

TOURISM INDUSTRY MARKETING TOOLKIT 2020

TOURISM NORTH EAST VICTORIA'S HIGH COUNTRY IS RENOWNED FOR ITS DIVERSE SCENIC LANDSCAPES, LOCAL CHARACTERS AND OUTSTANDING PRODUCE, COMBINING TO CREATE UNRIVALLED TOURISM EXPERIENCES.

The tourism industry in the north-east has thrived in recent years, and is an important economic driver for the region. In 2019 Victoria's High Country welcomed 5.3 million visitors, who contributed 1.5 billion in expenditure and supported the employment of 11,480 people.

Rising above the challenges of 2020, Tourism North East continues its commitment to the industry and objective to increase intrastate and national visitation. The High Country offers world-class experiences to a range of holiday makers, and our reputation for providing outstanding products and services are the region's strengths.

This Marketing Toolkit is designed to support tourism industry operators enhance and develop their product offering and guide marketing and business planning decisions.

Tourism North East's focus is on working with industry stakeholders, all levels of government and tourism operators to create and showcase the best of the region's tourism experiences.

I look forward to working with all sectors of the industry as we evolve and grow the visitor economy within the High Country.

Bess Nolan-Cook
CEO, Tourism North East

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU

As the Regional Tourism Board, Tourism North East's (TNE's) overarching goals are to drive visitation and yield to Victoria's High Country, ensuring the long term sustainability and success of the visitor economy. This is achieved through collaborating with all levels of government and working with industry partners to grow, enhance and promote the High Country offering.

Defined by Visit Victoria, the High Country includes seven regional shires; Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Murrindindi, Towong, Wangaratta, and three alpine resorts; Falls Creek, Mt Buller Mt Stirling and Mt Hotham. Strategically aligning industry support and development with destination marketing has been key to the success of the region, achieving YOY visitation growth of 3.9%.

Industry and product development are key focus areas for TNE to achieve its strategic goals.

The TNE team work closely with regional tourism operators to assist enhance and diversify their current tourism experience and to develop new product capable of meeting market gaps.

TNE is here to help tourism operators:

- > keep abreast of current market trends
- > evolve your business and better meet customer demand
- > review your business plans to identify efficiencies
- > optimise your strategic direction
- > provide any other general guidance you may need

This toolkit and our website are resources developed to support industry. If you'd like to talk to a TNE team member in person you'll find all our contact details here (tourismnortheast.com.au/contact-us/).



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UNDERSTANDING YOUR BUSINESS

Before you spend time and money marketing your business and implementing changes, it is important to understand how your business is currently positioned.

A thorough review of your business operations will help with future planning and decision making. Think of a business audit as a health check for your business; it will allow you to review your product offering and marketing plans objectively and provide a sound foundation for further investment.

SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS)

A great tool to help you understand your business and what it is capable of achieving is a SWOT analysis.

A SWOT analysis looks at internal and external factors that can affect your business. Internal factors are ones you have control over, whereas external factors are those outside your control, but are important to be aware of.

The following pages will walk you through conducting your own SWOT analysis.





Strengths

Start by listing your business's strengths, what you believe you do well and you're told you do well. If you are a tour operator, what is unique about your tours? If you are an attraction, what do you offer that is better/different/more unique than any other attraction? What do your customers love about you?

Top Tips



- > Identifying these strengths can help you make sure you maintain them.
- > Growing your business involves finding ways of using and building on these strengths.

Weaknesses

This is the place to list all the elements you may need to improve on. Be realistic so you can deal with them adequately. They are internal aspects of your business so think of things you might be able to control and change. This could include things like 'poor customer service' or 'outdated rooms'.

Top Tips



- > Be your own harshest critic here the best way to improve is to address issues head-on.
- > Look at your negative online reviews objectively; this feedback is vital in enhancing your offer.

Opportunities

This is where your creative thinking will come into play. Remember these are positive, and created by external factors, such as new consumer trends and changes in the market. They benefit those who can take advantage of them, but they cannot be 'produced' as and when desired.

Top Tips



- > Keep abreast of tourism trends through TNE's industry updates and segment specific insights.
- Have you seen something great that could make you stand out from your competitors? Have a chat with the TNE team for guidance on how to bring your idea to life!

