

Tourism & Destination Marketing Strategy

2010 - 2013

FOREWORD

Since the late 1990's AlburyCity has provided funding to external organisations to develop and grow tourism in Albury. During that time there have been varying degrees of performance and achievement of real outcomes, and a diverse range of opinions as to whether there has been an adequate return on Councils (the Community's) investment in tourism. If Tourism Research Australia data is any indication overnight tourism visitation to Albury grew up until 2005, since that time it has declined by almost 40%.

Destination Albury Wodonga has received support from AlburyCity since 2003. The current agreement between the two organisations expires on the 30 June 2010. At its meeting of the 21 December 2009, AlburyCity Council considered "Tourism Industry Support" and the establishment of a Visitor Information Centre (VIC) at the Albury Stationmaster's residence.

Council unanimously determined:

10D	Tourism Industry Support (10/80/0017)
	Cr van de Ven Moved, Cr Gould Seconded
	That Council:
	a. agree to the provision of funding to the Murray Regional Tourism Organisation, in accordance with the model proposed by Tourism NSW and Tourism Victoria in November 2009;
	b. consider the provision of Visitor Information Services in Albury;
	c. manage the attraction of conferences and events to Albury in consultation with industry;
	d. determine not to support DAW beyond June 2010;
	e. request the City of Wodonga to join with it in collaborative, strategic destination marketing for Albury Wodonga; and
	f. invite other Councils within the region to also collaborate in strategic destination marketing for the region.
	CARRIED

10E	Albury Visitor Information Centre (VIC) – Stationmaster’s Residence, Railway Precinct (PF 29459)
	Cr Duncan-Strelec Moved, Cr Sawyer Seconded
	That Council:
	a. assume the role of providing Visitor Information Services for the City;
	b. locate the Albury VIC within the Stationmaster’s Residence at the Albury Railway Station;
	c. reallocate \$450,000 from the 2009-10 budget to upgrade the residence and surrounds to make them fit for purpose as a VIC and develop the necessary marketing collateral to support VIC activities;
	d. acknowledges that VIC operations will incur recurrent operating costs of approximately \$200,000 net per annum;
	e. enter into a lease agreement with the ARTC for the Stationmaster’s Residence; and
	f. liaise with the City of Wodonga to determine their interest in having representation within the VIC.
	CARRIED

Accordingly this strategy has been developed to provide a clear direction and pathway for the growth and development of tourism in Albury, with the primary objective of increasing tourism visitation, length of stay and spend.

Tracey Squire

Team Leader Economic Development

19 February 2010

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Appendix 1 - Extract from Tourism Research Australia's December 2009 Forecast

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism plays an important role in the social, cultural and economic vibrancy of Albury.

The tourism marketplace is highly competitive, and becoming increasingly so as other regional centres strive to capture market share. National industry forecasts suggest domestic tourism growth will remain relatively flat over coming years and, according to Tourism Research Australia's National Visitor Survey, visitation to Albury has decreased almost 40% over the past five years.

While there are significant challenges facing the local tourism industry, AlburyCity recognises tourism's contribution to the City and the opportunity to grow that contribution and the flow on benefits that come from being a recognised tourism destination. Accordingly AlburyCity has committed to taking a leadership role in tourism and working with industry to increase tourism's contribution to the sustainable growth and development of Albury.

The Tourism and Destination Marketing Strategy provides a foundation for industry consultation and the development of strategic partnerships, and an action plan for the achievement of identified objectives. Once finalised it will drive the growth and development of tourism in Albury and Wodonga, and complement the marketing efforts of our regional neighbours.

While the primary objective is to effectively develop and promote Albury, there is strong recognition of the value and need to promote Albury as AlburyWodonga. Accordingly industry operators in both Albury and Wodonga will have the opportunity to buy in to marketing and promotional activities, and destination marketing partnership opportunities with Wodonga Council and other key stakeholders will be investigated.

The Mission

To increase tourism's contribution to the growth and development of Albury's economy and lifestyle offer.

The Vision

Albury is widely recognised as one of Australia's leading regional destinations for conference, business, sporting and recreational events. It is strongly supported by a range of high quality facilities and shopping, entertainment, cultural and nature based experiences. Its strategic location and proximity to the Murray River, snowfields and food and wine regions further strengthen its appeal.

Strategic Objectives / Anticipated Outcomes

- Effectively market Albury's tourism offer
- Improve the visitor experience
- Build the events market
- Under promise and over deliver
- Offer red carpet, not red tape (event organisers and product developers)
- Attract investment in tourism related product
- Improve tourism related community assets/product
- Increase industry participation in marketing activities through industry engagement
- Increase tourism visitation, spend and length of stay

Key Strategies

- Establish and operate a high quality Albury VIC
- Undertake a range of destination marketing activities targeting specific markets
- Establish, attract and facilitate sporting, recreational, cultural and other major events
- Attract major conference and business events
- Develop new and enhance existing tourism product and infrastructure
- Engage with industry and assist in its development
- Undertake research and analysis.

INTRODUCTION

AlburyCity is acutely aware that economic, social and environmental sustainability is critical to Albury's future.

While the economy of Albury is subject to ever changing local, national and international market forces, there are opportunities for AlburyCity to positively contribute to the continued growth and development of Albury as a major regional economy.

