



# FOOD + DRINK FESTIVAL

*CONCEPT / EVENT STRATEGY - DRAFT*

Daylesford Macedon Tourism

*Prepared by*

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DAYLESFORD  
MACEDON  
TOURISM

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waterways of our region. We recognise their living cultures and ongoing connection to Country and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

## INTRODUCTION

**Daylesford Macedon Tourism** (DMT) encompasses the **Hepburn Shire** and **Macedon Ranges Shire** Councils. It is also proudly recognised as a “**Gastronomy Region**” by **UNESCO**. This region overlaps the First Nations’ map of the **Dja Dja Wurrung people**. In 2017 the last **Harvest Festival** was held. A festival focussed on the region’s ‘food and wine leaders’ and operated by the **Daylesford Macedon Produce** (association). This festival championed the region’s unique array of growers, producers, farmers, makers, distillers and hospitality. From paddock-to-plate, seed-to-service, ground-to-mouth this festival was as important for the consumer as it was for industry to come together, share ideas, promote their businesses, produce, methods and hospitality.

At its heart the Harvest Festival had strong potential to grow and establish itself as a significant event for the region and state whilst gaining national and possibly international notoriety. After five years (in 2022), DMT and Visit Victoria have commissioned Yonder (author of this document) to develop the concept, strategy and plan for a new Food & Drink Festival. Using the Harvest Festival as its core, a new event will need to reimagine the past and develop a unique way to engage consumer and industry alike for the future.

The aim of this document is to develop a **Food & Drink Festival** concept which is underpinned by a three-year growth strategy and is supported by a one-year action plan and marketing plan. The strategy will leverage from the strengths of past festivals, uncover the uniqueness of the industry which supports the UNESCO Gastronomy status and overcome any weaknesses of past events to ensure success into the future. A re-emerging post-pandemic tourism environment, matched with a highly engaged industry and a gap in the market for a unique food and drink festival creates a strong foundation for this strategy. All the while, promoting what is unique about the region and driving visitation at a traditionally slow time of year.

This document will step through the extensive research, stakeholder engagement and industry consultation undertaken to pinpoint a festival which resonates with the target market, but also the unique part of Victoria it showcases.

# REVIEW



## REVIEW

Determining a criterion for a food and drink festival that responds to the key objectives of this brief is vital. Festival and events centred around food and drink are as broad and diverse as the category.

### The key objectives laid out in the brief by DMT are:

- Activate increased visitation and yield, in the 'foodie' and 'makers' segment
- Strengthen the key 'Food & Drink' brand that is core to DMT's message
- Celebrate and unite makers and producers in the region
- Promote the role and importance of artisan agriculture
- Provide opportunities for business forums, bringing together producers for collaboration
- Unlock PR and social media opportunities
- Increase followers / database of DMT and collaborators via competition

### The review and research phase of our process was the foundation for this document. This process spanned over three months and consisted of:

- Review existing relevant historic information, data, and reports from past Harvest Festival operated in the region
- Research and review viability of food & drink festivals/events domestically and internationally
- Review best practice case studies and models to ensure a successful and sustainable approach
- Engaging with industry stakeholders, primarily to gather feedback
- Consult with industry stakeholders on concept viability

## Past Harvest Festivals

### *Operated by Daylesford Macedon Produce (DMP)*

An analysis of past harvest festivals operated under the banner of DMP was based on the documentation provided and conversations with people who were directly involved. They included Larissa Wolf-Tasker, Andrea Pribaz and Michelle Symes. We did not pull apart each festival individually, but rather analysed the festival over the years it operated as a whole.

### Concentrating on:

- What worked and what did not?
- How it suited the region and what could be better?
- Identifying weaknesses to overcome and strengths to leverage.

### Documents reviewed from the past Harvest festivals included 2014, 2015 and 2017. These included:

- Past festival guides <https://issuu.com/dmproduce>
- Operating budgets
- End of event analysis
- Festival Acquittals.

### Summary:

- 9 to 10 days long
- All events run by industry, business and producers
- Run either April /May (2014, 15) or June (2017)
- May timing incorporated The Great Trentham Spudfest
- 2015 was the largest year in terms of programming
- 2017 dropped right off in terms of programmed events and participation
- Relied heavily on funding and limited resources.

### Programmed events included:

- Farmers markets
- Special lunches and dinners
- Workshops and classes
- Seminars and info sessions – farming, gut health, fermentation
- Open gardens | open farm gates and cellar doors.

## Key Findings:

Findings	Outcomes
No central ticketing system – all bookings made directly with venues	This makes it difficult to centrally gauge ticket sales, collect data and have live control of the event sales performance including attendee follow up and feedback
Held in colder months	Can restrict programming, especially outdoors
The Producers Day at The Lakehouse was the signature event. Attracting a reported 3,000 people on the day. It was popular with industry and consumers alike	It was fondly regarded by industry and is currently missed
Spread out over 10 days	Dilutes visitation into the region. Concentrating on a shorter period would encourage increased average night's stay per attendee
No flow of events targeting certain markets	These experiences should be clustered together to encourage engagement and increase average night's stay
Most events held in the Daylesford / Hepburn Springs region - 60% to 70%	To include more experiences, showcase more of the region and receive both councils' support, a more even spread of events over both LGAs should be achieved
Small investment from industry wanting to be part of the event. \$100 to \$250	This is not enough to ensure the event's sustainability – relying too heavily on funding
A mix of programming from education, tours, food and drink experiences, tastings, meals, comedy. All but one event was ticketed. That one was free.	Too broad in its approach to programmed events
Programming attendee target market was solely concentrated on adults with high discretionary spend	Based on DMT customer profiles these would be Alex, Heather, Geoff and Chelsea
DMP created a strong following and brand, with 3,000 followers on Facebook and 3,400 on Instagram	This demonstrates a real desire and hunger for these experiences and the festival at large and something to leverage from in the future
The event incorporated Farmers Markets, ticketed events and other venues promoting their own 'specials' for that week – activations and events were broad	Minimum criteria, standards should be established for experiences to ensure they are commercially viable for the provider and align with the festival vision and values

# DESKTOP RESEARCH

## ESTABLISHING A FESTIVAL CRITERIA

When researching food and drink festivals around Australia and Internationally, it was important to establish a criterion that would suit the Daylesford & Macedon Ranges unique regional profile. There are a broad variety of food and drink festivals to choose from around the world. Initially in our international research, this became a challenge as most festivals are singularly concentrated around one type of food or drink rather than a festival that celebrates a region. It is interesting to note that (what we discovered) Australia has a unique way of delivering festivals with a focus on an area or region, celebrating a broader community or movement giving strength to programming and content.

As an example, the following are the most popular food festivals around the world. All except the **St. Moritz Gourmet Festival** and **Taste of Chicago**, is centred around a particular kind of food or drink. This list was similar in multiple searches.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Pizzafest   June, 2022</li><li>- Oktoberfest   17 Sep, 2022 – 3 Oct, 2022</li><li>- Bacon Festival   TBA</li><li>- Salon Du Chocolat   Yet to be announced</li><li>- Dumpling Festival   3 June, 2022</li><li>- National Cherry Festival   20 Mar, 2022 – 17 Apr, 2022</li><li>- Herring Festival   TBA</li><li>- Vegetarian Festival   24 Sep, 2022 – 03 Oct, 2022</li><li>- National Street Food Festival   TBA</li><li>- Maslenitsa Pancake Festival   28 Feb, 2022 – 6 Mar, 2022</li><li>- St. Moritz Gourmet Festival   28 Jan, 2022 – 5 Feb, 2022</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Melbourne Food and Wine Festival   12 Mar, 2022 – 31 Mar, 2022</li><li>- New Orleans Wine &amp; Food Experience   8 Jun, 2022 – 12 Jun, 2022</li><li>- Taste of Chicago – July 2022</li><li>- Maine Lobster Festival   3 Aug, 2022 – 7 Aug, 2022</li><li>- Gilroy Garlic Festival   22 Jul, 2022 – 25 Jul, 2022</li><li>- Giant Omelette Celebration   5 Nov, 2022 – 6 Nov, 2022</li><li>- Bugfest   TBA</li><li>- Olney Pancake Race   1 Mar, 2022</li><li>- Monkey Buffet Festival   27 Nov, 2022</li><li>- Cooper's Hill Cheese Rolling   30 May, 2022</li></ul> |
|---|---|

With this initial research in mind, we back tracked and developed a criterion that would give our search more laser focus. This became easier for domestic based festivals than it did International. These elements were vital to home in on relevant, aligned and defined festivals that centred around a region's food and drink consumption as much as it did on its origin and production.

### Our criteria when researching:

- A regional based festival (not in a large city or large regional township)
- Culinary / gastronomy / produce / food and drink focused
- A festival that has lifted a region's profile around food and drink
- A festival that has made an impact domestically and internationally
- Multi-faceted events that champion all stages of produce from paddock-to-plate.



## AUSTRALIAN FESTIVALS

Due to the history of the last three years of the pandemic, we needed to research historically as most festivals had not been activated since 2019/20 with many having ceased operating permanently (sadly). We settled on four festivals to highlight and provide an overview. These festivals relate best to the purpose of this strategy. They provide best practice and the key findings of what really works about a regional food and drink focussed event.

### Grape Escape – Grampians, VIC

Date: 5-7 May

Years: Since 1992

Attendance: 10,000

Insta: 4.5K

Facebook: 17K

<https://grampiansgrapeescape.com.au/>



#### About:

The **Grampians Grape Escape** is one of the longest running food and wine festivals in Australia.

The founding focus of the event was to showcase some of the oldest vines in the world with some original plantings from 1862. Each year participating wineries select a parcel of wine from the year's vintage for inclusion in the special release Grampians Reserve Shiraz, which is auctioned exclusively at the festival. Up to a tonne of grapes are donated to the festival each year by local vineyards and picked by school students for a traditional grape stomping competition. Across the weekend there are several local food and wine producers including over 120 local artisan stall holders. The festival is a family friendly event with a long history of attracting a strong crowd.

Held against the rugged backdrop of the Grampians National Park, the event takes place within an open venue with various temporary structures. The venue is secured and patrons are charged an entrance fee to attend. Whilst there, they experience a range of workshops, master classes, rolling kids activities, demonstrations, local food, dance, and music performances.

#### Key Findings:

- This event is delivered by an external event management company. They have stayed true to the original vision in highlighting and celebrating the Grampians as a serious wine region. Simultaneously the food and entertainment add to the weekend's activities with the use of various celebrity chefs across a number of years to help drive visitation with master classes and demonstrations.
- Ticket prices vary from \$40.00 for a 1 day or \$90.00 for 2 days of general admin or \$75.00 for a 1 day 'tasting' ticket with a few inclusions.
- This is a classic wine, food and music festival that appeals to a broad audience.
- It is located 3 hours from Melbourne, 2 hours from Ballarat and 2.45 hours from Geelong – all being the largest markets the festival is attended by.