Threats

These are external factors you can't control, such as changes to the market or who your competitors are. Threats could cause problems for your business but are often outside your control. The best response is to formulate ways to counteract them.

Top Tips



- > Clearly identify factors that may impact your business and make plan to address them.
- > The secret here is knowing you can't change the world but you can change how you respond.

TOURISM INDUSTRY S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS attraction? STRENGTH WEAKNESS **OPPORTUNITIES THREATS** What can What What are What your tourism challenges some new problems business do you markets or are looming deliver better currently products? on the than anyone? horizon? face?

YOUR NOTES

Top Tips



- Once you've reviewed your business, it's time to review your business plan. Haven't got one yet? That's OK, Business Victoria can help you <u>create one</u> (business.vic.gov.au).
- > Your business plan and SWOT analysis need to be dynamic and regularly updated. Don't file them away with your taxes to be done once a year! Keep copies on your desk and keep them up to date then you're in the best place to maximise your success.



ENHANCING YOUR BUSINESS

Once you are clear on your business direction you'll need to find new and innovative ways to stay front of mind with your audience.

Here's some ideas about how to reinvigorate your offer or come up with something completely new!

EVENTS

Local events

Being involved in local events is a great way to ensure your business is a part of the total tourism offering and marketing efforts of the region. Work with your Shire to find out which events take place near you and to see how your business can become involved.

Regional events

Partnering with TNE on regional or even state-wide events (examples pre-COVID include the Feast High Country Festival and the Melbourne Food and Wine Festivals) also creates marketing opportunities for your business. Not only can you leverage the exposure provided by large-scale marketing campaigns and generate new reasons to talk about your offer, you may benefit from increased revenue and yield.

Running your own events

Getting together with like-minded businesses, or working independently to run your own events is another great way to connect with consumers. It gives you a reason to communicate with your audience and gives the consumer another opportunity to engage with your business.

Celebrate your brand, highlight what makes you special! Think about new product/vintage/property offerings, anniversary celebrations, or activities aligned to your business plan such as national days or seasonal celebrations.

Once you have planned an event make sure you create an ATDW event listing here (https://oauth.atdw-online. com.au/login. This means your event will be displayed on a number of regional and national tourism websites, all for one listing.





PARTNERSHIPS AND PACKAGING

Creating new partnerships and products can help to refresh your offering and generate media and public relations interest.

Partnerships

A great way to create new offerings for your visitor is to partner with another business. Working together you can create a product that is seamless and coordinated to meet visitors needs, and enhance the overall experience for the guest.

This could include arrangements such as a bike hire company partnering with a cafe to offer picnics to go, an accommodation venue offering bespoke winery tastings in-house or a restaurant promoting a pick-your-own experience with a supplier that features on their menu.

Think about other businesses you would like to promote and support and how you can work together to give your visitor the best experience while they are with you.

Packaging

Once you've created a partnership with a complementary tourism business (or if your business offers a number of products) the next step is to combine these products into a 'package'.

Packaging is the grouping of tourism products and experiences to sell them to customers as a single purchase item, usually with the aim of driving visitation, and increasing the length of stay and yield from your guest. The package must provide one or more advantages to the customer, for example convenience, additional value, ability to budget, or cater for special interests.

The following page describes a few different types of packages you may consider.

Packages of products within one tourism business

- > Accommodation 2 nights, bottle of wine, late check out.
- > Restaurant/cafe plat du jour with a glass of wine.
- > Adventure operator pre-packed lunch with bike hire, transport to and from major centre or multi experiences.

Single destination packages involving more than one business

- > Activities only attraction pass, dinner and evening event.
- > Accommodation and activity bike tour, accommodation and breakfast.

Packages that go beyond a single destination

- > A rail trail experience with multiple nights' accommodation
- Accommodation and activities, for example a two night booking with wine tour and lunch at a restaurant

Workshop: packaging for profit

TNE runs a full workshop on packaging for profit that covers: what is packaging, why package, packaging tips, how to package.

Booking

Contact a member of the Industry Development Team to set up a date that suits you.



YOUR NOTES



MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

Marketing your business means more than just updating your social media platforms and running some advertising.