Tourism contributes an estimated \$420M to the Albury economy each year and provides a wide range of other direct and indirect benefits to the community. AlburyCity is concerned that this contribution has been diminishing over the past five years with overnight visitation decreasing by more than 40% (from 592,000 to 342,000).

In 2009 Council considered the broad range of issues and opportunities associated with the tourism industry's sustainable growth and development, as a result in December 2009 it determined to take a leadership role in tourism.

This document presents a situation analysis, mission, vision and objectives with respect to tourism. It clearly identifies the key strategies required to achieve identified outcomes, and details new and existing initiatives that will underpin those strategies.

The effective implementation of the strategy will ensure AlburyCity's contribution to economic growth and development is strategic, focused and delivers real outcomes for the long term benefit of the community.

The local tourism industry will be the major stakeholder, and opportunities for development of destination marketing partnerships with Wodonga Council and other surrounding Councils and local tourism organisations will be pursued where specific opportunities exist.

This strategy has been developed giving consideration to:

- The competitive tourism marketplace
- National domestic tourism trends and forecasts
- Local data and statistical information
- Existing markets of strength
- The depth and breadth of Albury Wodonga's tourism product
- Existing tourism infrastructure and services
- Challenges and opportunities facing the tourism industry
- Existing strengths and weakness
- Recent developments in the structure of regional industry
- Relevant State and National tourism strategies
- Albury 2030 (Draft)

Initiatives will primarily be implemented by the Planning and Economic Development group, or where appropriate projects will be undertaken by or in collaboration with key staff from other business groups of AlburyCity.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Local Market

Tourism plays an important role in the social, cultural and economic vibrancy of Albury. The effect of tourism is not limited to the Accommodation, Cafes & Restaurants, Retail and Personal Services sectors; the indirect financial and employment benefits filter through to all but a few industries. Key visitation findings of the 2009 Albury Tourism Monitor (data relates to the 2008 calendar year) include:

- 342,000 Domestic Overnight Visitors came to Albury and stayed an estimated 728,000 nights. Of those visitors:
 - 121,000 were visiting friends and relatives and stayed an average of 2.2 nights.
 - 69,000 were here on business and stayed an average of 2.3 nights.
 - 119,000 were here for holiday and leisure and stayed an average of 1.9 nights.

- Albury was a popular destination for daytrip visitors, with some 480,000 visiting the city.
 - 294,000 were here for holiday and leisure
 - 59,000 came to visit friends and relatives
 - 34,000 visited for business reasons
 - 94,000 came for other reasons

- 15,157 International Overnight Visitors came to Albury and spent an average \$89 per day.
 - 10,169 visited Albury for holiday and leisure
 - 2,607 came to Albury to visit friends and family
 - 1,537 were in the city for business reasons.

The key markets for tourism in Albury are:

- Visiting Friends and Relatives
- Business Travel
 - Conferences and business events
 - General business meetings and activities

- Holiday or Leisure
 - Shopping
 - Attending Events and Festivals (sporting and other)
 - Entertainment
 - Restaurants

These markets are the major markets for overnight stays and are also the dominant discrete sectors contributing to daytrip visitation.

Averages since 1999 show that 38% of overnight visitors were from Melbourne and 19% were from Sydney.

Albury is the 16th most visited regional destination in NSW and Victoria for all purposes. Of those destinations it's the 3rd most visited for business, 6th most visited for visiting friends and relatives, and 16th most visited for holiday and leisure.

The majority of visitors to Albury stayed 2 nights.

The 25-44 and 45-64 age profile groups represent the largest proportion of overnight visitors however recent years has seen growth in visitation by those 65+. The Older Working and Older Non-Working Group lifecycle groups represent 45% of all visitors with a further 28% being parents with children aged 5+.

While the majority of visitors utilise private or company vehicles as their means of transport the number of visitors using air transport has been gradually increasing since 2004. For overnight visitors eating out is the most popular activity with visiting friends and relatives and attending pubs, clubs and discos 2nd and 3rd respectively.

Daytrip visitors like eating out, visiting friends and relatives and shopping.

A financial impact analysis of 2009 key visitation findings, using spending and visitor data from Tourism Research Australia and REMPLAN Regional Economic Modelling Software, showed the annual economic impact of tourism in Albury during 2008 as follows:

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM IN ALBURY (2008)			
Visitor Type	Visitor Number/Nights	Average Daily Spend	Visitor Impact
Domestic Overnight	728,000	\$111	\$80.8 million
Domestic Daytrip	480,000	\$141	\$67.7 million
International Overnight	70,123	\$89	\$6.2 million
Direct Tourism Impact			\$154.7 million
Indirect Tourism Impact	As determined using REMPLAN, ABS AND TSA data		\$265.6 million
Total			\$420.3 million

The \$154.7 million direct tourism impact calculated above was further analysed, using REMPLAN Economic Modelling Software and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) data, to determine that the indirect tourism impact is \$265.6 million.

The above financial analysis and REMPLAN Regional Economic Modelling Software were also used to calculate the employment impact of tourism in Albury. It is estimated that 1,175 direct Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs were supported by the tourism industry. A further 1,762 people were indirectly employed by the industry, bringing the overall number of business owners, employees and their families supported by tourism to an estimated 4,757 people.

