Destination Rutherglen
Marketing Strategy and Action Plan
2017-2018
Introduction

Rutherglen needs a united focus and understanding of its needs so all our local businesses can work towards a common message for tourism.

The following plan has been developed based on research and data provided by Tourism North East, Indigo Shire Council and Winemakers of Rutherglen. This means our plan is informed by fact, and we can work towards a prosperous tourism future with strong data and focus.
Contents

• Who are we? What do we want?
• Where are we? Who else is around? (Environment and competition)
• The ideal visitor (our Audience)
• Taking Action! (Strategy)
Who are we?
What do we want?
Our Goals

• To attract more visitors to Rutherglen
• To increase spend in Rutherglen
• To increase awareness of Rutherglen as a destination of choice within our chosen target market

We want Rutherglen to be known as:
The ideal regional Victorian destination for gourmet food and produce experiences, unique wines, exploring bucolic Australiana scenery and rich history and heritage.

*Bucolic = relating to the pleasant aspects of the countryside and country life.*
## What is Rutherglen best at?

How do we rank our attributes?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Benefit (Functional or Emotional)</th>
<th>USP*</th>
<th>#</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internationally renowned wines (Durif, Muscat, etc.), produce (olives, lamb etc.)</td>
<td>Benchmark in produce and wine, opportunity to discover and source the finest directly at the heart of a gourmet region. Goes in partnership with the wine, authenticity and sense of terroir.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of romantic escapade</td>
<td>An escape away from the clichés and the crowd, a place where you have time to discover and (re) connect with people that matter to you.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate individuals who are the face of our great regional town</td>
<td>Feel welcomed and special. Give the region credibility as a genuine gourmet destination with story and history.</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endorsed and acclaimed (by customers) wineries, restaurants, accommodation and producers</td>
<td>Genuine and authentic region with a something for everyone (all levels of income and expectation)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great regional history and heritage dating back 150 years and 7 generations</td>
<td>Feel special and enjoy a sense of discovery and uniqueness</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great opportunity to explore the region on a bike</td>
<td>A different experience, I don’t have to be a sporty to enjoy the scenery and local produce / Explore and indulge at your own pace</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray River</td>
<td>Picturesque, give a sea side feeling to a country destination, geographic pin point, symbolic for fertile soil (and Outdoor activities)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central location makes it the perfect base to explore the North east.</td>
<td>Rutherglen is at the heart of some of the best places in the North east (Beechworth, Bright, Wangaratta, King Valley, Yarrawonga etc.)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A picture-perfect gold-rush main street **</td>
<td>Definite feel of a country town, city escape</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A family friendly activities</td>
<td>There is a bit of everything for everyone.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the attributes above are important to the Rutherglen region, and help to complete the picture of an attractive and inspiring destination. However, we need to prioritise and focus on a few key assets to increase visitation. The table above highlights the attributes that truly set us apart as a region and thus will drive visitation.

* A unique selling proposition (USP) refers to the unique benefit exhibited by a company, service, product or brand that enables it to stand out from competitors.

** We believe the main street will become a strong asset once the revitalisation project is completed.
**What is Brand Rutherglen?**

How do we sum up brand Rutherglen?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE PROPOSITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Who want</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is a</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>That</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Which</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Because only**

Rutherglen has:
- Internationally renowned produce: wines (Durif, Muscat, etc.), olives, lamb etc.
- A sense of romantic escapade
- Passionate and genuine individuals who are the face of our great regional town
- Endorsed and acclaimed *(by customers)* wineries, restaurants, accommodation and producers
- Gives you an opportunity to spend time with the people you cherish
- Scenic and peaceful rural landscape mixing perfect growing land and natural beauty
- Great regional history and heritage dating back 150 years and 6 generations
- Is at the source of the gourmet journey of the Murray river
Where are we? Who else is around?
Our Environment

➢ The Australian Tourism Industry is made of several layers, interrelated but with their own specific focus. Destination Rutherglen is Destination focus organisation, sharing that space with ISC.
Different groups are busy promoting the region at different scales and to different audiences.

We need to make sure we align our strategy with the organisations surrounding DR, while filling the gaps in this cluttered environment.

We need to develop a strategy that resonate with the pillars used by tourism organisations around us, while promoting a unique selling proposition that only Destination Rutherglen is able to fully own.
The Ideal Visitor.
Consumer Research

- Our target market is Lifestyle Leaders (LL): They are progressive, educated and professional individuals who **actively seek out new experiences**.
- Lifestyle Leaders have extensive social networks in which they are viewed as trusted advisors and influencers of others.
- Lifestyle Leaders are led to destinations with a strong gourmet food/local produce story. Food is a major driver for visitation in regional Victoria.
- Lifestyle Leaders want to find a **warm, friendly and honest** experience – they want to escape their stressful lives and be relaxed.
- Lifestyle Leaders are looking for premium food options, premium venues, premium accommodation – Lifestyle Leaders are not settling for less.
- Lifestyle Leaders are not restricted by age, the key dimension that differentiates this market is life stage:
  - **SINK DINK*** – Looking for stimulation
  - Young families – getting the most out of limited travel opportunities
  - Older families – balancing and meeting the interests of everybody
  - **Empty nester** – getting out and involved in life again
  - Retirees – immersing themselves in all of their interests and looking to explore

*SINK DINK and Empty Nester are the two stages that Rutherglen has the most to offer to, and should be our priority.
Where do Lifestyle Leaders get their information?