## Gourmet Escape – Margaret River, WA

Date: 10 days in November

Years: Since 2012

Attendance: 120K+ (across all sites)

Insta: 24K

Facebook: 20K

<https://gourmetescape.com.au/>



### About:

**Gourmet Escape** is a food and wine festival highlighting four regions of Western Australia – Margaret River, Swan Valley, Perth and Rottneest Island. Noting this festival did include Perth, but for very few events. Focus was Margaret River.

They fly in world-renowned celebrity chefs to be involved in over 60 events across the 10 days. In recent years they focused on industry with 2019 hosting the first ‘World Gourmet Symposium’ alongside numerous ‘once in a lifetime’ chef collaboration events, drawing a crowd of over 20,000 attendees.

This festival is touted as ‘**Experiential Gastronomy in Extraordinary Locations**’, using their natural assets as host locations such as Rottneest Island and beaches.

### Key Findings:

This event is the brainchild of Tourism WA, delivered by an external event management company, IMG. IMG would source the talent, manage the PR and deliver the event. The use of celebrity chefs being flown in from all over the world, including Australia has placed this event in all the experienced foodies’ calendars. They deliver 3 ‘icon’ events year on year that are ticketed with the addition of ‘new’ programs depending on the sourcing of talent and chef collaborations. It is 5 days of ‘who’s who’ in the chef world, helped by the addition in 2019 of the World Gourmet Symposium which has legitimised the attendance for anyone interested in the future of all thing’s food. Margaret River is located 3 hours from Perth.

# INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

## Aldeburgh Food & Drink Festival, UK

Date: 2 days in September

Years: Since 2005

Attendance: 10K

Insta: 6K

Facebook: 4.2K

<https://aldeburghfoodanddrink.co.uk/>

### Aldeburgh FOOD & DRINK festival



#### About:

The first **Aldeburgh Food and Drink Festival** took place in 2006 to celebrate and publicise the abundance, variety and quality of food and drink in the region. The organisers sought to reconnect people with the food provided by the landscape as a whole: the villages and market towns, the fields, woodlands and marshes, the rivers and the sea. The festival has grown in size, success and importance but its philosophy remains the same.

With over 100 food and drink producers from the Suffolk region all gathered to sell their produce including raw milk, organic vegetables, sourdough bread, plus local award-winning beer and spirits and delicious street food. The festival is truly family friendly with free tickets for under 15's with free children's activities and hands on cooking workshops. Not only is there an amazing array of local produce but the festival also has 2 cookery demonstration stages hosting visiting and local chefs.

#### Festival aims:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Celebrate and promote the variety, quality and abundance of food and drink in Suffolk</li><li>• Emphasise connection between local food producers &amp; countryside</li><li>• Support the region's economy and reduce food miles by encouraging sales of local produce</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Publicise Suffolk as a food &amp; drink destination throughout the year</li><li>• Promote the Suffolk seaside and countryside, wildlife reserves, market towns and villages</li><li>• Encourage and support new and fledgling food and drink businesses</li><li>• Host conference discussions to explore broader food &amp; nutrition</li></ul> |
|--|---|

#### Key Findings:

This is a good example of a traditional food and drink festival that has stood the test of time. All the right elements to attract a crowd and celebrate the food and drink of this region. Their objectives are clearly set out above as the 'festival aims' are a great example of a clear vision to revert back to each year and to 'sense check' decisions around programming as the festival evolves and grows. It is located 2.5 hours from London.

## Wild Foods – New Zealand

Date: 1 day in March

Years: Since 1990

Attendance: 15K

Insta: 1K

Facebook: 11K

<https://wildfoods.co.nz/>



### About:

The **Wildfoods Festival** was started in 1990 by a producer of gorse-flower and rose-petal wine, who wanted to celebrate the flavours and produce of the West Coast. The event is now run by the local council.

The first festival initially attracted a crowd of 1,800 with renowned New Zealand cook Alison Holst as a culinary judge of the wild food category. The following years have continued to grow and now attracts a 15,000 strong audience.

Entranced by the magical idea of a wild food's festival in a real Wild West region of New Zealand, the event attracts people from all over the world to be a part of this event.

The festival hub is located in a little seaside town called Hokitika. The event focusses on the wild foods of the region and all its natural assets, with music, fashion and the arts playing supporting roles in keeping the audience engaged.

### Key Findings:

The concept has attracted a strong following from the beginning, however curiosity around the wild foods has helped build the audience year on year, with a range of crazy foods available such as sheep testicles, stallion semen, pigs nipples and huhu grubs. The wild food element of this event has been phenomenally successful and a great PR strategy to entice attendees. General admission comes with a ticket price of \$23.00 for older kids and \$59.00 for adults. All other experiential events incur a higher fee of \$64.00 or more. Like many other food and wine lead events, Wildfood's has a celebrity chef component, music, wine and great food.

## OVERALL KEY FINDINGS

Taking into consideration the key findings from each of the four food & Drink focussed festivals, there are a few key commonalities that are prevalent for success. No surprise, they are food, drink, music and entertainment which form the foundation of each festival. There was often an element of 'fun', uniqueness and education.

Each of these festivals chose to highlight a 'unique selling proposition'. As an example - eating sheep testicles, indulging in a feast produced by a collaboration of world-renowned chefs whilst sitting on the beach, stomping grapes from some of the oldest vines in the world.

These festivals are unique and attractive to the consumer, 'best in class' as they have sustained over time. Most of all, each festival tells the story of food and drink from the region it is based.

They are all:

- Connected to place
- Connected to people
- Connected to the region's industry that produces food and drink
- Genuine and unique to the specific region

# STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT





## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A list was provided by DMT, Hepburn and Macedon Ranges shire councils of industry contacts. This covered producers, farmers, hospitality, wineries, distilleries, breweries, and relevant associations that would fall under the Gastronomy category. Our first step was to contact industry first and foremost.

The logic being it is business and/or industry who will be the backbone of this festival. Initial findings relate to their willingness to participate, their capacity, timing, success for them in participating and recommendations of other festivals. This all ties in with our research in developing the festival concept.

### INDUSTRY

#### Process:

Our initial engagement was set up to gather as much feedback as possible. Contacting industry prior to sending out the survey allowed us to introduce ourselves, the project and why we needed their feedback. It also gave us an opportunity to establish our contact details for the future and invite ongoing feedback. We understand that industry are time poor, so we tried our best to engage and encourage feedback.

Our process was as follows:

- W/C November 14 – sent all an email introducing the project, Yonder (James and Sarah) and that we will be seeking feedback through a survey which we will send the following week
- W/C November 21 – Sarah and James called each contact and either spoke with them or left a message (where possible). This was to add a personal touch to the process. We let all know our contact details and opened the door to further conversations. This was followed up by an email with this [link to the online survey](#). *Questions outlined in Appendix 1.1*
- W/C November 28 – Sent a gentle email reminder with the survey link
- W/C December 5 - Collated feedback
- Conversations were also held along the way

#### Key Findings:

These key findings were in response to the survey sent:

- **81%** of respondents are very keen to be part of a Food and Drink Festival.
- **19%** would need more information before committing.
- Collectively they would like to be part of a festival which is good for business and the reputation of the region.
- All mentioned they would be very willing to contribute to the following categories:
  - Tours / behind the scenes - 57%
  - Educational experiences / demonstrations / classes - 50%
  - Farm Gate / Cellar door - 62%
  - Hospitality focused special event - long lunch, dinner, live music, family fun day - 70%
  - Be part of an offsite trade event - offer samples and sell your products / produce - 50%
- **81%** have held onsite events before
- **100%** of responses have supported late February as good timing of a festival, although Lake House highlighted that it is “wedding season”
- The ‘No-Go’ times for the festival stretched across the year and varied from business to business. Mainly school holidays, Christmas. November, April and May
- A successful festival would be measured by quality of attendees, revenue and exposure to the region and businesses
- All respondents were positive and supportive of a food & drink focussed festival

## INDUSTRY KEY FINDINGS CONTINUED...

*Further Insights to keep in mind – that came through phone and email feedback:*

- Current staffing shortages in the region are pushing small business and capacity
- Quality (over quantity) of festival attendees would be highly regarded by industry
- Opportunities to collaborate with established festivals with regards to IP and databases
- B2B collaborations and networking – promotes the industry and establishes integrity of the festival
- Wineries in the region operate from small vintages and so encouraging visitation to cellar door is more beneficial than creating a central hub
- Wineries are keen to increase year-round profile and sell wine
- Opportunities to create produce trails – visiting cellar doors / farm gates – which last year round
- Focus equally on small and large businesses / farms – not just the main players
- Market early as the region, as accommodation can fill up to 2 months prior
- ‘We don’t need to fake it’ - The region is at the forefront of sustainable farming which promotes traceability, provenance and seasonality
- The ‘magic’ and appeal of the region are the small, unique producers benefitting from the rich volcanic soil and mineral springs
- The region is a true food bowl producing a vast and varied level of produce
- A strong Swiss Italian heritage should be promoted

## COUNCIL

We consulted with both Hepburn Shire and Macedon Ranges Shire councils. Both emulated each other in terms of feedback, concerns and response.

This would be the first tourism initiative both councils have worked on, funded or supported equally, if it were to go ahead. Whilst supporting the concept of a food and drink festival in the region, there are concerns around operation, support and timing listed below:

### Timing:

- Proposed timing of February highlighted capacity issues at both councils due to busy March schedules
  - Macedon Ranges Autumn Festival (April 1 to 30)
  - Macedon Ranges Summertime fling - promotion of wineries during the last three weeks of January
  - Chillout Festival – Labour Day long weekend (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday in March)
- An alternative recommendation of October as secondary timing, but understood the need to attract visitation at a traditionally low time of the year and the weather being much more conducive to outdoor events in February

- DMT is not in any position to fund or deliver an event. There is opportunity for in-kind support through marketing services
- Depending on structure (and of course) location of event, funding may be achievable
- They highlighted there are always significant issues being approved by council
- After first year of operation and a proven concept, a more robust level of funding could be achieved over a three-year period for both councils. This will depend on location and structure.
- MRSC funding through the [Events and Festivals Grants Program](#)
- HSC funding through the [Events Strategy Funding program](#)
- Long-term – Tier 2 funding would be a challenge with an ‘un-tried’ event through Visit Victoria. A Tier 3 level of funding could be more possible.

### Funding opportunities:

#### General feedback

Both councils identify the need of a food and drink focused festival to highlight the region’s UNESCO category of Gastronomy. They see the benefit it will bring to the region and the importance to highlight the unique selling proposition of the festival which would ground it to the region’s attributes.



## FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

When considering a concept for a food and drink festival for the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges region, it is important to note that no one festival around Australia or the world can be form fitted. A festival needs to be developed that suits the unique profile of this region in Victoria.

The scope in which we place our concept recommendations considers the key event objectives laid out by DMT along with our own key criteria. Through this we have also developed guidelines for content and where opportunities could exist for local business.