A comparison between Albury's Gross Regional Product and total tourism impact emphasises the significance of tourism's contribution to the City's economic activity. AlburyCity's Gross

Regional Product (GRP) as at December 2008 was \$2.756B. The annual direct and indirect economic impact of tourism was \$420M. While these are not gross figures they do demonstrate that some 15% of the city's economic activity is generated by the tourism industry.

Employment also benefits from tourism in Albury, with approximately 11% of the city's jobs resulting from tourism industry activity (direct and indirect).

Historically AlburyCity's tourism research has not extended to Wodonga. Wodonga Council will be invited to participate in future research programs to enable the expansion of the Albury Tourism Monitor to include Wodonga data.

National (Domestic) Market

In a media release distributed by Tourism Research Australia on 30 December 2009 Bernard Salt, Chairman of Australia's Tourism Forecasting Committee (TFC) reported that in 2009 the domestic tourism sector didn't fare as well as the inbound market, with a fall in economic value of 5.4% to \$63.5 billion and a decline in domestic visitor nights of 6.3%. However, he also noted "The prospects for 2010 are brighter with a stronger Australian economy supporting better job security and higher discretionary spending". In 2010 the economic contribution of domestic tourism is forecast to rise 2.9% and domestic visitor nights are forecast to rise 2.3%.

Mr Salt also said, "The green shoots of world growth are now more evident following sustained stimulus measures and low interest rates around the globe. While Australian tourism will clearly benefit from the recovery, competitive pressures on the inbound and domestic industries will continue to intensify. This highlights the need for Australian governments and the tourism industry to work together to improve the competitive footing of this key sector."

According to Tourism Research Australia (TRA Forecast - December 2009) "Australian's propensity to travel domestically has been declining since the beginning of the decade". The average number of trips per person has decreased from 3.9 in 1999 to 3.1 in 2009, the number of domestic visitor nights by Australians has fallen from 19.9 nights in 1999 to 14.6 nights in

2009, and “the average duration of domestic tourism trips decreased from 4 to 3.8 nights”. Australian’s are taking less trips each year and the duration of trips is contracting. TRA proposes that “domestic tourism’s weak performance this decade has contrasted with the generally strong growth in the Australian economy. This partly reflects a loss of competitiveness associated with high petrol prices (over 90% of domestic overnight travel is conducted by car) and a higher Australian dollar (which has lowered the cost of many competing goods, including outbound travel) and the emergence of a wide range of new competing goods and services. Further, the recent growth in international aviation capacity has placed additional downward pressures on international airfares and package travel, further increasing the price competitiveness of outbound travel relative to domestic travel.

Tourism Product, Services, Infrastructure and Facilities

The following list is not exhaustive but seeks to demonstrate the range and nature of tourism product, services, infrastructure and facilities currently offered in Albury Wodonga.

<p><i>Accommodation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 star & 4 star+ - 3 star - 2 star - Backpackers - Caravan, Cabins and Camping - Resort 	<p><i>Entertainment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Major clubs - Pubs/Bars - Nightclubs - Albury Cinema Centre - Restaurants & Cafes
<p><i>Cultural</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albury Art Gallery - Art Space Wodonga - LibraryMuseum - Bonegilla Migrant Museum - Albury Entertainment Centre – performing arts events - Fruit Fly Circus (public shows) - Hothouse Theatre 	<p><i>Nature Based – walking, cycling, exploring (flora & fauna), water sports, canoeing, fishing etc</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wonga Wetlands - Oze-Wildlife - Albury Botanic Gardens - Nail Can Hill Reserve - Noreuil and associated riverside parks - Murray & Kiewa Rivers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heritage buildings - Livid Productions facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Murray River Experience - Lake Hume - Various parks, gardens and reserves throughout the City
<p><i>Points of Interest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lake Hume Wall and hydro scheme - Monument Hill - Huon Hill - Eastern Hill Lookout - QEII Square 	<p><i>Retail - Shopping</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albury CBD - Centro Lavington - Harvey Norman Centre - Homemaker Centre (Wodonga) - Wodonga Plaza & High Street
<p><i>Other attractions/activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ettamogah Pub - Go-Kart Racing Track - Paint Ball - Ten Pin Bowling - Golf (Thurgoona, Albury and Wodonga) - Bandiana Army & Light Horse Museums 	<p><i>Major Conference and Special Event Venues</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial Club - SS&A Club - Kinross Woolshed - Albury Entertainment Centre - Lake Hume Resort - Lavington Panthers - Wodonga Civic Centre
<p><i>Infrastructure and Facilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albury VIC - Network of tracks, trails and pathways - Signage (currently below standard) - Railway Station - Albury Airport - Public Toilets - Lavington Sports Ground - Albury Swim Centre - Albury Sports Stadium - Jelbart & Alexandra Park (Hockey/Soccer/Athletics/Touch) 	<p><i>Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car Hire - Taxi's - Buses - Albury VIC - Satellite VIC's (Myer City Centre, Museum etc) - Regular Passenger Transport (RPT) services from/to Sydney, Melbourne & Canberra - Air charter services

