enhancements (map) to include springs.
 - Support installation of pedestrian counters to assess demand and tourism value of springs.
 - Support site-specific plan and investment.

Desired Outcomes:

- Run a successful Food and Drink event that attracts an agreed level of visitors and spend, is on-brand, supports our producers and hospitality businesses and achieves high visitor satisfaction (event may run in FY25...this will be determined by Q1FY24).
- Work with Councils, neighbouring RTBs/VEPs, RDV and VV to develop strategy by end FY24.
- Deliver on above actions with Mineral Springs plan.

Nature Based Tourism (NBT)

The DMT region has some NBT product that is – or can be – of national or even international significance. A stronger focus on marketing these products, improving visitor servicing (in the form of improved content and interpretation) and ultimately, infrastructure investment is key to the region's ongoing success.

Key Actions:

- CEO to continue on PCG of Goldfields Track Interpretation Project.
- Work with Macedon Ranges Shire Council and Tourism Macedon Ranges to advocate for the Ministerial approval of the Hanging Rock Master Plan, (HRMP) obtain funding to develop business case, then seek funding to implement plan.

- Wellness Rail Trail/Rail Extension advocacy and seek funding for fully costed plan following the Urban Enterprise work.
 - Work with council and stakeholders to establish an advocacy group.
 - Disseminate advocacy video and pack.
 - Maintain engagement with local MPs regarding the importance of the project.
 - Link project with recommendations within State endorsed DMP for region.

Desired Outcomes:

- Finalise Goldfields Track Interp project by end of FY24, with 100 interp signs, trail heads, and visitor hubs.
- Ensure that the draft HRMP is approved by the Minister for Environment by September 2023, and seek funding to fully cost the Plan, with a view to obtaining funding to implement the Plan (this will likely be beyond FY23).
- For the Hanging Rock to Daylesford Wellness Rail Trail/Rail Extension, it is likely that the Wellness Rail Trail and Rail Extension will be phased separately. Our objectives within FY24 are to:
 - Form Rail Trail Advocacy Group
 - Seek funding to fully cost the Rail Trail

Beyond FY24, the objective will be to fully fund the Wellness Rail Trail, assuming that the Rail Extension will form Phase Two of the plan in a staged approach. The good news is that both can be done together.



Industry (helping enhance partners' capability)

DMT has, and will continue to, take an 'industry first' view with both operational and strategic approaches. This was evident during Covid lockdowns and will be critical during the VEP transition process and if the Visitor Economy slows in FY24.

Communications

With limited resources, it's easy to allow external communications to slip, so discipline is required.

Key Actions:

- Corporate site upgrades: using money from Industry Strengthening fund, enhance the DMT Corporate site:

- Create DMT Industry Hub.
- Add resources relating to Workforce and Industry Strengthening to Hub.
- Improved system cohesiveness.
- Increased industry comm's from CEO.
- Develop DMT 'pitch deck' that clearly communicates DMT value proposition for industry partners and potential partners. Printed version and housed on corporate site.
- Create and disseminate Annual report.
- Develop and communicated longer lead time for industry calendar.

Desired Outcomes:

- Site upgrade complete by end of 2023.
- At least 10 CEO emails to industry during FY24.
- Pitch deck complete by September 2023.
- Annual Report distributed by end of 2023.
- Industry calendar developed and housed on corporate website.

Programs

FY23 saw significant funding for industry-focused programs, some of which will continue into Q1 and 2 of FY24.

Key Actions:

- Workforce plan
 - Work with LLENs to finalise 'Kickstarter' program (ends July '23) and run Hospitality Expo (October '23).
 - Develop mature age worker program.
- Promote Tourism Awards to industry, encouraging them to apply and providing support when needed.

Desired Outcomes:

- Workforce Plan complete by end of 2023.
- At least five businesses in the DMT region apply for the Tourism Awards.

Industry Events

Getting Quarterly Updates back into the calendar in FY24 is important, and these events will be improved to include informative sessions delivered by experts. This will also be relevant as we move into the transition phase of establishing a VEP. We will also endeavour to continue to improve our already successful Annual Conference.

Key Actions:

- Run Industry Conference with 100 attendees, at an 80% satisfaction rating.
- Re-start quarterly industry updates, with expert guest speakers e.g., cashflow management.

Desired Outcomes:

- Conference delivered on budget, achieving targets.
- Three in-person updates in FY24.

Stakeholders

Engaging with key sector groups, including business sectors and advocacy groups crucial to sustaining DMT's reputation.

Key Actions:

- Engage sector groups in Accommodation, Food, Wine, Wellness and others.

Desired Outcomes:

- CEO, Operations Manager and Paul M to develop engagement strategy by end of 2023.

See next page for Actions Summary

Actions Summary

Operations

- **VEP transition** – ensure all stakeholders' position is improved by any change
- **CEO support and Project Management** – ensure program delivery continues at current high level and that Paul Matthews' support of CEO and organisation continues
- **DMT Advocacy** – continue execution of advocacy strategy, more PR, work with LGAs on issues of concern to community

Marketing

- **Digital** - enhance websites, continue digital marketing, grow channels/offset attrition
- **Print** - Maintain current print activity and add new collateral (guides and itineraries)
- **PR** - own-source famils and leverage VV activity through strong relationship
- **Stakeholders** - strengthen VV/LGA relationships, low-cost partner marketing
- **International Marketing** - Lower GSTR cost, leverage Tourism Australia relationship
- **Merchandise sales** - investigate opportunities

Destination Management Plan

- **Seek funding** for key infrastructure/investment that the DMP highlights
- **Ensure Local Area Action Plans** are designed to assist with Council planning
- **Visitor Servicing** - act on recommendations on how to inform visitors, and use findings to inform Visitor Servicing Strategy
- **Investment prospectus** - Seek funding from LGAs and develop

Product and Events

- **Finalise Food & Drink** - finalise event planning
- **Commonwealth Games** - Work with LGAs/RDV to develop a Visitor Economy Plan
- **Mineral Springs** - Work with DEECA and Land Managers to develop tourism plan
- **Nature Based Tourism** - deliver on key priorities outlined in Plan

Industry

- **Communications** - deliver: corporate site upgrade, more CEO comm's, partner pith deck, Annual Report, industry calendar
- **Programs** - finalise existing programs and (funding dependent) Visitor Servicing
- **Events** - deliver Annual Conference and three industry updates with guest speakers
- **Stakeholders** - engage sector groups in Accommm, Food, Wine, Wellness and others.