• Lifestyle Leaders are seriously educated consumers. They will research a destination thoroughly before committing.

• Lifestyle Leaders are using:
  • Destination websites
  • Facebook & Instagram
  • Broadsheet The urban list & lifestyle blogs
  • TripAdvisor
  • They’re on their mobile more than a desktop

• In the research, none mentioned specifically radio, TV or print media. However, Lifestyle Leaders will read and be influenced by material they pick-up at certain specific locations (Restaurant, festivals etc.).
Why Lifestyle Leaders?

- Lifestyle leaders make up 40% (the majority) of visitors to Victoria’s High Country
- They like to ‘lead’ and find new places to share with their friends – word of mouth is a valuable tool for them (and us!)
- They’re generally the decision makers in a group/family, so will be the ones picking the holiday location and activities
- Are happy to spend money on experiences – they’ll indulge with their partner or friends
What does that mean for Rutherglen?

Destination Rutherglen and Rutherglen businesses need to be telling their story in the places where the target market are researching. Therefore, our marketing strategy needs to be **strongly focused on digital channels** in order to connect with our desired visitors.
Taking Action!
Target Market and Focus

Our strategy aims to make Rutherglen more aspirational to our desired audience (Lifestyle Leaders) and reinvigorate the loyalty of our current market.

Content Pillars
What we talk about

- Heritage
- Families and Personalities
- Gourmet Produce, Food & Wine
- Nature and Scenery

Identity
How we talk about it, tone and message

- Romantic Escape
- Allow time to connect with the people you cherish
- Bucolic Australiana landscape
- Historical region
- Genuine personalities
- Unique food, wine and produce

Market Segments
Who we talk about

- Lifestyle Leaders living in Melbourne, Canberra and regional cities like Albury, Wodonga, Wagga, Griffith etc.
- Habituals, who visit Rutherglen regularly and have been for a long time.

Both our content pillars and target market align with the strategies of Tourism North East, Indigo Shire Council, and Winemakers of Rutherglen helping us to work collaboratively and achieve our goals as a team, while cultivating our Unique Selling Proposition: Rutherglen is the ideal region to share time, make memories and reconnect with the people you cherish.
Winemakers of Rutherglen

Wine message:
Rutherglen wines are uniquely Australian, rich in heritage, versatile, brave and deliver a joyful sense of discovery. The wine and the associated imagery conveys a unique sense of place. Unique wines (Durif and Muscat) are generally presented in-situ, in a family context or at the table showing people having a great time, reconnecting with one another.

Destination Rutherglen

Visitor message:
Encapsulates Rutherglen’s ‘gift’ to visitors; it’s an emotive message speaking to busy, urban Lifestyle Leader audiences who crave timeout and reconnection opportunities. A visit to Rutherglen gives you the time and the space to reconnect with the person who means the most to you (while enjoying all that the Sun & Soil produces - wine and food).
### Marketing Activities Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Autumn</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism North East</strong></td>
<td>Ride High Country x3</td>
<td>Nature base and Cycling – (Water activities TBC)</td>
<td>High Country Harvest</td>
<td>Winter Cocooning (food and wine) Leverage Snow Victoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winemakers of Rutherglen</strong></td>
<td>Spring Swing</td>
<td>Tastes of Rutherglen Rutherglen in the City</td>
<td>Winery Walkabout Tastes of Two Regions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Destination Rutherglen</strong></td>
<td><strong>Campaign 1</strong></td>
<td>Tweed ride</td>
<td><strong>Campaign 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Targeted PR Activities / Social media and digital activities
- Participate in High Country Harvest
- Maintain Visit Victoria listing up to date Social media activities

- Destination Rutherglen is working all year long on the Rutherglen’s digital presence and PR projects.
- To maximise the returns on our spending we will also be developing two seasonal destination campaigns, in Spring and Winter.
Marketing Activities Plan

We will be developing two destination campaigns, in Spring and Winter because:

- We can use other organisations’ activities to our advantage and capitalise on existing campaigns.
- Rutherglen is actively participating and represented in High country Harvest (Autumn).
- Rutherglen has some great assets resonating with our pillars in Spring and Winter.
- Promoting visitation in Summer is ineffective as we would struggle to be heard in such a cluttered space.
Marketing Spend Split

**BUDGET**
- $5000 cash
- $5000 radio (in kind)

**Destination campaigns DR-WOR**
- $15,000 + $15,000 ($ for $ sponsorship)

**DR and WOR CAMPAIGNS**
- $30,000

**RADIO**
- $5000 (in kind)

**FACEBOOK**
- $2500

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**
- $2500

**Work with TNE and ISC to leverage larger marketing initiatives and budgets for a Spring and Winter campaign.**

**Seasonal radio activity promoting visitation focusing on events and our content pillars.**

**Seasonal activity around our content pillars driving off-season visitation.**

**Collaborating with TNE and ISC to attract media famil and journalists to the region, and explore opportunities around influencer.**
Working Together

Destination Rutherglen is in the very lucky situation to be able to work with larger organisations with far better resources and budgets to achieve common goals.