<p>Football)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Albury Lawn Tennis, Kelly Park and a variety of other tennis courts throughout the city - Wodonga Sports and Leisure Centre - Equestrian Centre - Albury & Wodonga Racecourses - Albury & Wodonga Showgrounds - Noreuil Wood Fired Oven - Major Education Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wide range of conference and event support service providers
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SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Proximity to the Murray River, Lake Hume and associated water courses
- Location on Hume Highway and main rail corridor between Melbourne and Sydney
- Significant retail and entertainment offer (in comparison with other regional centres)
- Range of conference, business, sporting, recreational and cultural event facilities
- Major regional airport providing RPT services to Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra
- Parks, gardens and city's general visual amenity and appeal
- Network of tracks and trails
- Proximity to snowfields, food and wine regions and national parks
- Vibrant and diverse economy (supports business travel market, investment attraction and presentation of a positive image)
- Strong sporting culture with links to national sporting bodies
- Sporting facilities capable of hosting regional, state and national events
- Existing tourism research program and understanding of key markets
- Established events team with demonstrated capacity to attract, facilitate and host major events
- Extensive tourism and general marketing, management and strategic planning expertise
- Ability to develop and maintain strategic partnerships in order to progress identified initiatives
- AlburyCity Council commitment to the growth and development of the economy, and recognition of the value of tourism.
- Strong working relationship with Chambers of Commerce, business and industry.

Weaknesses

- Lack of high quality marketing collateral and web presence
- Historic lack of marketing strategy and successful implementation
- Failure to maximise tourism opportunities associated with a range of community owned assets/product
- Limited access to Murray River
- Historic approach to product development and provision of facilities/services
- Industry and key stakeholder apathy
- Limited range and quality of tourism product
- Lack of 5 star accommodation
- Lack of packaged product
- Credibility within the industry (State and National)
- Lack of permanent 800+ delegate capacity venue
- Lack of caravan/camping/cabin style accommodation within close proximity to the Murray River.
- Ageing tourism related infrastructure and accommodation product.

Opportunities

- Support a strategic and targeted approach to general tourism marketing, promotion and industry development
- Establish a high quality Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in Albury's CBD
- Develop stronger relationships and engage with industry through a Tourism Partner Program
- Further develop and promote cultural tourism opportunities

- Refine tactical marketing strategies in order to continue to attract conference, business, sporting, recreational and other major events to the City
- Attract new, and encourage investment in existing, accommodation, activities and attractions.
- Improve existing community owned tourism related assets/product
- Improve tourism signage throughout the City (including approaches)
- Establish a strategic partnership with the new Murray Regional Tourism Organisation (Tourism VIC & Tourism NSW)
- Investigate opportunities to undertake Destination Marketing activities with other regional Councils (NSW & Vic) and/or local tourism organisations.

Challenges (*Threats*)

- Increasing domestic visitation when national trends and forecasts suggest limited market growth
- Establishing a strong position and point of difference in the national marketplace
- Maximising returns on destination marketing spend
- Industry engagement and investment in marketing activities and tactical campaigns
- Building industry and community understanding of the City's tourism offer and market appeal
- Consistently presenting a positive image
- Ensuring industry and government politics do not impact on the achievement of identified objectives
- Maximising returns on community funds invested in supporting tourism growth and development
- Providing the highest standard of tourism service, across both public and private sectors

- Meeting community and industry expectations
- Financing the maintenance and future development of major facilities to remain competitive in the general tourism and conference and major events marketplace.
- Strong competition from emerging regional event & conference destinations investing heavily in tourism promotion and major conference and event facilities.

STRATEGY

Mission

To increase tourism's contribution to the growth and development of Albury's economy and lifestyle offer.

Vision

Albury is widely recognised as one of Australia's leading regional destinations for conference, business, sporting and recreational events. It is strongly supported by a range of high quality facilities and shopping, entertainment, cultural and nature based experiences. Its strategic location and proximity to the Murray River, snowfields and food and wine regions further strengthens its appeal.

Strategic Objectives / Anticipated Outcomes

- Effectively market Albury's tourism offer
- Improve the visitor experience
- Build the events market
- Under promise and over deliver
- Offer red carpet, not red tape (event organisers and product developers)
- Attract investment in tourism related product
- Improve tourism related Council assets/product
- Increase industry participation in marketing activities through industry engagement

Key Strategies

- Establish and operate a high quality Albury VIC
- Undertake a range of destination marketing activities targeting specific markets
- Establish, attract and facilitate sporting, recreational, cultural and other major events
- Attract major conference and business events
- Develop new and enhance existing tourism product and infrastructure
- Engage with industry and assist in its development
- Undertake research and analysis

Target Markets

The following represent the target markets for all marketing activity:

- Visiting Friends and Relatives
- Business
 - Conferences and business events
 - General business meetings and activities
- Holiday or Leisure
 - Shopping
 - Attending Events and Festivals (sporting and other)
 - Entertainment
 - Restaurants

Developing markets include:

- Cultural (heritage, performing arts, galleries, museums)
- Nature Based (activities primarily associated with the Murray River, Lake Hume, parks, gardens and reserves)

Strategic Relationships

- Wodonga Council
- Chambers of Commerce (Albury/Northside/Wodonga)
- Albury Central
- Albury Wodonga Moteliers Association
- Sporting/Service Clubs & community organisations
- Murray Regional Tourism Organisation (currently being established)
- Tourism Victoria
- Tourism NSW
- Regional and Local Tourism Organisations (where appropriate)
- Events NSW & Business Events NSW
- NSW Industry and Investment

Industry Structure

In withdrawing its support for Destination Albury Wodonga, AlburyCity has committed to taking a lead role in tourism in Albury.