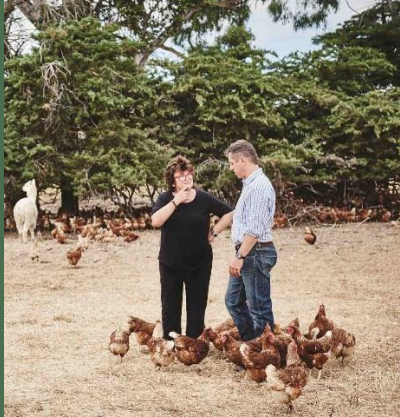
Through our research and stakeholder engagement, the following criteria has been established to focus on the project's key objectives and tailor a festival that meets the uniqueness of the producers, growers and hospitality of the region.

### Key Criteria of the festival:

- Activate a large catchment area involving the townships of Hepburn Shire and Macedon Ranges council
- Energise and engage the broad range of business, farmers, producers, makers, retail and hospitality involved in the gastronomy lifecycle of food and drink
- Encourage people to travel to the region for at least two nights by making the festival 'sticky' and 'engaging' for attendees
- Develop an over-arching profile and brand that will last year-round
- Create a multi-faceted event with scale. One which can grow in time and one that can shrink in size and adapt to external factors
- Celebrate and amplify the region's agricultural farming practices and ethical gastronomy
- Needs to be unique as the festival appeals to industry and consumers alike
- Must have integrity, quality and be regionally focused
- Lift profile of region and drive visitation along with revenue for businesses
- Collaborate with industry, councils, Visit Victoria, First Nations and DMT where possible to deliver and support the festival







# GROUNDNED

PROVENANCE | SUSTAINABILITY | TRACEABILITY | SEASONALITY





## EVENT VISION

**GROUND**ED is a festival which centres on the unique farming and food production attributes of the region's volcanic soil and natural mineral springs. It will focus on the paddock-to-plate lifecycle of food and drink produced in the Daylesford Macedon Ranges Tourism region. From planting to harvesting to producing and consuming, the journey of the region's food and drink is complex, considered, progressive and multifaceted.

**GROUND**ED will open its farm gates, back of house, factories and kitchens to showcase the region's UNESCO gastronomy status. **GROUND**ED will use the support and delivery of the region's industry and businesses who are involved in all aspects of food and drink production – from seed-to-service, ground-to-mouth and farm-to-table.

**GROUND**ED will create the platform to hold a wide range of unique, interactive and immersive events which illustrate the region's formidable reputation for quality produce. The vision throughout this strategy will need to navigate a pathway of growth while mitigating financial risk. Demand is high from the community to attend as much as it is from industry to showcase and deliver the unique experiences, however funding is limited.

## GUIDING MISSION

**GROUND**ED will develop a 'movement' and support the ethical gastronomy focus of the region which champions:

### PROVENANCE | SUSTAINABILITY | TRACEABILITY | SEASONALITY

While the festival is the centrepiece, this movement will continue year-round. It will promote, educate and drive the message around sustainability, exceptional produce and celebrate the people and businesses that work tirelessly to grow, farm, produce and serve consumers.

## EVENT STRUCTURE

**GROUND**ED will be made up of three components within its long-term vision:

**CURATED** | *Learn and experience*

**PADDOCK TO PICNIC** | *Australia's largest regional producers' picnic*

**GASTRONOMY TOURISM SYMPOSIUM** | *An industry lead event targeting experts and innovators*

## TIMING

We recommend the timing of the event to be in the last weekend (Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday) of February. After consulting with industry and stakeholders alike this timing works well for the following reasons:

- It is at the lowest time of year for visitation into the region
- All industry who answered our survey agreed the timing worked for them
- Warmer month does allow for a boarder program of events and can involve the outdoors
- A picnic event would suit this time of year best

A secondary timing has been requested. However, this timing will impact the content of the festival. There may be some conflict with other events in the region, like the Hanging Rock Makers Market. Third or fourth week of October falls in line with industry feedback with little conflict and can certainly be an option, however this will impact the Paddock to Picnic event due to inclement weather. It is important to note, that over time the festival will grow in its profile and will have the ability to run seasonal events year round. These events could align with various harvesting times or production schedules.

## START SMALL AND SCALE FOR SUCCESS

Establishing the festival in its first year will need to be small scale to ensure sustainability and mitigate financial risk. Establishing the 'movement', 'vision' and brand of **GROUND**ED will involve industry engagement to form the unique range of immersive experiences for consumers. There is no shortage of content ideas for the festival. However, the need for industry to collaborate to deliver, will ensure experiences are unique and only offered during the festival, making it much more attractive to attendees – to be part of the 'one-off', 'once-in-a-lifetime' event experiences.

## A TARGETED FESTIVAL

The strategic framework should be used as a guide to plan and deliver the festival and its content. Using these guidelines, the organisers will ensure that  **GROUNDED**  will operate in a way that will target the right market, measure uptake, attendance and success and further develop future content to grow the festival.

Using the **S.M.A.R.T.E.R approach** = Specific | Measurable | Attainable | Realistic | Time-bound | Exciting | Responsible

Guidelines needs to involve industry best practice for event planning. Quite simply to be **S.M.A.R.T.E.R.**

Establishing a clear vision for  **GROUNDED**  festival is vital. As presented earlier in this document, creating the event vision begins by understanding the event that is to be executed, the reason for it, the people involved, the timing, the setting etc. Understanding the Why, Who, What, When, Where and How or  **WWWWWHow**  as the foundation for the festival is paramount.

It is applied to the event and ensures the programmed content passes the litmus test to clearly align with the  **GROUNDED**  vision.

<i>WHY?</i>	<i>WHEN?</i>	<i>WHERE?</i>
<p><b>...must Grounded be held?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Celebrate the region’s unique story of gastronomy (the art and science of good food)</li> <li>- Highlight the region’s dedicated farming and production values of Traceability, Sustainability, Provenance and Seasonality</li> <li>- Give consumers the rare opportunity to be part of unique Paddock-to-Plate experiences which educates about, and champions the region’s quality produce</li> <li>- Establish a year-round movement which promotes the region as a progressive food and drink destination</li> <li>- Provide business and industry the opportunity to share their approach, methods and practices around food and drink production and service</li> <li>- Champion the region’s Swiss Italian Heritage and tell their important history. How they protected the Springs and the unique foods that still exist from their influence – like the bullboar sausage (as an example)</li> </ul> <p><b>...would stakeholders want to invest in GROUNDED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increases the regions profile around quality produce – year round</li> <li>- Gives industry the opportunity to build their business and increase sales</li> <li>- Builds on the strong reputation of the region and encourages more tourism</li> </ul>	<p>Last weekend in February annually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A traditional period of low visitation to the region</li> <li>- Warmer and more predictable weather</li> <li>- Suits most industry who are instrumental in delivering the festival to consumers</li> <li>- An alternative of week 4 of October. Recommendation to launch at this time.</li> </ul> <p><b>**note that there is a makers market at Hanging Rock in Week 4 of October</b></p> <p>GROUNDED festival is relevant year-round as it represents the produce of the region. Is mailability to operate events any month of the year. It can also respond to external forces – like the 2026 Commonwealth Games and adjust timing to compliment and benefit from this significant global event in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programmed events will be held by industry across Hepburn and Macedon Ranges shires, within the DMT reach</li> <li>- The picnic in the second year will be chosen based on location, support and possible funding. Or there could be multiple picnics highlighting the beauty of the region’s many outdoor locations.</li> </ul>

<i>WHO?</i>	<i>WHAT?</i>	<i>HOW?</i>
<p><b>...are expected to attend the event?</b></p> <p><b>GROUND</b>ED will target a discerning market who are attracted by quality, easily accessible and uniquely curated food and drink experiences. They are willing to pay for opportunities to travel to regions that offer this. They are lovers of food and wine, beer, cider and locally grown produce and curious people who crave new experiences. It is the entire gastronomic journey that they want to be part of.</p> <p><b>Using the DMT profiles of high discretionary spend, they are as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Geoff</b> - discerning retiree after unique food and wine experiences</li> <li>• <b>Heather</b> – urban socialite after new experiences</li> <li>• <b>Alex</b> – busy introvert that needs a break and unique experience</li> <li>• <b>Chelsea</b> – party, food and wine loving</li> </ul> <p><b>Broadening programming in following years to include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Pheobe</b> – involving families and children in some events</li> <li>• <b>Brian &amp; Kathy</b> – would be attracted to the free events and some of the curated cheaper ticketed events</li> <li>• <b>Mei</b> – for a day trip to the larger events with capacity, but this requires and organized and planned target market</li> </ul> <p>Attendees would initially be drawn from Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo.</p> <p>As the festival grows in reputation, it will target interstate visitation. A strong industry presence nationally and internationally will broaden the festival’s reach as attendees are coming for the content, the networking and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Visitation would be targeted at an average 2.5 night stay.</p>	<p><b>...would delight the event audience?</b></p> <p>Unique immersive experiences which aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educate and inform attendees</li> <li>- Be exclusive to this region and to this festival</li> <li>- Involve participants in the movement of the festival year round</li> <li>- Spread the message of sustainable food security and regenerative farming methods</li> <li>- Appeal to people who search for quality produce and want to know where it comes from and how it is made</li> <li>- Excite people to keep coming back to the region</li> <li>- Promote the philosophy of paddock-to-plate lifecycle of produce</li> <li>- Involve attendees in tasting and understanding the food and drink they are consuming</li> </ul> <p><b>...are the expectations of the stakeholders?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Champion the region’s strong reputation centered around food and drink</li> <li>- Develop a festival that grows with popularity and content</li> <li>- Increase visitation and average night’s stay at a traditionally slow time of year</li> <li>- Create a year-round visitation flow through the profile created by this festival</li> <li>- Promote the region’s produce</li> <li>- Encourage industry to collaborate with each other to be part of this festival</li> <li>- Engage industry with the festival’s mission and vision</li> <li>- Provide a platform for industry to promote their produce, products or services</li> </ul>	<p><b>...many attendees are expected – indicative figures?</b></p> <p><b>Year 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 500 intrastate visitors – programmed experiences</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,000 intrastate visitors – programmed experiences</li> <li>- 500 intrastate visitors – Picnic events</li> </ul> <p><b>Year 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1,500 intrastate visitors – programmed experiences</li> <li>- 1,000 intrastate visitors – Picnic events</li> <li>- 200 industry professionals - Symposium</li> </ul> <p><b>...will the budget be set?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A modest budget to launch Year 1 &amp; 2 will be established by the event provider. Recommendations are made later in this document.</li> </ul>

## PILLARS

**GROUND**ED aligns clearly with the DMT’s regional tourism pillars. The breadth of opportunities that this concept provides from a content perspective stretches across all four pillars -

To **Indulge**, To **Refresh**, To **Learn** and To **Make**. With a view to attract increased visitation, length of visitor night’s stay in the region and spend per visitor.