By collaborating with ISC, TNE and WOR we have the chance to make our money work a lot harder, and reach audiences we otherwise couldn’t afford to reach.

This is our chance to combine forces and deliver great return on investment to our members.

How Can Destination Rutherglen and its Members Get Involved?

Our marketing plan takes into account Tourism North East, Indigo Shire Council, Winemakers of Rutherglen and Visit Victoria detailed strategies and goals they hope to achieve for regional tourism marketing.

The next few pages highlight the major opportunities with both organisations to leverage their budgets and make sure Rutherglen gets involved in major projects and campaigns.
Visit Victoria Marketing Activities

- Visit Victoria’s Wander Victoria campaign is perfectly aligned with our strategy and we need to capitalise on their activities. Message: *Regional Victoria is the ideal place for an easy, short break in nature. It allows you time to indulge your passions – to feel relaxed, enriched and invigorated.*

- Visit Victoria has worked with Regional Tourism Boards to develop opportunities for industry to participate in the Wander Victoria campaign. Here are some simple ways to get involved:
  
  ✓ List your business on visitvictoria.com
  
  ✓ **Develop a ‘deal’ or ‘offer’ on visitvictoria.com**
  
  ✓ Use #wandervictoria and your region’s hashtag when posting to social media
  
  ✓ Encourage your visitors to do the same
Tourism North East
Marketing Activities

- Leveraging **High Country Harvest** is of the highest importance to TNE. Harvest menu items, drinks, and major events are vital to involve Rutherglen in this huge marketing campaign.

- Food, wine and heritage will play key roles in TNE’s activity and their collaborations with Visit Victoria. By aligning with their content pillars, we have the opportunity to work with them and leverage larger marketing campaigns.

- **TNE Kickstarter $2500 funding** – marketing funds are available to businesses with collaborative tourism projects. Contact Tourism North East to find out more and how you can take advantage of this opportunity.

- **Ride High Country**: Two initiatives - the Cycle Friendly Business Program and the new Ride High Country Preferred Business Program - are now available to help business operators benefit from the current boom in cycle tourism.

- **Pedal to Produce** is a major project which will have continued focus over Spring and Summer. Having bike friendly businesses is essential.
Indigo Shire Council
Marketing Activities

• Indigo Shire are looking for product innovation in the tourism sector – new experiences and opportunities for visitors to Rutherglen. New tourism products will be strongly supported by media famil and incorporated in any above the line campaigns.

• ISC is also working on a marketing campaign focusing on Rutherglen and Beechworth attracting visitation from regional cities (Albury/Wodonga, Wagga, Shepparton, etc.) based around gourmet food, wine and craft beer. There is a huge opportunity for DR to work with ISC to leverage their spend for our own benefit.
Winemakers of Rutherglen
Marketing Activities

• Winemakers of Rutherglen have recently invested heavily in the development of a marketing strategy. This includes market research, action plan, brand activation and photography. This is a fantastic opportunity for DR to align our strategies with WoR to further increase awareness of Rutherglen as a stand-out destination at a national level.

• Winemakers have offered to support a targeted destination marketing campaign with a $ for $15k sponsorship.
Member Businesses
Action Items

Here are some of the things you can do to make the most of Destination Rutherglen’s resources and marketing plan:

• **Get social!** Use Facebook & Instagram to appeal to our target audience with great images and stories. Need help with ideas and how to do it? Contact jfrupp@rutherglenvic.com for a mentoring session!

• Become a **Ride High Country preferred business**

• Develop a ‘**deal’ or ‘offer’** on visitvictoria.com

• Run an event/menu for **High Country Harvest**, or find out how you can get more out of other major events (including Tastes of Rutherglen and Walkabout) by contacting jfrupp@rutherglenvic.com.

• Reply to comments from reviewers on **TripAdvisor**. It’s a great way to show you care and you want people to return. Need help? Get in touch with us!

• Send your nice **photos and exciting news** to jfrupp@rutherglenvic.com so we can consider it for social media and our weekly newsletter

• Follow Rutherglen on **Instagram** and **Facebook**!

• Use our **Hashtags**: #rutherglen #explorerutherglen #seehighcountry #wandervictoria
What’s next

• The marketing committee will get together on the 28th of April to discuss both campaign options and define the strategy to adopt for these campaigns.

• Destination Wedding have been identified as a potential avenue to explore as they increase visitation and spending by bringing larger groups. This can be done elegantly in wedding related publications, without having to fall in the trap of a white dress in Rutherglen imagery.

• One of the campaigns (spring?) will be more about Rutherglen as a destination, putting the accent on the “time to reconnect” concept and new message.

• Both campaigns will be mostly digital. This includes, potential advertising in lifestyle blogs etc. or use a more subtle approach (influencer, media famil etc.) and focus on (sharable) content.

• Members suggestions are welcome.