Accordingly AlburyCity will drive and control the management and operation of the VIC and its associated activities, in consultation with industry and strategic partners, to ensure the community maximises the return on its considerable investment in tourism growth and development in Albury.

While the primary objective is to effectively promote Albury, there is recognition of the value and need to promote Albury as AlburyWodonga. As a result Wodonga Council will be invited to participate in destination marketing activities and tactical campaigns on a project basis. In the event they choose not to do so Albury will work with industry in Albury and Wodonga to implement the Tourism and Destination Marketing Strategy as planned, however generic promotion of Wodonga may be limited to participating partner products.

At a regional level AlburyCity's primary partner will be the new Murray Regional Tourism Organisation however it will consider participation in additional destination marketing activities developed in partnership with nearby local/regional tourism organisations and Councils.

Giving consideration to the aforementioned, industry structure in Albury Wodonga is as follows:

Local	AlburyCity, Wodonga Council (to be confirmed), Industry
Regional	Murray Regional Tourism Organisation
State	Tourism Victoria/Tourism NSW
National	Tourism Australia

Human Resources

The Albury VIC Business and Marketing Plan has identified that the following staff will be required to operate and provide services at the VIC:

- 1 full time
- 2 part time
- 2 casuals

There will also be opportunity for volunteer involvement in the centre although the successful operation of the centre will not rely on volunteer support.

A Tourism Officer will be required to drive and facilitate the effective implementation of the Tourism and Destination Marketing Strategy. They will work closely with industry and AlburyCity's Conferences, Events, Economic Development and Communications teams to ensure identified activities are successfully completed. They will also manage all associated administration and communications, research and data collection and analysis, industry engagement and buy-in, and destination marketing partnerships with Wodonga Council and other key stakeholders (where appropriate).

The level of human resources supporting AlburyCity's tourism effort will require review over time however the aforementioned is considered appropriate until such time as there is a better appreciation of the workload involved in achieving identified objectives.

Branding

The development of a unique brand identity for Albury tourism activity is not recommended immediately. The creation of a unique/sub brand for tourism will be considered once the foundations of tourism are established and we can determine who we are and how we want to be positioned in the marketplace. In the meantime AlburyCity's brand framework allows for the treatment of the Albury Visitor Information Centre and the delivery of destination marketing materials required by the tourism strategy.

The visitor information centre will be treated as an AlburyCity service or facility, with a facility identifier developed to complement its purpose and work with the brand identity guidelines for NSW Accredited VIC's.

Destination marketing will be addressed as campaign collateral is developed and tailored uniquely to a given marketing purpose. Graphically this will fall within the broad scope allowed for in AlburyCity's visual identity to market the city, with the tourism url used as the common call to action on all material.

The *2010/2011 Conference & Business Event Planner* is an example of the scope of AlburyCity's visual identity to effectively accommodate marketing of tourism product.

KEY STRATEGIES

The following provides an overview of the key strategies and associated activity to be undertaken over the term of this strategy.

1. Establish and operate a high quality Albury Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

The Albury VIC will be established at the Stationmasters Residence in the Albury Railway Precinct. It will provide high quality, professional and personable Visitor Information Services in partnership with industry and key stakeholders, using innovative, collaborative and adaptive techniques to best present the diverse tourism activities within the City and surrounds to attract new visitors or extend their stay and spend.

All visitor information services will be provided by professional and well trained staff.

Services will include:

- One on one personal customer service to visitors
- VIC Partner brochure displays
- Free access PC's (with personal customer service support)
- Promotion areas for upcoming events and exhibitions
- Flat screen display with rolling promotions (general, upcoming events and exhibitions, partner promotions)
- Weekly 'Whats On' email updates to operators, Chamber members and registered friends of the VIC
- "Rush seat" and general tickets sales, or sales support, for performances at the Albury Entertainment Centre and other facilities in the City e.g. Kinross, Commercial Club, SS&A Club, Paddy's etc
- Co-ordination of VIC and Destination Marketing Partner participation in all marketing and VIC activities
- Management of all general 1300 Albury enquiries and 'call to action' responses to destination marketing campaigns

- Surrounding landscaped areas for visitor use
- Provision of free and direct access parking for larger touring vehicles e.g. caravans and mobile homes, within the CBD
- Ensuring key collateral and information available from the Albury VIC is also available at satellite VIC's throughout the City (Satellite VIC's are those key locations where visitors expect information to be available e.g. Myer Centrepoint info desk, LibraryMuseum, Albury Airport, Albury Art Gallery etc)
- Co-ordination of any Ambassador programs (Volunteers)

2. Undertake a range of destination marketing activities targeting specific markets

Destination Marketing will be managed from a strategic business perspective, identifying and acting on opportunities for promotion, improvement and growth, and measuring their success upon implementation.

Domestic

Activity will focus on existing key domestic markets of strength which include Business, Visiting Friends and Relatives, and Holiday and Leisure. There will be a strong emphasis on events with specific tactical marketing campaigns developed to maximise opportunities to attract new conference, business, sporting, recreational and other major events.

International

International visitation represents just over 4% of all visitors to the City. Accordingly marketing efforts will focus on those visiting friends and relatives and touring (via the Sydney Melbourne Touring Alliance).

Tourism Partner Program

AlburyCity is providing core funding for the operation and management of the VIC and for the development and co-ordination of destination marketing activities. Accordingly, a Tourism Partner Program has been developed recognising that where there is a direct commercial

benefit, industry participation must be on a commercial basis. All revenue raised from the partner program will be utilised for implementation of the Tourism and Destination Marketing Strategy, complementing the public funds contributed to grow and develop tourism in Albury.