<i>INDULGE</i>	<i>REFRESH</i>	<i>LEARN</i>	<i>MAKE</i>
Rich volcanic soil and famed natural spring mineral water world-class produce (food and drink). Farm to table provenance. Artisanal producers and growers	High end accommodation, natural mineral springs and the surrounding volcanic hills makes for a great place to unwind and relax.	Explore the amazing trail of farm gates and learn about life on the farm.  Talk to the producers and understand how they make and market their products.	Get your hands dirty, have fun learning new skills to take home.  Learn the art of making using skills passed down from generations gone or the latest modern practices.
Event concepts that could be considered: - Long Lunches & indulgent dinners with produce collaborations - Produce Trails - Wine / cider / beer / spirits tastings	Event concepts that could be considered: - Explore the regions lakes, gardens and buildings - Explore and enjoy the Springs - Let one of the farm gate trails take you on a journey of the region - Enjoy a long lunch or dinner	Event concepts that could be considered: - Exploration into the food and drink of First Nations people - Open houses/ farms/wineries/distilleries – tour behind the scenes - Learn about the region’s underground natural springs, its past and present - Amplify the Swiss Italian Heritage and history of the area	Event concepts that could be considered: - Cooking classes for all ages and experiences - Learn through masterclasses from local producers – distilling, wine making, brewing, baking

## S.W.O.T

This analysis outlines what can be gained from the establishment of GROUNDED, as well as what needs to be considered in its delivery. It highlights the strengths and opportunities to the region and community as well as industry. It is important to note that this S.W.O.T. is based on what is currently foreseeable.

### STRENGTHS

- *A unique festival that activates the whole region over both councils*
- *Establish a strong gastronomy profile year round*
- *The festival is an immersive experience that it isn't just about consuming, it is about teaching, learning and being part of a movement*
- *Create a world first regional event focusing on paddock-to-plate food and drink journey*
- *Offer a range of activity streams attracting differing target markets – broadening the market and increase visitation average night stay*
- *Targeting B2B and B2C (industry and consumers)*
- *Empowering industry to build their businesses*
- *Harness technology to connect the range of events with consumers*
- *Offer year-round opportunities to increase visitation*
- *Ability to utilise the whole region – ensuring there isn't a pressure on a particular township / infrastructure*
- *Can launch using strong DMP following and use the current database*

### WEAKNESSES

- *Not proven*
- *Initial funding*
- *The right people to deliver*
- *Limited resources for marketing and promotion*
- *High cost to deliver paddock to picnic concept and will be reliant on funding*

### OPPORTUNITIES

- *Creating a world first festival of its kind unique to the food-bowl region*
- *Grow a symposium aimed to attract industry experts into the region*
- *Strengthens the regional profile while providing strong PR opportunities*
- *Engaging industry and consumers equally – develop a high level of integrity through the festival mission, vision and messaging*
- *An opportunity to start in a considered conservative manner and strategically scale over time*
- *Become the largest and most respected regionally based and gastronomy focused event of its kind in Australia / World*
- *It will have year-round impact on the region*
- *Expand to multiple locations for a wider audience reach*
- *Offer a variety experience streams aimed at different target markets*

### THREATS

- *External weather events - Bushfires and heat*
- *Other festivals being created at the same timing*
- *Industry not backing the festival*
- *Staffing shortages affecting the industry*



# CONTENT



## CONTENT

**GROUNDED** will be a multifaceted festival which gives consumers the opportunity to learn about all aspects of food and drink production – from paddock-to-pate. Content and experiences will be delivered by local farmers, chefs, vigneron, distillers, producers, brewers, bakers, hospitality and First Nations people as they open their back doors and farm gates. A celebration and education of the region's unique natural farming and food and drink production assets – the **rich volcanic soil** and the **natural mineral springs**.

Truly unique experiences focused on the gastronomy of the region for both industry and consumers to take part. Programmed content will be delivered by industry and give attendees rare insight into all areas of farming to production, hospitality to retail and how their food is grown and produced. Participants will be able to witness firsthand the hard work that goes into producing the food we consume daily. They will discover how farming and production practices has an impact on all aspects of produce as the festival will champion the region's focus on **provenance, sustainability, traceability** and **seasonality**.

*Curated* content will give local industry the opportunity to:

- Open their venue on their own terms
- Demonstrate and educate people about what they do and how they do it
- Collaborate with other producers / industry / hospitality / retail to develop a unique experience
- Increase their profile
- Add customers to their mailing lists
- Drive revenue through sales
- Educate, inform and engage with the public along with peers from the industry
- Promote the region's unique farming, production and culinary standards.

During research and consultation with industry there is no lack of enthusiasm, ideas and opportunities to develop unique festival content. It is important to develop guidelines and standards for the GROUNDED festival content. This will ensure it aligns with the unique selling proposition of the festival.

## GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMMED CONTENT

All industry which supports food and drink farming, production and consumption in the Daylesford Macedon Tourism region are encouraged to submit an application to hold an event as part of **GROUNDED - Curated**. The Advisory Group of GROUNDED will steer content along with the event producer. This will ensure uniqueness, quality, originality, credibility and professional delivery is delivered. The unique integrity of the festival, events and programmed content must be developed and delivered to meet the following guidelines.

### Criteria for programmed events:

- Must highlight the region's UNESCO gastronomy classification – paddock-to-plate
- Must align with the festival's values of provenance, sustainability, traceability and seasonality
- Give attendees a unique immersive experience to learn - unique to the region
- Only include local regional industry
- Collaboration with other regional industry will be highly regarded
- Be priced appropriately
- The experience will be described precisely to set realistic expectations
- Integrity in messaging and outcomes to align with festival values

### Considerations:

- Look to offer the experience more than once if popular or if it can only engage small numbers at a time
- Data from participants can be collected at the event
- How can you maximise your event to your own advantage? Sell produce, offer a promotion, encourage subscriptions or signing up to mailing lists
- Providers of experiences will be required to give feedback on operation of event

### Numbers:

- The number of attendees must comply with the capacity of the venue to ensure risk is managed effectively. Your venue will need to comply with local council guidelines including number of attendees, safe access, carparking and accessibility.
- The quality of the programmed content should not be compromised by overselling or having too many people take part. All attendees should have the opportunity have the same experience.
- Safety and OH& S standards must be followed – see Risk

### Ticketing and pricing:

- Ticketing and pricing will be handled by a central digital ticketing platform
- A service / booking fee is added to the ticketed price – this pays for the platform
- A percentage of the ticketed price will be retained by the operators of GROUNDED to cover operation and marketing costs
- Funds will be dispersed once the programmed content has been delivered
- \*\*more defined Ts &Cs will be established once ticketing platform is engaged
- Pricing guidance will be guided by the festival operators to ensure it aligns with the value of the programmed content offered

### **Risk – General:**

- Identify potential risks: Conduct a thorough risk assessment to identify all potential risks that may affect the safety and security of your event, such as security risks, safety hazards, weather conditions, and possible emergencies.
- Develop a safety plan: Develop a safety plan that includes strategies to mitigate identified risks, emergency response protocols, and procedures for evacuation, communication, and medical assistance.
- Communicate safety information: Communicate safety information to all attendees, vendors, and staff members, including emergency contact information, evacuation procedures, and any safety guidelines that they need to follow during the event.
- Hire professional services: Consider hiring professional services such as security personnel, medical personnel, and event planners with experience in handling large events.
- Secure the venue: Ensure that the venue is secure and take steps to prevent unauthorized access or other security breaches.
- Monitor weather conditions: Monitor weather conditions and take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of attendees and staff in case of extreme weather conditions.
- Implement COVID-19 protocols: Implement appropriate COVID-19 protocols such as mandatory face masks, social distancing, and regular cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces.
- Obtain necessary permits and insurance: Obtain all necessary permits and insurance coverage to protect your event and attendees from potential liabilities and risks.
- Evaluate potential liabilities: Evaluate potential liabilities and develop strategies to mitigate them, such as securing liability waivers from participants or ensuring that vendors have adequate insurance coverage.
- Have a crisis management plan: Develop a crisis management plan that includes strategies to respond to any emergencies or unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the event.
- Ensure all food safety protocols are complied with.

# CURATED

## THE ART OR SCIENCE OF GOOD FOOD - THROUGH UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

**GROUND**ED and the highly engaged industry's commitment to producing world class food and drink - ensures a year-round opportunity for visitation through ongoing high end curated experiences. Find to follow a number of ideas that could be integrated into the *Curated* program:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Master class cooking demonstrations by local chefs using local produce</li><li>2. Tour behind the scenes of your business, farm, winery, distillery, cidery and learn from the producers</li><li>3. Learn about the region's produce, farming practices through seminars located at a central venue</li><li>4. Long lunches &amp; indulgent dinners using local produce combined with producers and farmers telling their stories</li><li>5. Specific content for industry Farm tours Agricultural / production</li><li>6. Learn about the six seasons of the Dja Dja Wurrung First Nations people and how that relates to produce</li><li>7. Farmgate festivals – a map of open farm gates during the weekend</li><li>8. Unique dining experiences like a sunrise breakfast or a moonlight feast</li><li>9. Seminar on UNESCO's 17 sustainability goals</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>10. Celebrate the Swiss Italian heritage of the region, which was so integral in saving the natural springs from mining in the 1900s</li><li>11. Make the bullboar sausage and learn about its Swiss Italian significance unique only to the region</li><li>12. Produce harvesting experiences – picking and learning about produce</li><li>13. A produce day at your unique venue – winery, cidery, brewery etc – highlighting local produce with your own wine, cider, beer</li><li>14. Artisanal producers' day aimed at highlighting the region's small agriculture.</li><li>15. Promoting seed to service and simple production methods</li><li>16. Makers workshops – fermenting, distilling, brewing, baking etc</li><li>17. Collaborations between producers and hospitality venues</li><li>18. Accommodation experiences collaborating with local producers</li></ol>
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### Streams

All programmed content will be categorised and tagged with streams so that attendees can choose what they are interested in. An example of streams:

Family | Learning | Cooking | Farming | Indulgent Food + Drink Experiences | Hands On | Wine | Industry

# CENTREPIECE EVENT

## PADDOCK TO PICNIC

The centrepiece event to the festival.

An interactive producer's picnic '**Paddock to Picnic**', designed to encourage people to attend, purchase their picnic, understand where it comes from and be part of the day's festivities aimed at promoting **local producers and practices**. It will aim to be Australia's largest annual gastronomic picnic celebrating produce from paddock-to-plate from the region's volcanic soils and natural mineral springs.

The centrepiece event will be held over one day of the central weekend of the festival. Encouraging people to get out of the city and towns into the Daylesford and Macedon Ranges tourist region. The picnic concept will see local suppliers selling their produce 'picnic ready'. Boasting a range of stalls showcasing everything from locally made pork pies, artisanal cheeses, local sourdough, cured meats, cider, wines just to name a few.

