

melbourne's **west**



Visitor
Economy
Strategy
2025-2028



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About Western Melbourne Tourism

Western Melbourne Tourism Inc (WMT) is an urban regional tourism board incorporated for the purposes of developing a stronger more competitive tourism sector in Melbourne's west. Melbourne's west embraces the municipal areas of Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham councils.

WMT exists to increase the recognition and contribution of visitors to the region's economy; supporting our local visitor economy businesses and promoting the attributes that make Melbourne's west a compelling place to visit, to drive economic growth and community.

melbourne's west



The Context in 2025

Melbourne's west is home to an incredible diversity of arts and culture, nature, food and hospitality, iconic tourism destinations, and unique community and visitor events. As the world has opened back up following COVID-19, we have a fresh opportunity to engage with the confidence and enthusiasm for exploring new destinations, enjoying new experiences, and returning to old favourites.

The pipeline of development in our region - including the Melbourne Airport Rail Link (and Sunshine Interchange), Avalon Airport's expansion, new and upgraded sports, leisure and cultural facilities, and nature-based infrastructure - means our offer to visitors is only set to improve, and we need to capitalise on this momentum.

On the other hand, Australia's economic landscape has changed dramatically since COVID-19, with the rising cost of living having significant impacts on household spend. While this increases competition for the tourism dollar, our location and ease of access to Melbourne, Geelong and other regional centres presents an advantage. We have the proximity and range of experiences to capture the hearts and minds of our Victorian neighbours, as well as our own communities, who are looking to explore closer to home.

Our region's cultural diversity also means we have a unique and substantial opportunity to play host to visitors from overseas who come to stay with friends and family; in particular our significant Indian, Vietnamese and African diasporas.

The data available at April 2025 shows we welcomed 4.56 million visitors in FY 23/24. This remains below pre-COVID-19 figures, which saw substantial growth, particularly in day trips, in the two years prior to the pandemic.

This outlook suggests that we have a compelling proposition for visitors, which was building prior to COVID-19. Our 2025-2028 strategic period is the time to re-ignite that momentum and build on it with a focused approach to visitor outreach, engagement and storytelling on behalf of the whole region.

To do this, we must continue to expand our efforts in visitor-facing marketing and promotions, launching and embedding our new brand and website, and developing campaigns, content, visitor experiences and events. We will work in partnership with government, industry and community to bring the region to life for visitors and make it a destination of choice.

We must also lead advocacy for Melbourne's west and its community with key partners, stakeholders, industry and funders so that we can engage those with the influence and resources to champion and support our work. We must ensure the west is a vital and key element of the Melbourne narrative. We also need to provide more opportunities for our tourism operators and associated businesses to connect, collaborate and build the capacity of our tourism ecosystem, so it is fit to serve the visitors we seek.

We love westside.

Our journey ahead will unite our industry and communities, elevate our shared story, and draw more people into and around our region so they can love westside too.



Our Strategic Foundations

Our Vision

A welcoming and prosperous visitor economy for the west.

Our Purpose

We are the leading organisation driving visitor activity and growth in Melbourne's west.

Our Values



Courage



Collaboration



Accountability



Creativity



Integrity

Our Roles



Advocacy & Voice



Promotion & Storytelling



Expert Advice & Research



Industry Activation



Collaboration & Connection

Our Strategic Priorities

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Storyteller of the West

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Connecting and Empowering the Tourism Ecosystem

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About our Roles

Advocacy & Voice

We advocate to government, communities and the tourism sector, on the value of the visitor economy, encouraging greater investment and economic benefit for the west.

Promotion & Storytelling

We unite the visitor narrative for the west, and drive the promotion of our whole-of-region offer, experiences and events to all visitors.

Expert Advice & Research

We provide strategic advice to key stakeholders on tourism in the west, including data, research and market insights.

Industry Activation

Collaborating with, and supporting, tourism operators and the tourism sector, we enable regionally coordinated events, programs, networking and capacity-building for our industry and communities.

Collaboration & Connection

We facilitate the connection and collaboration of key stakeholders in the west to build a robust and thriving tourism ecosystem.

About our Strategic Priorities

Storyteller of the West

We unite and share the story of the West as a unique and compelling place to visit and explore; to raise our region's profile and visitor expectations.

Advocating for the Visitor Economy

We lead and drive advocacy and support for, and contribution to, the West's visitor economy.

Connecting and Empowering the Tourism Ecosystem

We facilitate and empower a thriving, capable and connected tourism ecosystem in the West.