Rates for participation in the Tourism Partner Program will be calculated on a commercial basis however will be partially subsidised initially to encourage industry participation and build confidence in the program.

Industry based in the Albury LGA will receive a differential rate in recognition of their ratepayer status and the contribution to tourism provided from AlburyCity general rate funds.

Details of the Tourism Partner Program will be available to the industry from 3 March 2010.

Activities

- Website development
 - The primary domain name for the website will be www.visitalburywodonga.com. Other domain names will also direct traffic to the site to minimize leakage e.g. www.visitalbury.com.au and www.alburywodongaaustralia.com.au (with consent from DAW).
 - Motivational and informative general content on Albury Wodonga
 - Motivational and informative content on surrounding areas
 - VIC Partner Product listings
 - Electronic Postcards from Albury
 - Maps & Guides
 - Calendar of Events
 - Hot deals on offer
 - Friends/visitors register
 - Secure Tourism Partner area (back end database & product listing content management)
 - General promotional DVD download

- Call to Action

The primary call to action for all campaigns will be www.visitalburywodonga.com and www.visitalbury.com.au (where appropriate) and 1300albury.

- Official Visitor Guide (OVG)

The OVG will motivate and inform current and prospective visitors of the range of things to do, see and places to stay in AlburyWodonga and opportunities to experience the surrounding areas. Individual product and surrounding region promotion will be restricted to participants of the Tourism Partner Program.

The publication creative and content will be of the highest standard, accordingly much of the advertising will be of a template style with only a limited number of full page advertisements offering the opportunity for partner design.

Distribution activities will include:

- Response piece to general destination marketing campaigns
- Albury VIC, VIC's within 2 hours of AlburyWodonga (Touring market), Federation Square (Melbourne), Sydney VIC
- Households in AlburyWodonga - as a tool to build local resident knowledge of things to do and see and places to stay (VFR market)
- Inclusion in delegate/participant pre & post event information packages (where appropriate)

- Maps & Guides

There is a recognised need for provision of a number of high quality maps and guides to improve the quality of visitor experiences. Those developed will be available via the website as a download pdf (where appropriate) and in hardcopy format for distribution at the VIC, accommodation providers and satellite VIC's throughout the City.

Requirements identified to date include:

- Street map showing key visitor information including the location of accommodation, attractions, major parks and gardens, sporting and recreational facilities, conference and event facilities, public toilets, parking and shopping precincts. (*Note only VIC General Partner products will be included*).
 - Tracks & Trails guide (walking/cycling).
 - Trash Map – quick general reference tool for accommodation and other visitor information providers.
 - Day tour guide (to be undertaken in partnership with surrounding Councils, local or regional tourism associations).
- General
 - Update tourism photo library with a focus on key product and activity offer, and target markets
 - Develop general promotional DVD for download from web and for use on Flat Screen display in VIC
 - Refresh the mobile visitor information unit and use it at major events (where appropriate) to promote things to do and see
 - Support the establishment and activities of the Murray Regional Tourism Organisation (in accordance with the framework proposed by Tourism VIC & Tourism NSW in November 2009)
 - Invite Wodonga and other regional Councils, Local Tourism Organisations and Regional Tourism Organisations, to participate in destination marketing campaigns of mutual benefit
 - Develop a Visiting Journalist Program (VJP)
 - Participate in “Sydney Melbourne Touring” marketing activities
 - Presence at major travel shows
 - Maximise opportunities for promotion through the Murray Regional Tourism Organisation, Tourism VIC and Tourism NSW marketing activities.
 - Additional tactical and general promotional campaigns will be developed to maximise market opportunities. Areas of opportunity include:

- Cycling, cultural tourism and nature based markets in line with product development.
- Touring market, particularly the Older Non-working lifecycle group, already a key market for Albury and one with potential for growth.
- Day visitors from the surrounding areas
- Education (school and special interest group tours)

3. Establish, attract and facilitate sporting, recreational, cultural and other major events

- Develop a facilities and major events guide
- Develop a comprehensive 3 year forward program of tourism events
- Develop a tactical advertising and promotional campaign targeting national and major sporting and recreational organisations
- Develop promotional DVD to support tactical campaign and event bids
- Preparation of event bids
- Event co-ordination and facilitation support
- Event sponsorship (where appropriate)
- Engage with those with a passion for their particular field of interest and the capacity to contribute to the achievement of identified outcomes.

4. Attract major conference and business events

- Production of Conference & Business Events Planner (developed for the trade market)
- Representation and opportunity to attend trade shows and exhibitions including:
 - Meeting Mart (Melbourne) – (TBC) October 2010
 - PCO Conference (Canberra or wherever held)
 - AIME (Melbourne) - 2 & 3 March 2010
 - Melbourne RSVP Expo – 26 & 27 May 2010
 - Business Events EXPO & Sydney RSVP - 22 & 23 July 2010

Note travel and accommodation costs of trade show attendance to be borne by operator.

- Develop promotional DVD to support attendance at trade shows, tactical campaigns and bids
- Ensure expo display material remains fresh and innovative
- Develop tactical advertising and promotional business and trade marketing campaigns
- Develop a trade familiarisation program

5. Develop new and enhance existing tourism product and infrastructure

Investment in new tourism product will be encouraged as part of the City's general investment attraction program activities.