This will be a ticketed event where attendees will have the opportunity to sample and buy produce, picnic hampers, wine, cider, beer and locally produced food to complete their picnics in a market style environment. We would recommend various ticket prices to cater to a variety of budgets, to follow is an example of how that could look:

<i>PERSONAL PADDOCK-TO-PICNIC</i>	<i>PADDOCK-TO-PICNIC EVENT</i>	
<p>The promotion of picnic anywhere in the region with one of the festival's GROUNDED picnic boxes</p> <p>GROUNDED will promote the personal paddock-to-picnic, collaborating with local producers and handpicked picnic box that can be collected from a range of pre-determined locations throughout the region.</p> <p>The idea is to promote the region as a whole, along with its produce and give consumers the option to picnic where they choose. Boxes can be collected from hub bases such as Kyneton, Woodend and Daylesford.</p>	<p>A central picnic festival to hero the regions produce and celebrate 'paddock to picnic' produce.</p> <p>Attendees can enter the 'picnic market' and continue through to the main 'picnic hub'. Here they can find a spot to sit and picnic for the day. They will be able to purchase local wines, cider, craft beers etc once again stall holders should consider offering sales and delivery to homes.</p> <p>A main stage with live music, demonstrations, interviews with local industry leaders will focus on GROUNDED's mission. Attendees will learn where their produce comes from, how it is grown and how it is made. Connecting it to the guiding principles of:</p> <p><b>PROVENANCE   SUSTAINABILITY   TRACEABILITY   SEASONALITY</b></p>	<p><b>**A package for those looking to be pampered.</b></p> <p>Their experience has been curated, packed and ready for collection.</p> <p>Guests will receive a branded picnic box full of local produce, plates, utensils and glasses ready to picnic! They will have access to the Picnic Pamper zone where tables and chairs will await them. Priority positioning of the main stage plus a centralised bar to purchase drinks from.</p> <p>All guests will be able to enter back into the Picnic Market at any stage to top up their picnics at any stage.</p> <p><b>**This option may be offered in future years</b></p>



## *CENTREPICE EVENT Continued*

Picnic goers will enjoy a leisurely picnic, surrounded by the spectacular region of rolling hills, volcanic soils and natural mineral springs. This festival will prioritise environmental sustainability with zero waste goals, composting and recycling initiatives implemented throughout. This concept outlines the potential of the Paddock-to-Picnic and what the festival should aim towards.

### **To note:**

- The food and beverage offering will be adjusted to 'picnic' style, ready to eat
- We do not recommend food trucks to be involved in the delivery of this event unless they are local, using local produce, picnic style
- The focus on picnic-style food adds a unique twist to traditional festival food offerings
- Stall holders/local providers will be encouraged to offer direct to door sales for attendees to maximise sales
- Promotes the region and getting outdoors for the weekend
- Drives the consumption of local produce to be part of the picnic
- Lifts profile of local producers with the opportunity to involve many of them in the stage component
- Offers a range of activated spaces in the region
- Can be scaled up or down depending on funding.

### **Venue recommendation:**

As GROUNDED is established the option to hold smaller picnics at private participating venues could be an option worth exploring – based around funding and budget. These examples could include:

- Attwood winery
- Passing Clouds winery
- Daylesford Cider
- Hanging Rock winery
- Curly Flat Winery

Based on feedback from the two councils, it would be ideal if the signature festival (in years to come) of Paddock to Picnic event had 2 locations identified with the idea that it could be held in each council region every second year. The following are some top line suggestions:

- The Smeaton Mill
- Hanging Rock
- Glenlyon Recreative Reserve
- Daylesford – Victoria Park
- Wombat Hill Botanic Gardens
- Hepburn Mineral Springs reserve



# INDUSTRY SYMPOSIUM

## *Gastronomy Tourism Symposium / Conference / Forum*

The concept for the Symposium aims to stimulate conversation, research and collaboration on the history, culture, production, education and science of food and drink. The Symposium should feature original presentations and workshops relating to the themes from educators, enthusiasts, farmers, hospitality and producers. Driven by the GROUNDED Industry Advisory Group the Symposium will align with and promote the festival values of Provenance, Traceability, Sustainability and Seasonality.

The Symposium should look to incorporate the Aboriginal concept of the six seasons of sustainability and provide opportunities to explore the fields of fermentation and preservation, exemplifying cultural traditions around seasonal foods and sustainable approaches.

- Two-day event targeting industry - experts and innovators in their field
- An opportunity for industry to come together and share information, network and discuss the future of food, agriculture, tourism and hospitality with a focus on the region
- Forum to exchange ideas, network, discuss current topics facing the industry
- Attract global industry leaders. Establish a conference attuned specifically to paddock to plate tourism
- Streams for viticulture, hospitality, farming, retail and food/drink production
- Workshops and seminars to support business and specifically drive visitation / revenue
- Opportunities to collaborate
- Gastronomy Tourism Awards
- Start small and grow with industry response.



# **MANAGEMENT MODEL**

## *FESTIVAL DIRECTOR / EVENT DELIVERER*

An external events company will need to be sourced to deliver **GROUNDED**. This company will need to own the event, its brand, operations and delivery.

DMT to recruit an appropriate and capable company. We recommend a local group who are well connected, understand the region and will grow the event gradually to mitigate risk. The long-term potential of **GROUNDED** is substantial and scaling for success will be imperative. This company will be guided by the Advisory Group, assembled from engaged industry stakeholders. It is important to note that the company will have full ownership, responsibility and accountability of all aspects of the festival. Due to the current concept the company will need to develop job roles and structure.

## *ADVISORY GROUP*

Through the process of industry consultation, a handpicked group of industry professionals have initially agreed to be part of an Advisory Group. This group will be focussed on steering the festival and its content, engaging industry and driving the mission and vision of the festival. This group is vital to the operation of **GROUNDED**. They represent the core industry and will ensure the festival reflects the integrity, quality and ethics of the region's food and drink farming, production and service. Ensuring the festival closely reflects the industry and region it is championing. The people below have all been consulted with and at the time of writing initially agreed to assist with the Advisory Group. However, roles responsibilities and structure of the group has not been discussed or determined. All were involved (or consulted in line with) a workshop held in February 2023 to discuss the content and direction of **GROUNDED**.

### **Who:**

Larissa Wolf-Tasker – The Lake House - Hospitality

Cameron Leith – Passing Clouds – Farmer / producer

Paul Righetti – Honest Eggs – Farmer / producer

Natalie Hardy – Brooklands Farms – Farmer / producer

Bryanna Sandercock – Piper Street and Macedon Ranges Food Collective - Retail

Lisa Rundell – Lost Trades – Events

Michelle Symes – Gastronomy Project Officer with Bendigo Council – worked on past Harvest festivals and Lake House

Samantha Mackley – Cliffy's and Beppe – Hospitality

Sharon Hebard – Need to confirm

# **MARKETING PLAN**

## *BRAND / EVENT POSITION*

An effective strategy starts with a clear Brand position.

# GROUND

*A paddock-to-plate festival*

PROVENANCE | SUSTAINABILITY | TRACEABILITY | SEASONALITY

Following on from the reputation of Daylesford Macedon Produce, **GROUND** will re-establish a brand which is defined by its unique volcanic soils, natural springs and high-quality produce. The values reflect the region's gastronomic principles of Provenance, Sustainability, Traceability and Seasonality. Using the **Vision** and **Mission** as its **Unique Selling Proposition**, the festival will build its brand from the integrity of Daylesford Macedon Produce.

# STRATEGY

Launch site – Build database – Establish movement & event – Launch Program & tickets – Maintain - Measure

<b>MARKETING CHANNELS</b>	
<b>Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domain names of <b>Groundedfestival.com.au</b> or <b>grounded.net.au</b> are available</li> <li>• Needs to be designed and launched</li> <li>• Simple and uncomplicated</li> <li>• Main hub for up-to-date festival information</li> <li>• Event details and ticketing links</li> <li>• Press releases</li> <li>• Marketing toolkit for partners to use. This includes press releases, event descriptions, logos, images, digital marketing assets that can be used in further communication</li> <li>• A clear seasonal comms strategy needs to be developed for the website</li> <li>• Use the website as a vehicle to build the database for future comms and promotion, encourage future sponsors and participating vendors to register interest</li> <li>• Establish clear links to follow social media</li> <li>• Subscribe for periodic updates about festival events – this should feature heavily on the website</li> <li>• Links from DMT's, HSC and MRSC websites</li> <li>• Aim for links from participating industry partners and sponsors</li> <li>• Optimised as much as possible using best practice SEO standards</li> </ul>
<b>Industry engagement</b>	<p>Marketing to industry is as important as it is to the consumer. Industry will be the backbone of this festival as it is their farming practices, techniques, methods of production, philosophy of food security and sustainability and the hospitality that make the region so unique. Engagement of industry is vital to garner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness and recognition</li> <li>• Support and respect for the festival – regardless of participation</li> <li>• Establish database of industry</li> <li>• Participation and collaboration with other industry providers</li> <li>• Collectively industry, retail and hospitality businesses have a huge reach through databases and social media. Engaging them to help support the festival to their databases should be part of the social media strategy</li> <li>• Business social media is always looking for content that supports their business and the local region. Send this content to them or encourage reposting on social media</li> </ul>
<b>Advertising and promotion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DMT Magazine advertising</li> <li>• Council support and promotion</li> <li>• Visit Victoria support and promotion where possible</li> <li>• SEM will be dependent on budget, however, will not be necessary based on already established following through DMP and DMT</li> </ul>
<b>Social Media</b>	<p>Primarily Facebook and Instagram Change the current DMP profiles to @GroundedFestival - is available</p>

	<p>A content strategy needs to be developed which includes content scope and timeline of posts. This may be challenging with limited resources and so the schedule should be precise with content which has clear messaging to a growing database.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch</li> <li>• Highlight programmed events</li> <li>• Links to ticketing</li> <li>• Encourage booking accommodation with all providers</li> <li>• Promoting the mission of the movement and vision of the festival</li> </ul> <p><b>Commit to frequency and content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Instagram and Facebook are connected and follows all industry</li> <li>• Research and use hashtags that will connect with your market, involve businesses and partners</li> <li>• Tag and involved providers</li> </ul>
<b>EDMs to current database</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A monthly EDM (electronic direct mail) that updates database on the festival</li> <li>• This same messaging can be replicated with the EDM databases of DMT, HSC, MRSC and Visit Victoria</li> <li>• The communication should be consistent with other channels</li> <li>• Frequency should increase 6 weeks out to every fortnight</li> <li>• Subscribe through the website</li> </ul>
<b>Targeted media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local, inter-regional (Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong) and Melbourne</li> <li>• Primarily using the resources of DMT to promote the festival to media</li> <li>• Launch of GROUNDED</li> <li>• Daylesford Macedon Life magazine targets the right market</li> </ul>

## INITIAL TARGET MARKET

Using the DMT profiles of high discretionary spend, they are as follows:

- **Geoff** - discerning retiree after unique food and wine experiences
- **Heather** – urban socialite after new experiences
- **Alex** – busy introvert that needs a break and unique experience
- **Chelsea** – party, food and wine loving

Evaluate after year one then year two whether the events are reaching and engaging the initial target market. This will be integral the festivals sustainability. Constantly measure. If, what the festival presents and stands for appeals to a different market, then it may result in a shift of messaging and targeting.