Managing a Sustainable and Growing Organisation

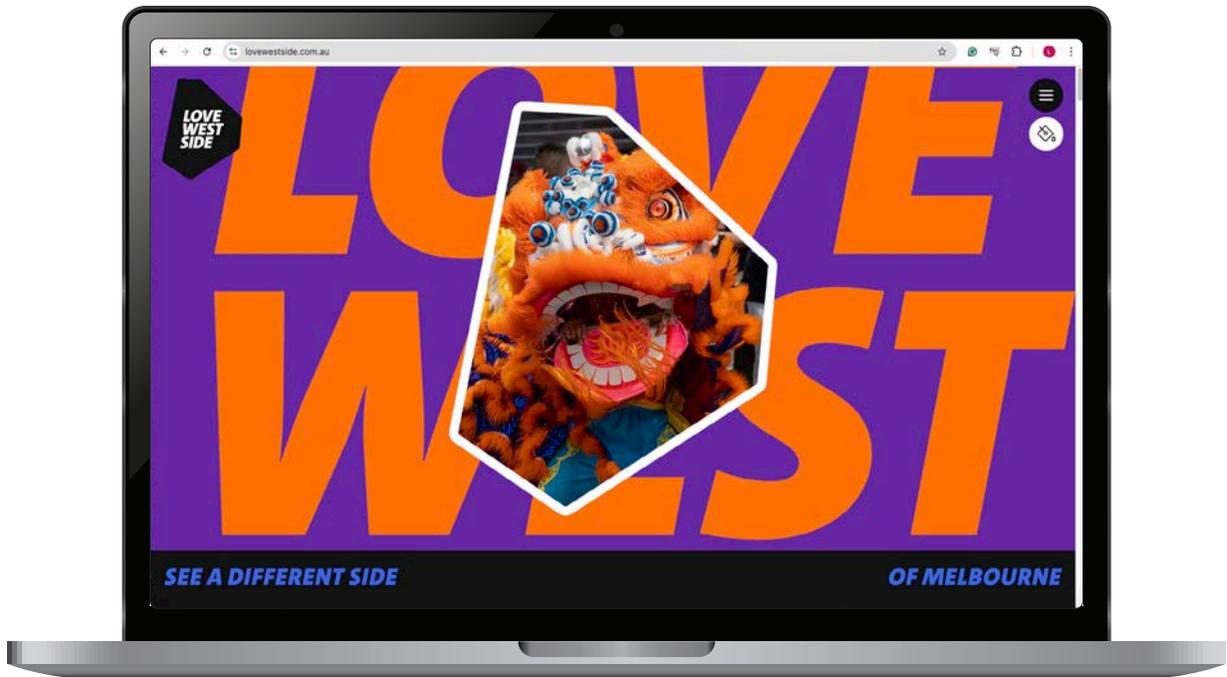
We are a reputable, sustainable, high performing and high achieving organisation recognised as the leader for tourism in the West.



About Love Westside

The key vehicle to deliver our Strategic Priorities is our new consumer focused brand and communication tool “Love Westside”. Developed as part of our 2021-24 Strategic Plan, the brand and website launched in September 2025.

lovewestside.com.au



melbourne's **west**

Love Westside is an initiative
of Western Melbourne Tourism





Storyteller of the West

We unite and share the story of the West as a unique and compelling place to visit and explore; to raise our region’s profile and visitor expectations.

We will focus our activity on:	As measured by:
Helping to shift perceptions and increase visitation - both from outside of the West as well as encouraging our communities to ‘explore their own backyard’	Visitor/patron data Visibility and sharing of Love Westside both within and outside the region
Uniting the story that builds on and activates community pride, through region-wide branding and a focused, clear and actionable marketing and communications program	Launch of the Love Westside brand Development of a whole-of-region tactical marketing plan Engagement measures for Love Westside website and social media, and PR/ media coverage
Targeting audiences within the west, as well as Melbourne, relevant intrastate and international (VF&F) markets for the 2025-2028 strategy period	Visitor/patron data from within our own communities, Greater Melbourne, regional Victoria and relevant international markets
Developing clear channels, processes, and tools to support and empower community, business and tourism operator engagement with the region’s visitor brand and marketing	Community, industry and tourism operator engagement with brand and marketing - including provision of content for consumer campaigns, website and social media



Advocating for the Visitor Economy

We lead and drive advocacy and support for, and contribution to, the West’s visitor economy.