The renewal/re-development of existing private sector product will be encouraged and facilitated wherever possible however it is recognised that it is the responsibility of individual businesses to ensure their products remain competitive and continue to meet market demands.

There are a range of Council owned tourism related assets that have a recognised value in the city's tourism product/infrastructure/facilities offer, but require further investment to ensure they have the capacity to maximise their contribution to tourism. Products/facilities/assets identified for further development include:

- Murray River (Murray River Experience project)
- Albury Botanic Gardens
- Wonga Wetlands
- Lavington Sports Ground
- Albury Railway Precinct
- Albury Cultural Precinct, including the Albury Entertainment Centre & Albury Art Gallery, QEII Square
- Albury Sports Stadium
- Albury Swim Centre

- Alexandra Park Athletics Track/Hockey Fields
- Albury Airport
- Monument Hill & Eastern Hill Lookout

Activities planned for this key area over the next 3 years will include:

- Ensure opportunities for investment in tourism related product are incorporated into investment attraction marketing collateral produced by AlburyCity
- Undertake a product audit of Council's key tourism related assets/facilities, identify and prioritise (from a tourism perspective) works required, and incorporate key items into Councils forward works program
- Review all tourism directional signage in the City, rectify major issues and incorporate the remainder of upgrades/new installations into forward works program
- Review and update (where appropriate) marketing collateral for key assets
- Investigate opportunities to expand the range and quality of indigenous tourism experiences.

6. Engage with industry and assist in its development

Industry Engagement

Industry consultation was undertaken to obtain feedback on the Draft Tourism and Destination Marketing Strategy. This feedback was incorporated into the final report which is presented for consideration by AlburyCity Council at its March 2010 meeting in readiness for 2010/11 budget preparation.

An Industry Advisory Group will also be established to complement this industry consultation and ensure ongoing engagement through industry leaders with a high level of tourism expertise and knowledge.

The Industry Advisory Group will be made up of 4 key representatives from the tourism industry and 1 representative from the Chambers of Commerce executive group. All representatives will be selected based on their tourism experience, skills, knowledge and innovative thinking.

Other industry engagement activities will include:

- Consult with industry
- Ensure relationships between operators and Council staff are developed and maintained over the longer term
- Ensure a high level of awareness of industry issues and opportunities is maintained
- Provide opportunity for operator's ideas to be pooled and considered in the development of specific marketing and promotional activities.

Industry Development

Given the nature, size and scale of the significant proportion of tourism related businesses in Albury Wodonga, the majority of industry and professional development activities will be undertaken in partnership with or by the Chambers of Commerce. This will ensure minimal duplication of effort and recognizes that the Chambers already provide a diverse range of professional development opportunities for its membership base.

Specialist professional development programs in the areas of marketing and product development, specific to tourism, will be undertaken as required or as new opportunities are identified.

Other industry development activities will include:

- Facilitate improved communication and information sharing between operators, particularly in relation to service demand in peak periods, i.e. large conference, recreational event delegates/participants
- Investigate and identify sustainable long term funding models to support the growth and development of tourism in Albury.

7. Undertake research and analysis

- Continue to produce the Albury Tourism Monitor and investigate opportunities to expand content to include Wodonga.
- Finalise and implement the major events research program
- Develop mechanisms to monitor performance of tactical marketing activities
- Identify new research opportunities
- Distribute key findings of research undertaken by Tourism Vic, Tourism NSW and Tourism Research Australia

APPENDIX ONE

Extract from Tourism Research Australia's Forecast – December 2009

Domestic tourism - Market commentary

The TFC has revised downward its forecasts of the economic contribution of domestic tourism to the Australian economy. Despite the better-than-expected performance of the Australian economy since the previous TFC *Forecast* release, domestic tourism demand continued to decline, with domestic tourism consumption (as measured by Domestic Tourism Economic value) now forecast to fall 5.4% in 2009, compared with the June 2009 forecast of a decline of 2.9%. Contributing to this downward revision is the poor performance of numerous key indicators of domestic tourism performance in the first three quarters of 2009, including domestic visitor nights (down 7.2%), overnight trips (down 7.5%) and domestic nights in paid accommodation (down 8.5%). In contrast, the number of day trips made by Australians in Australia rose 7.1% in the first three quarters of 2009 compared with the same period in 2008, reflecting increases in all purposes of visit (including business). Further, for the year to September 2009, domestic overnight tourism activity and expenditure in Australia is at its lowest level since the current data series began in 1998 at 257 million nights. This estimate is 15% (46 million nights) below the peak of 302 million nights set in the 2002–03 financial year. Assuming a moderately lower rate of decrease for all purpose segments in December quarter 2009, domestic overnight trips are forecast to contract 6.1% to 66 million in 2009 while domestic visitor nights are forecast to fall by a greater amount (6.3% to 255 million).

Australian's propensity to travel domestically has been declining since the beginning of the decade. The annual average number of trips per person (aged 15 years and over) decreased from 3.9 trips in 1999 to 3.1 trips in 2009. Further, the number of domestic visitor nights taken by Australians fell from an average of 19.9 nights in 1999 to 14.6 nights in 2009 because of the decline in trips per person and a trend toward trips of shorter duration. Between 1999 and 2008, the average duration of domestic tourism trips decreased from 4 to 3.8 nights.