## MARKETING CONTENT

Marketing content will rely on the established content of the festival and what is being offered through the festival. It will include:

- Profiling participating providers
- Championing the values of the festival
- Encouraging consumers to know where their produce comes from
- Telling the story of Festival
- Promoting the vision and mission of the festival
- Outlining the specific experiences consumers can buy tickets for
- Encourage subscription to build database.

## DATA COLLECTION

The importance of data collection is paramount in everything the festival does as it is starting from a greenfields standpoint. The festival can set itself up for success to ensure it collects quantifiable data every step of the way. It will give the festival the tools to understand their target market, determine what works and what doesn't from a programmed content perspective and measure engagement and visitation to the area. It is also integral for future funding as grants are aligned directly with economic impact benefits as well as participation profiles.

**Data collection and analysis should be undertaken in the following areas:**

- Measure visitation to the region
- Work with accommodation providers for figures
- Understand demographics attracted to the festival
- Obtain feedback from programmed content. What did attendees like and dislike?
- Website traffic, social media follows, share and likes as well as analytics which breaks down demographics
- Overall ticket sales and attendance to events - how did visitors engage with the region
- Data through ticket platform – postcode and age
- Collect feedback from industry providers delivering the experiences
- Post festival survey.

## TICKETING & PRICING

A central ticketing platform has been researched with Trybooking being a recommendation. It is easy to use, reasonable fees, data collection, easy integration and live reporting. This central ticketing service can be seamlessly integrated with the GROUNDED website. It will provide stakeholder with clear visibility of:

- Ticket sales and revenue
- Fees and charges
- Ease of fund transfer to event providers
- Data collection and reportability
- Ease of use
- Integration with festival website
- Ability to edit, add or cancel events

Pricing of events, experiences and the picnic will need to commensurate with market forces as well as demand. The following factors will play into effective ticket pricing:

- Rareness of uniqueness of the event being held
- The initial perceived demand for the event / experience
- Delivery of event – to ensure costs are being covered. Including time and staff wages. A long lunch compared to a farm tour will have very different costs to consider
- Opportunity for other revenue source aligning with event – extra produce sales for example
- The capacity of the attendees

# MARKETING TIMELINE - INDICATIVE

	2024																2025																																																															
	June				July				August				September				October				November				December				January				February				March																																											
Marketing Timeline	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4																																				
<b>Website / Brand Development</b>																																																																																
Establish brand and style guide for GROUNDED																																																																																
Wire frames of website																																																																																
Final website design and development																																																																																
Finalise website content																																																																																
Domain and hosting groundedfestival.com.au or grounded.net.au																																																																																
Launch website and festival																																																																																
<b>Social Media</b>																																																																																
Using DMP established Social media profile																																																																																
Alter new handles @groundedfestival																																																																																
New messaging and content plan																																																																																
Aim for a weekly post																																																																																
Increase posts to twice per week																																																																																
Follow regional industry and stakeholders																																																																																
Profile festival content																																																																																
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>																																																																																
Liaise with industry - engage, educate and distribute festival info																																																																																
Develop digital marketing packs including logo & style guide																																																																																
Connect via social media, encourage industry to promote festival																																																																																
Send industry updates on festival via EDM																																																																																
Report back to industry on festival data and metrics																																																																																
<b>EDM &amp; Comms</b>																																																																																
Establish EDM design and style																																																																																
Develop copy style and finalise first EDM																																																																																
EDM festival launch																																																																																
EDM schedule																																																																																
Establish database from DMP build through website subscription																																																																																
<b>PR</b>																																																																																
Work with DMT to establish media releases for launch																																																																																
Define release data base																																																																																
Send launch media releases Year one																																																																																
Send releases for Year two																																																																																
<b>Advertising</b>																																																																																
Work with DMT on advertising in DMT magazine																																																																																
September Daylesford Macedon Life Magazine																																																																																
March Daylesford Macedon Life Magazine																																																																																
Research other advertising or promotion opportunities																																																																																

# FUNDING MODEL



A proposal should be developed to consider inclusions such as:

- Event overview and key messages
  - Key details of the opportunity
  - Comprehensive list of benefits, including how they relate to the business you are approaching
  - Timeline, including important deadlines
  - Credentials of the event and key subcontractors (curation team, publicist, event producer etc)
  - Process for consideration
  - Notification period and term options
- Consider creative ideas as to how this sponsorship can connect with our target markets

Before meeting a potential partner, the festival will need to consider these points:

- Sponsors are moving away from wanting to just sponsor monetarily or the same, they want to sponsor something unique that differentiates them from the pack
- Be discriminate
- Be careful to target sponsors that could truly benefit from a partnership
- Consider creative ideas as to how this sponsorship can connect with our target markets
- Overview of your marketing plan, including what is and is not confirmed
- The partners business objectives ie. awareness, leads, or opportunity
- What metrics matter most to the sponsor and what does success look like?

Reporting on ROI is imperative. Data must be captured across event attendance, social media and metrics that help tease out the value proposition. Include social media mentions or impressions, app downloads and activations, click-through on the sponsor's logo or banner on the event website or app. Email marketing analytics such as open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates must commence being tracked to ensure that quantifiable data can be provided by return.

## *IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION*

In-kind support and contribution will be vital for the festival to launch. With limited funding opportunities for year one the festival will need to rely on the in-kind support of:

- Daylesford Macedon Tourism – through marketing services, website development and branding and production. Leverage from DMP social media and database
- Industry – collaborating industry businesses to offer marketing assistance and support for festival
- Events Company – with view to invest in the future of the festival and its potential
- Councils – through promotion and marketing of festival and possible funding (see below)



## GRANT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Grant opportunities to assist the festival in the first three years of operation may be achievable based on agreed direction, location and the ability to prove the festival concept aligns with funding guidelines.

It is important to note that funding from either Macedon Ranges or Hepburn Shire Councils will depend on the location of the festival. The initial Curated programmed events do not qualify for funding from either council. The Paddock-to-Picnic can be eligible. However, both councils cannot financially support an event that is not held in its jurisdiction. There is a possibility that both councils could enter into an agreement with each other in terms of financial and in-kind support of the festival. This would depend on long term planning of picnic locations. We have included possible in-kind opportunities as this will be integral to ensure the viability and launch of GROUNDED.

### Hepburn Shire Council

Description	Criteria	Support
Regional Event funding	<p>New or established event for medium to large scale, that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract more than 2,500 attendees</li> <li>• Have the capacity to attract intrastate visitation</li> <li>• Have a minimum of one community group participating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding: \$2,500 &gt; \$5,000</li> <li>• Funding tied to event growth</li> <li>• One to three year funding agreement</li> <li>• Max in-kind council support of \$5,000</li> </ul>
Notes on funding opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding can only be possible if the Paddock-to-Picnic event targets more than 2,500 pax</li> <li>• With no other guaranteed funding and the necessity to start small and scale, this funding would be possible in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the picnic and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the festival – as this strategy stands.</li> <li>• This funding will only support an event held in the Council's jurisdiction</li> <li>• This funding can only be applied for by the Events Company operating GROUNDED</li> </ul>	

### Macedon ranges Shire Council

Description	Criteria	Support
Events & Festivals Grant – Tier 2	<p>New, emerging or established events and festivals of a medium to large scale that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the capacity to attract intrastate visitation</li> <li>• Are of regional significance</li> <li>• Have a broader reach and attract a high community attendance</li> <li>• Attract visitors outside the township where is being held</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-year support of up to \$6,000</li> <li>• Triennial support if strategy demonstrates an increase in visitation:</li> <li>• Year one – up to \$10k</li> <li>• Year two – up to \$8k</li> <li>• Year three – up to \$6k</li> </ul>
Notes on funding opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim for one year of funding in second year of picnic with a view to change location to the MRSC region</li> <li>• Possibility for year one of picnic based on projected participation level and size</li> <li>• This funding will only support an event held in the Council's jurisdiction</li> <li>• This funding can only be applied for by the Events Company operating GROUNDED</li> </ul>	

**Visit Victoria**

**Description**

Regional events fund – Tier 2, event growth and development

**Criteria**

- Events that demonstrate plans to achieve economic impact
- Medium to large scale events
- Capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation
- Events of national, state or regional significance

**Support**

- Event development
- Feasibility planning
- Operational support capped at 50% of total funding requested
- Event resource support, capped at 25% of total funding request

Up to \$500k

Regional events fund – Tier 2, event industry support

- Events that have the capacity to attract intrastate and interstate visitation
- Are of state and regional significance
- Investment will generate an audience commensurate with funding request

- Offset costs of marketing to an intrastate audience
- Strategies to increase event capacity
- Operational support capped at 50% of total funding requested
- Event resource support, capped at 25% of total funding request

Up to \$50k

Notes on funding opportunity

- GROUNDED is not yet an existing or proven festival
- It will need to show proof of concept to be eligible for Tier 2 funding
- The event company will need to apply for funding
- Positioning festival in February (the lowest visitation month) is favourable
- Tier 3 may be a possibility based on size of event and current investment

# **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

## *ECONOMIC IMPACT*

Development of a model for economic contribution that assesses the economic value of the festival, and the economic contribution of the event if the strategy is implemented as recommended. This will be an untested festival and so data collection will be key in the first year of operation.

As mentioned in the marketing strategy, measuring both the outputs and outcomes of the festival is imperative. This includes gathering feedback from attendees and analysing the results and key findings while considering how the event has met agreed goals, delivered key messages, been successfully implemented and ultimately delivered sound ROI.

As the marketing approach is consistently delivered across the festival team, the curators and its partners, registration of attendees at events increases, subsequently the opportunity to collect data and understand the audiences' economic impact will expand. It is imperative for marketing and awareness to be a collective focus, directing the current online/offline audience to one source of information during and surrounding the festival in order to capture and build the community. Unified marketing will enhance audience analysis and provide information such as location of visitation, demographic, daily spend, interests and enable connection to a relevant audience and also provide opportunity for direct data collection.

The following tools should be adopted. All these measurements will provide a good indication from 'year one' of data collection.