We will focus our activity on:	As measured by:
Establishing ourselves as the leading body advocating for investment in the west’s visitor economy	Acknowledged by the sector, community, industry and Government as the lead voice for the region A seat at the table whenever tourism investment in Melbourne and Victoria is under discussion and review
Acting as a regional tourism body, with a clear and communicable remit that encompasses two strategic themes: Advocacy & Industry Engagement, and Brand & Marketing	Effective team, financial and governance structure in place to carry out these two key remits Treated as a regional tourism body by the sector, community, industry and Government, regardless of having, or not having, a formal Regional Tourism Board or Visitor Economy Partnership designation
Developing and implementing a program of advocacy opportunities, with clear and communicable ‘asks’ and outcomes that relate to investment in the region, support to promote the region, and support to resource the work of WMT	Advocacy program in place, including set of key messages for financial, resourcing and promotion/advocacy ‘asks’ that can be expanded on, or targeted, for each advocacy activity Increased investment for the region and equitable access to industry development programs and funding opportunities
Acting as a partnership identifier and broker for industry, community, stakeholders and funders; fostering collaboration to improve visitor infrastructure, events, skills, programs, and ensure accessibility for all visitors.	Delivery of collaborative partnerships with project delivery outcomes for the region



Connecting and Empowering the Tourism Ecosystem

We facilitate and empower a thriving, capable and connected tourism ecosystem in the West.

We will focus our activity on:	As measured by:
Executing a program of industry and community engagement, networking and capacity-building events and opportunities to increase the tourism competency and capacity of our whole region	Implementation of a calendar of industry and community engagement activities Number and range of opportunities created for local businesses and tourism providers to upskill and connect, through WMT engagement activities
Collating and collecting data to tell the full story of visitation, and the value of the visitor economy for our region now, and set measurable KPIs for visitor growth, profiling and economic metrics.	Delivery of research, and data-sharing protocols in place Decisions about Advocacy & Industry, and Brand & Marketing activity, driven by evidence and evaluated by data Development of a functional and segmented stakeholder and consumer database
Promoting and connecting local events, experiences and tourism products in partnership with community and industry, reinforcing the region’s identity as a destination, and supporting Council priorities for health, wellbeing and community engagement	Curated content prevalent on new destination website, social channels and campaigns Development and promotion of joined up experiences across the region Visitor data to show visitor growth, yield and dispersal around the region
Leveraging our network and role as the region-wide tourism body to support our region’s businesses and community groups to develop a stronger destination culture with more experiences, events and tourism products that cross Council borders and filter visitors through the west	Number and range of opportunities created for local businesses and tourism providers to cooperate and/or cross-promote products and experiences from across the region
Actively driving a positive narrative for the west and promote the region’s visitor experiences through PR and media.	Media coverage achieved



Managing a Sustainable and Growing Organisation

We are a reputable, sustainable, high performing and high achieving organisation recognised as the leader for tourism in the West.

We will focus our activity on:	As measured by:
Developing and embedding a sustainable financial business model that combines Council contributions and commercial streams of revenue.	An endorsed financial model that increases industry and partner involvement and engagement, and diversifies and increases overall revenue.
Developing and embedding a governance and team structure, including review of our rules and guiding principles, that clearly defines roles and expectations for all WMT team members, Board members, Council and industry resources, and external consultants and contractors Note - this would include a plan for future growth of the delivery teams, aligned to growth in revenue we should see from activity 1 in this pillar	An endorsed and implemented, efficient and effective governance and resourcing structure that supports us to deliver to our two key remits - Advocacy & Industry Engagement, and Brand & Marketing.
Embedding an optimised governance structure to facilitate a diverse, effective and efficient Board	
Developing a business case approach to secure longer-term Council funding commitments aligned to Council plan periods.	Formal business cases put forward at each Council Plan period, and updated yearly in line with Council budget reviews.

Board Members*

* At February 2026



Scott Chapman
(Chair)
Independent



Pamela Sutton-Legaud
Director, Join In Pty Ltd



Cr Julie Shannon
(Dep Chair)
Melton City Council
Representative



Cr Larry Zhao
Wyndham City Council
Representative



Scott Thompson
(Treasurer)
Founder & CEO, The
Reputation Agency



Robyn Grattidge
Director Business
Development, Zoos
Victoria



Cr Samatha Byrne
Moonee Valley City
Council Representative



James Brineat
Area Chief Ranger,
Parks Victoria



Cr Cuc Lam
City of Maribyrnong
Council Representative



Prof Naomi Dale
Director, Victoria
University School for
the Visitor Economy



**Cr Duyen Anh
Pham**
Brimbank City Council
Representative



Daniel Santangeli
CEO & Artistic Director
Footscray Community Arts

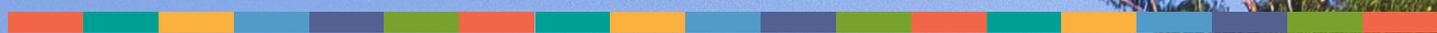


Cr Lisa Bentley
Hobsons Bay City Council
Representative



Richard Ponsford
Executive Officer

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Love Westside

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