Domestic tourism's weak performance this decade has contrasted with the generally strong growth in the Australian economy. This partly reflects a loss of competitiveness associated

with high petrol prices (over 90% of domestic overnight travel is conducted by car) and a higher Australian dollar (which has lowered the cost of many competing goods, including outbound travel) and the emergence of a wide range of new competing goods and services. Further, the recent growth in international aviation capacity has placed additional downward pressures on international airfares and package travel, further increasing the price competitiveness of outbound travel relative to domestic travel. Despite this, an improvement in the domestic economy remains a prerequisite for any sustained turnaround in the performance of the domestic tourism sector. There are a range of positive signs, for example the Westpac-Melbourne Institute Consumer Sentiment Index recovered in 2009 following steep falls in late 2008. Consumer sentiment remained high in late 2009 despite three successive monthly increases in interest rates. Sentiment was buoyed by the strength of the Australian stock market and the resilience of employment levels. These are supportive forces for tourism activity. Announcements made in December 2009 by Jetstar and Qantas to increase domestic air services are also positive news for domestic tourism. Jetstar announced an additional 700,000 seats (equating to 77 new weekly services) in early – mid 2010. This additional capacity will mainly serve existing routes from Sydney and Melbourne to leisure-based destinations in Queensland, as well as additional services to Tasmania, Newcastle and Adelaide. Qantas announced it will add 340,000 seats (equating to 19 extra return services) from 29 March 2010, with small increases in services on the Adelaide-Melbourne, Brisbane-Sydney, Brisbane-Townsville, Melbourne-Perth and Sydney-Ayres Rock. They will also upgrade services on the Brisbane-Cairns and Brisbane-Melbourne and Brisbane-Adelaide routes.

In 2010, a gradual economic recovery in Australia and an associated recovery in business travel, combined with the release of some pent-up demand for domestic leisure travel is expected to underpin modest growth in domestic visitor nights of 2.3% and a 2.9% rise in TDEV.

Looking further out, domestic visitor nights are forecast to remain largely unchanged in the period from 2009 to 2018. As Australia's population is forecast to increase by over 1.1% a year

over the period to 2018, this implies a continued decline in the average number of overnight trips taken by each Australian resident.

In contrast to the flat outlook for domestic visitor nights, TDEV is forecast to grow at an average annual rate of 1.2% in the 2009–2018 period, to reach \$70.4 billion in real terms (\$3 billion higher than in 2009), because of moderate increases in average spend per trip. Domestic tourism's share of the total economic value of the Australian tourism industry (which includes inbound and domestic tourism) is forecast to decline from 71% in 2009 to 67% in 2018.

Domestic tourism will continue to face intense competitive pressure from other goods and services including overseas travel over the next ten years to 2018, more so from outbound travel. Australian resident departures are forecast to grow at an average annual rate of 3.1% from 2009 to 2018, despite an assumed modest depreciation of the Australian dollar from the levels of late 2009.

Growth in tourism demand is expected to be strongest in the 'active seniors' (persons aged 55–69 years) group. This segment has been the best performing age group for domestic tourism in the past decade with visitor nights up 20% to 70 million nights in the year ending September 2009 compared with the 2000 calendar year. In comparison, domestic visitor nights in Australia by the other age cohorts combined fell 20% over the same period. Senior travel now represents around 27% of total visitor nights, compared with just 20% in 2000. In addition, the active senior's share of domestic visitor expenditure increased from 15% in 2000 to 22% in the year ending September 200 and is worth \$9.3 billion.

In the previous TFC forecast publication, the (then) sharp falls in retirement savings and income were identified as a major threat to the tourism activity of this segment. However, the recent partial recoveries in world stock markets and the only modest falls in real estate values have limited the falls in savings and income for active seniors in Australia. The latest NVS results suggest that despite the threat to retirement savings, overnight active senior segment remains a solid performer, with their domestic visitor nights falling by only 3.1% in the first

three quarters of 2009 (compared with the same period in 2008). This was less than half the 7.2% fall in total domestic visitor nights in that period. The outlook for the active senior segment remains sound for the period to 2018; with further rises in stock market values will boost wealth and tightening labour market will provide more active seniors with employment options to boost income.

This cohort is also expected to increase in size, with the ABS projecting the share of Australia's population aged 55 years and over to increase by three percentage points to reach 28% in the nine years to 2018. Further, the average post-retirement income of retirees in this age group is likely to increase given an increasing proportion this group will have benefited from longer periods of compulsory superannuation. As a result, active seniors are expected to remain an important growth segment in the medium term in a flat domestic tourism market.

Visitor nights in commercial accommodation

Domestic visitor nights in commercial accommodation are defined by the TFC as nights in hotels, motels, guest houses and serviced apartments (HMGSA). Domestic visitor nights in HMGSA accommodation are forecast to decrease by 6.9% to 72 million in 2009. This fall represents a second successive decrease following the 6.1% fall in 2008. The changing mix of domestic commercial accommodation customers in 2009 away from higher yield business travel placed downward pressure on average room rates (particularly in 4 and 5 star hotels) and magnified the financial challenges of many accommodation providers. However, HMGSA nights are expected to benefit from the pick-up in economic activity in 2010 and are forecast to rise 6.6% to 77 million in 2010 and to reach 88 million in 2018.