- Attendance numbers for ticketed events
- Sales figures of vendors – gauge increase/decrease from same time in previous year
- Survey business owners – local and regional
- Work with DMT on tools to determine other measurement tools
- Measure social media increase and engagement
- Revenue increase for local businesses.website
- Liaise with accommodation booking agencies in the area to determine occupancy levels
- Search on booking sites to determine availability for the weekend
- Analyse feedback survey from attendees who sign up to EDMs
- Accommodation occupancy levels
- Revenue increase for local businesses

<i>Application of Measurement</i>	<i>Method of Measurement</i>	<i>Data outcome / ROI</i>
Building community through industry	Encourage membership sign up to be part of festival. Industry mailing list	Develop an industry community to grow past year one. Updating community and reporting back on festival data and messaging. Educate industry for future years, encourage involvement and awareness
Visitation	Traffic counters if needed Visitation Event attendance Information centre	Increase in visitation compared to previous time of year for year one as a base. Data for potential future funding in the event's establishment years
Event revenue / profit	Accurate budget reporting	Event sustainability and establish expense targets in advance
Brand awareness	Social media outcomes Publicity outcomes	Marketing support and consistency will ensure maximum exposure
Database	Encourage consumers to sign up to festival Collect minimum data of age, gender, location Measure against festival attendance	Proof of target market for future years
Publicity	Publicity outcomes report	Local, intrastate and national exposure
Event Feedback	Survey attendees on satisfaction of events etc Survey industry on operation, attendance and improvements for future years	Outcomes of questions relating to spend, event satisfaction, overall experience, visitation

## **FORECASTING ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Economic impact can only assumed at this stage. Determining the economic impact of GROUNDED will involve analysing how the event affects the economy of the Daylesford Macedon Tourism region. Taking into account the recommendation to host GROUNDED during the low season of February and that it has no base data to work from, much of the economic impact can only be determined post event using the above metrics and applying the principles / steps below:

### **Define the Scope:**

The first step is to define the scope of the analysis, which includes identifying the boundaries of the region, the time frame of the analysis, and the type of event being analysed. Clearly this will be the Daylesford Macedon Tourism region.

### **Identify the Direct Spending:**

This includes the money spent on ticketed events, food and drink, produce related to events, merchandise, and other goods and services related Grounded. This information can often be obtained from the providers of the events / experiences.

Other factors that may impact the economic impact of the event include the number of attendees, the distance travelled by attendees, the duration of the event, and the type of event. For example, a multi-day festival may have a greater economic impact than a one-day event.

Indirect spending is the money spent by event attendees on goods and services in the region outside of the event. For example, attendees will stay in accommodation, eat at local restaurants, and shop at local shops. Indirect spending can be estimated using data from surveys of attendees and local businesses.

### **Calculate the Multiplier Effect:**

The multiplier effect is the additional economic activity generated by the direct and indirect spending. This includes the money spent by local businesses to purchase supplies and pay employees, as well as the spending by employees and suppliers in the region. The multiplier effect can be estimated using input-output models or other economic impact analysis tools.

### **Other Factors:**

Other factors that may impact the economic impact of the event include the number of attendees, the distance traveled by attendees, the duration of the event, and the type of event. For example, a multi-day festival may have a greater economic impact than a one-day event.

### **Interpret the Results:**

Once the economic impact analysis is completed, the results can be interpreted to determine the overall economic impact of the event. This includes the total economic output, the number of jobs created, and the tax revenue generated by the event. These results can be used to inform decisions about future events and to justify funding, and council support in event infrastructure and promotion.



## Daylesford and Macedon Ranges

Tourism Economic Contribution	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	YoY change (2020-21) (%)	2 year change (2019-21) (%)
Visitors, Nights and Expenditure	YE Sep 2017	YE Sep 2018	YE Sep 2019	YE Sep 2020	YE Sep 2021	YE Sep 2022	YoY change (YE Sep 2021-22) (%)	3 year change (YE Sep 2019-22) (%)
Domestic								
Daytrip visitors (000's)	1,828	2,093	2,539	1,876	1,614	2,118	31%	-17%
Overnight visitors (000's)	643	800	930	401	661	889	34%	-4%
Total domestic visitors (000's)	2,471	2,892	3,469	2,277	2,275	3,007	32%	-13%
Visitor nights (000's)	1,462	1,951	1,882	823	1,441	1,924	34%	2%
Length of stay (nights)	2.3	2.4	2	2.1	2.2	2.2		
Daytrip Expenditure (\$m)	147	163	206	137	141	234	65%	14%
Daytrip spend per trip	80	78	81	73	88	110		
Domestic Overnight Expenditure (\$m)	250	319	309	165	297	423	43%	37%
Domestic Overnight Spend per Visitor (\$)	389	399	333	411	449	476		
Domestic Overnight Spend per Night (\$)	171	164	164	201	206	220		
Total Domestic Expenditure (\$m)	397	482	515	302	438	657	50%	28%

\*DMT visitation and spend data

**Based on 2022 (post pandemic) visitation and spending:**

- Average overnight length of stay per visitor – 2.2 nights
- Average overnight spend **per visitor** - \$476

Assumption is made that Year One would attract 200 visitors into the region above and beyond standard visitation for October 2024 would inject an additional \$95,200 of direct spending in the first year of GROUNDED.

10 events / experiences

- Aiming that each visitor to the region would attend an average of 2.5 events
- Capacity of each event – average of 50pax = 500 pax
- 200 visitors into the region

Assumption is made that Year One would attract 200 visitors into the region above and beyond standard visitation for October, 2024 would inject an additional \$95,200 of direct spending in the first year of GROUNDED.

Assumption is made that Year Two would attract 400 visitors into the region above and beyond standard visitation for February 2025 would inject an additional \$190,400 of direct spending in the second year of GROUNDED. Taking a prudent stance on the forecast, these visitors will also attend picnic along with local attendees.

20 events / experiences

\*Figures are speculative

- Capacity of each event – average of 50pax = 1000 pax
- 400 visitors into the region

Assumption is made that Year Two would attract 400 visitors into the region above and beyond standard visitation for February, 2025 would inject an additional \$190,400 of direct spending in the first 2 years of GROUNDED. Being prudent these visitors will also attend picnic along with local attendees.

\*figures are speculative

# **OH&S RISK MITIGATION**

## *OH&S RISK MITIGATION*

An OH&S (Occupational Health and Safety) risk mitigation plan is an important aspect of event planning. It helps to identify potential hazards and risks that could harm attendees, staff, or the public, and outlines measures to mitigate those risks. It is important that all events comply with local council regulations, be it HSC or MRSC. Here is a standard sample OH&S risk mitigation plan to use as a starting point:

### **Identify Hazards:**

The first step is to identify hazards associated with the event. Hazards may include physical hazards, such as slips, trips, and falls, chemical hazards, farm machinery, unstable ground or exposure to infectious diseases.

### **Assess Risks:**

Once hazards are identified, the next step is to assess the risks associated with each hazard. This involves considering the likelihood and severity of harm that could result from each hazard. Risks can be assessed using risk assessment tools or checklists.

### **Determine Control Measures:**

Control measures are measures that can be put in place to reduce the likelihood or severity of harm associated with a hazard. Control measures may include engineering controls, such as installing barriers or ventilation systems, administrative controls, such as developing policies and procedures, or personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves or masks.

### **Develop an Emergency Response Plan:**

An emergency response plan outlines the procedures to follow in case of an emergency, such as a fire or medical emergency. This plan should include procedures for evacuating the venue, contacting emergency services, and providing first aid.

### **Communicate the Plan:**

The OH&S risk mitigation plan should be communicated to all event staff and volunteers to ensure they are aware of the hazards and control measures in place. Training should be provided to staff and volunteers on how to implement the plan in case of an emergency.

### **Review and Update the Plan:**

The OH&S risk mitigation plan should be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it remains effective. This may include updating procedures or control measures based on feedback or changes to the event.

### **Consult with Professionals:**

It is important to consult with OH&S professionals or experts to ensure the plan is comprehensive and effective. This may include seeking advice from local health authorities or engaging a safety consultant.

By following these steps, event organizers can develop an OH&S risk mitigation plan that helps to ensure the safety and well-being of all attendees, staff, and the public.

# **ACTION PLAN**

## ACTION PLAN

The actions within the Action Plan align to the overarching goals to establish GROUNDED, which is currently an unproven festival with little funding. Goals are aimed to be SMARTER. **Specific** and able to be **Measured, Acceptable** to those working to achieve the goals, **Realistic, Timely, Extending** capabilities and **Rewarding**. The Action Plan is designed to start small and scale. It is important to note that the first two years are closely aligned being four months apart and so for the purpose of this strategy we are considering the first two festivals as one year. Much of the work for Year One (October 2024) will flow into Year Two (February 2025), establishing the festival and building its profile over a four month period. The following Action Plan assumes an event company or contractor has been engaged to own the festival and deliver it.

<b>Year 1 - 2024</b> <b>LAUNCH</b>	<b>Year 2 - 2025</b> <b>ESTABLISH</b>	<b>Year 3 - 2026</b> <b>GROW</b>
Event structure Recruit events company/contractor Brand development Advisory group established Curated programming Industry relationship development Data collection Establish and build database Measure	Curated programming Centrepiece event - small scale at private venues Partnership development Funding opportunities for future Measure and analyse	Analyse, reset and plan Growth in programming Partnership / sponsorship focus Commonwealth Games - leverage opportunity Symposium development Sustainability



## **ACTION PLAN GOAL**

1. Establish event profile, vision, mission, brand and unique selling proposition in consultation with DMT
2. Connect and consult with industry to develop the curated content for year one and year two. Confirming Advisory Group to assist in the festival's direction and content. Establish content criteria and guidelines
3. Implement data collection methodology across the board to ensure as much Information is captured as possible.
4. Maximise exposure by delivering a diligent and coordinated marketing, publicity and communications plan once content has been established for Year One – launching GROUNDED to media and consumers.
5. Optimise budget through planning, partnerships and strategy to ensure long-term sustainability, maximises visitation and opportunities for growth within the region
6. Lead coordination and instil trust and confidence across all collaborators to successfully develop into Year Three

## **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)**

1. Clear visibility and establishment of GROUNDED through website and social media presence ready to go-to-market
2. Highly engaged and supportive industry in place to deliver the content of the festival.
3. Data will ensure this green-fields festival can measure success, operations, attendee information and industry / consumer satisfaction and assist in future funding applications.
4. Coordinated brand messaging online and offline to build awareness of festival offering and opportunities to experience DMT region as a destination. Growth through all social channels, reach and media interest will therefore increase.
5. Response to the proposal and uptake of partnership accepted, with continuation of partnership in Year 2 by at least one major / event partners approached in year one. Interest from new businesses in supporting the festival and a higher retention and growth rate of partners.
6. Internal review of all key collaborators which shows an understanding of roles and achievements on an annual basis. Encourage positive relationships.

## *ACTION PLAN - Year One + Two*

### **LAUNCH - TEST - MEASURE - LEARN - ADJUST - ESTABLISH**

This Action Plan assumes that the launch and delivery of the first GROUNDED festival will occur the third week of October 2024. This will include establishment and launch of the festival, followed by a small 10 event program of highly curated experiences. Considered and effective delivery followed by careful analysis of customer and industry feedback, data collection, attendance and delivery, and target market data. All with a view of launching the February 2025 program in November 2024. Year one would be considered the soft launch of GROUNDED. Giving consumers and industry a taste of the larger February festival while testing its resonance, appeal and delivery. For the purposes of this Action Plan we are considering 2024 as Year one and 2025 as Year two.

### *YEAR ONE - OCTOBER 2024*

Timing – October 25 to 28, 2024

#### **LAUNCH GROUNDED**

Year one should be focused on setting the tone for what the **GROUNDED** festival is. Working with local business and the steering committee to build the strength of the USP by identifying some key experiences that take people beyond the farm gate.

##### *Farm gate experiences*

- High end
- Intimate
- Hands on
- Behind the scenes
- Money can't buy

##### Content:

- Driven by industry
- As mentioned in content earlier in this document
- Cleverly, collaborative and unique to the region and the industry

The strategy involves Year Two being an extension of year one and held four months later in February 2025. After establishing the festival's profile and vision, GROUNDED will aim to have an expanded program of events including the centrepiece Paddock-to-Picnic.

## YEAR TWO - FEBRUARY 2025

Timing – February 21 to 24, 2025

### ESTABLISH GROUNDED

- Continue to strengthen movement and brand year round
- Increase industry driven content
- Develop externally operated Paddock-to-Picnic
- Data measurement and reporting

Festival Program - aim for 20 experiences to be held over 4 days

Paddock-to-Picnic – start small – Saturday February 22, 2025

- With no funding, our recommendation would be to collaborate with private venues to deliver a smaller more intimate picnic
- Entry price includes picnic
- Option to purchase other produce from participating producers who set up a stall

*Key: EC – Event Company, AG – Advisory Group, DMT – Daylesford Macedon Tourism, IN - Industry*

### EVENT MANAGEMENT

Focus	Action	Outcome	Assigned	Year
Advisory Group (AG)	Establish advisory group from regional industry stakeholders	Accountable for the steering of content of the festival	DMT	2023
Recruit Event Company/Contractor (EC)	Seek to appoint an events company or contractor to own and develop the festival	EC to work with AG to deliver the event primarily in the first three years	AG	2023
Establish event structure	Based on this strategy document develop structure of the first year	Establish possible October 2024 timing to launch GROUNDED with a small, curated program of unique experiences	EC	2023
Industry liaison	Establish an industry database and communication strategy	Launch grounded to industry	EC	2023
Ticketing platform	Establish ticketing platform – TryBooking. Clear communication regarding fees and payouts to the providers of the event. Along with the administration fee charged by the EC - proposed 10%	Centralised ticketing platform that will collect all payments and data	EC	July 2024

OH & S standards	Work with councils to ensure criteria and guidelines of events are in line with local government laws	Ensure all providers of the events are educated and aware of guidelines and are compliant	EC	July 2024
Event Delivery	10 highly curated events delivered by industry providers	Effective liaison and communication with industry ensuring OH&S compliant	EC IN	October 2024
Survey feedback	Survey all attendees and industry providers of the events. Automate to be sent after event is held	A clear understanding the event delivery and success on both industry provider and attendee.	EC	October 2024
Measurement	Establish key metrics for collection. These include ticket sales, revenue, feedback	Measure and adjust programming based on sales, feedback and metrics collected	EC	November 2024
Reporting	Report back to industry, DMT and AG	Set the standard for 2025 and the need to adjust operations for 2025	EC	November 2024
Establish timelines for 2025 event	As the 2025 event is four months after the first GROUNDED. Have milestones, timelines and operation scheduled set for program and the Picnic	Planning the Producers Picnic industry involvement, location and size established.	EC	Early November 2024
Event Delivery	20 highly curated events delivered by industry providers	Effective liaison and communication with industry ensuring OH&S compliant	EC IN	February 2025
Event Delivery	Paddock-to-Picnic delivery in collaboration with industry partners and private venues	Coordinated delivery of picnic event	EC IN	February 2025
Reporting	Report back to industry, DMT and AG	Reporting to enable clear outcomes from Year two of festival	EC	November 2024

## PROGRAMMING

Focus	Action	Outcome	Assigned	Year
Establish programming criteria	Finalise guidelines for the programming content of the festival. Start the conversations with industry to curate experiences	Clear and concise messaging around the festival's first year of programming	EC with AG	2023
Curated content development #1	Establish 10 key curated experience ideas for the first year through industry consultation and guidance from the AG.	Work with industry to establish the providers of these experiences. Ensuring all guidelines are met.	EC IN	April to June 2024
Curated content development #2	Continue industry engagement with another 20 key curated experiences for GROUNDED February 2025	Work with industry to establish the providers of these experiences. Ensuring all guidelines are met.	EC IN	ongoing

Launch scheduled program for 2024	Launch through marketing channels. Implement marketing launch strategy	Successful awareness campaign and ticket sales. Ongoing measurement of sales and communication with industry	DMT and EC	July 2024
Scope Paddock-to-Picnic event	Scope location, size, possible council funding, Define budget.	Clear event plan for Paddock-to-Picnic. Location or locations if it were to collaborate with private venues like winery compliant with council regulations of visitors	EC	September / October 2024
Scheduled events	Third week of October 25 to 28 – industry deliver events	Programmed events	IN EC	October 2024
Further programming planning	Through the above process of procuring the content establish a time frame for February 2025 for 20 further experiences.	Curate the scheduled program of events for February 2025. Keeping in mind outcomes from 2024 programming and adjust 2025 where necessary (based on feedback and data)	EC and AG	November 2024
Launch scheduled programme for Feb 2025	Launch through marketing channels and website. Open ticketing prior to Christmas.	Coming off the back of the soft launch, maximise awareness and exposure while ensuring increased ticket sales for the Christmas gift giving season	EC and DMT	December 2024
Scheduled events	February 21 to 25. Industry deliver curated experiences	Programmed events	IN EC	October 2024
Deliver first Paddock-to-Picnic	February 22 delivery	Paddock-to-Picnic	IN, EC	February 2025

## MARKETING

Focus	Action	Outcome	Assigned	Year
Establish brand and clear messaging	Based on this document develop the brand alongside the website	Logo, messaging and brand of GROUNDED	EC and DMT	December 2023
Develop website	Develop plan and wireframes to build out a simple website which will represent the festival	A clear and concise website which will be the central portal of the festival and host information, ticketing and be a resource for industry and consumers	EC and DMT	June 2024
Establish social media presence	Alter the DMP handles to @groundedfestival on Instagram and Facebook	Communicate with current followers what will be happening in the future as the profile name is altered	EC	July 2024
Develop a social media schedule	Start posting pre-launch messaging related to GROUNDED	Work from DMP's established following to build messaging and create interest around GROUNDED	EC	July 2024
Launch GROUNDED to industry	Promote directly with industry via DMT's website with clear messaging about GROUNDED and how they can get involved	Build on database, align industry with festival and start building interest around programmed content	EC and DMT	July 2024
Launch GROUNDED to consumers and media at large	Promote grounded to database through EDM, softly launch website and drive traffic to site. Using established DMP and DMT database	Create the buzz of what GROUNDED will be, its mission and vision	EC and DMT	July 2024

Build database	Encourage consumers and industry to join database for updates	Continue with ongoing EDMs	EC	Ongoing
Launch program of events for the soft launch Oct 2024 to data base	Target DMT and DMP (now GROUNDED website)	Start selling tickets	EC and DMT	August 2024
Launch GROUNDED to media	Using DMT resources send releases out to media launching GROUNDED and its soft October programming	Develop profile of festival, increase awareness and drive traffic to website	EC and DMT	August 2024
Advertise in Daylesford Macedon Tourism magazine	Work with DMT to profile festival	Drive traffic to website and encourage sign up to database and ticket sales	DMT	Time appropriate publication date
Stories of GROUNDED	Tell the stories of the festival to promote GROUNDED- 2025. Through social media and press, highlight the experiences of the first GROUNDED.	Reporting back to consumers through EDMs and social media the highlights of the first GROUNDED. Build awareness and strengthen brand	EC	November / December 2024
Launch GROUNDED 2025	Through social media, website and press launch the GROUNDED 2025 program of events	Start selling tickets – capitalise on the Christmas gift giving season. Enough time for people to book accommodation	EC and DMT	Early December 2024

## FINANCIAL

Focus	Action	Outcome	Assigned	Year
Operating budget for year one	Establish Year One budget. Based on agreed targets of EC. Scope funding opportunities for 2025.	Clear budget for EC to work from. Establish in-kind support from DMT, if available	EC	2023
Funding applications for year two - 2025	Funding application to Council for the Paddock to Picnic event. Funding support from Visit Vic, possibly tier 3.	Depending on location of the picnic, funding from that local council could be achieved to assist in its delivery in year 1.	EC	Start July 2024
Partnership opportunities	Using the data from the soft launch program, develop partnership opportunities for the 2025 festival	Sponsorship packages to encourage corporate partnerships of the festival	EC	October 2024
Evaluate budget for 2025	This will be based on industry participation and size of Paddock-to-Picnic event	Reset budget	EC	November 2024
Establish funding opportunities for 2026	Dependent on success of last application. Using proven concept of '24 and '25 festivals and data.	Possible funding to establish scope and growth of 2026	EC	March to June 2025



## *ACTION PLAN - Year 3*

The Action plan for 2026 can only be established once 2024 and 2025 events have been executed. Following is a guideline of what the festival will be aiming for. The launch of the symposium will be based on the success of year 1 and year 2 along with the industry support garnered in those years.

### *YEAR 3 - FEBRUARY 2026*

Timing – February 20 to 23, 2026

#### **GROW GROUNDED**

- Aim for 30 experiences to be held over 4 days
- Paddock-to-picnic
  - Direction will need to be determined based on 2025 data and success
  - Expand to two picnics over two days in both council regions or stick to one large picnic
  - Other smaller picnics can be promoted on private properties (like wineries) lending to a diverse range of options for consumers
  - Leverage from the timing of the **Commonwealth Games** to be held through the region between March 17 and 29
  - The timing of a large-scale picnic should piggyback before or after the Commonwealth Games. Taking advantage of the increased tourism into the region.

Industry – Gastronomy Tourism Symposium development – February 18 & 19, 2026

- Advisory Group to guide content, keynote speakers, theme and participants
- Location within DMT region
- Content – both onsite of conference and experiential off site content
- Note: Symposium could be moved into 2027 based on industry support and festival success.

## *CONCLUSION*

**GROUNDED** festival has the potential to be one of the state's most significant regional events. This strategy outlines the opportunity to start small and scale with the assistance of industry, the drive of an expert advisory group and the skills and direction of the right events company. The event's mission and vision stretch beyond the festival and has year-round appeal for the region's produce and tourism appeal. The region's farming, growing, food production and hospitality will benefit. Once the festival has been tested, proves its concept, collects data and it garners stronger support from industry, council, government, sponsors and stakeholders it will then pave the way for growth in a slow sustainable manner.

**THANK YOU**

**YONDER.**