To get the best from your marketing budget you need a plan that is soundly based on research, clearly articulates your unique value proposition and identifies your potential customers.

TOURISM RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Visitor market trends and habits

Knowing who is visiting your business, how they travel, where they spend their money and how much they spend, are all powerful tools in planning how to market and run your business.

Understanding existing visitation habits and trends of the High Country provides insights into what is already working for the region, and can be used to help you make business and marketing decisions.

TNE compiles and interprets data from a number of sources. This includes High Country specific data sets for:

- > Visitor numbers, age, origin and reason for travel
- > Visitor spend, length of stay
- > Accommodation type, transport used



The most up-to-date region-wide data can be found here (tourismnortheast.com.au/visitationdata/). Another great source for visitor data is Business Victoria.

Workshop

The TNE team will take you through a range of data and research, showing you how to leverage for your business.

Booking

Via Eventbrite <u>here</u> (http://tne_id.eventbrite.com) or book a one-on-one consultation with a member of the Industry Development Team.





TARGET MARKETS

It doesn't make sense to promote your business to everyone – it can be expensive and ineffective. Targeting smaller groups of potential consumers with common characteristics helps focus your marketing efforts and means the consumer is far more likely to take up your product or service. This is known as target marketing. The groups you identify are known as target markets or segments.

By knowing and understanding your segments you can promote your product or service more effectively to the right customer group. You will know:

- > where they are
- > which media channels they use
- > what their holiday habits are
- how to tailor your marketing and offer to motivate them to choose your product

CHOOSING YOUR POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

To define your target market effectively you'll need research findings which identify a number of characteristics that target markets have in common – this might be demographic or geographic, or focus on behaviours and motivation.

Some of these groups may already be your customers and others will be new potential markets.

Domestic visitor profiles

Tourism Research Australia has developed 'personas' that allow you to look at the profiles and habits of key visitor groups, with a view to better tailoring your product and marketing efforts that can be found here (tra.gov.au).

Remember – these are very broad brush, and offer only a general overview of consumer groups.

High Country Visitors

High Country visitors are characterised by two key segments – Lifestyle Leaders, who account for 40% of the region's visitors, and Habituals who make up 28% of visitor numbers.

Lifestyle Leaders are progressive, educated and professional individuals who actively seek out new experiences. They enjoy an active social life and have extensive social networks in which they are viewed as trusted advisors and influencers of others. They are higher in affluence and discretionary expenditure than the average Australian, so travel frequently and spend more when traveling.

The Habituals are travellers who come to the northeast each year (sometimes many times a year) that tend to return to a consistent location and often travel with the same group. They are heavily influenced by the recommendations of friends and family members, prioritise value for money, and are often driven by familiarity with a destination. Both Habituals and Lifestyle Leaders are primarily self-drive markets.

Tourism North East primarily focuses on Lifestyle Leaders as their propensity to travel, experience new things and consider multiple destinations when they travel means that there is a strong ability to influence them with focused and motivating marketing communication and effective product development.

TNE consumer segment insights

TNE has undertaken research on the behaviours of a wide variety of visitor groups based on their overarching interests, for example food and drink or cycling.

This research provides detailed insights into consumer motivation and behaviour – helping you develop your business and brand to match these consumers.

Copies of this research are available, however we recommend you run through it with a TNE industry development staff member to get the most out of it!

- > Cellar Door Visitation and Wine Segmentation
- > Cultural Tourism Segmentation
- > Brewery Segmentation
- > Walk Tourism Segmentation
- > Hume Food and Agri Tourism
- > Cycle Tourism
- > Snow Segmentation
- > Mountain Bike Segmentation





IDENTIFYING YOUR UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION (UVP) – WHAT MAKES YOU SPECIAL?

It is important to be able to define the features that make your business special and unique and communicate this to your potential customers.

Go back to your SWOT analysis – what are the strengths of your business? Why do your customers choose your business over your competitors? What makes you stand out from the crowd?

Your UVP may be a unique product offering (clifftop picnics anyone?) or the provision of outstanding customer service. Start developing your UVP by answering the following questions:

- > What do you love most about your product offer?
- > What are you particularly good at?
- > What makes your customers choose your business instead of your competitors?
- > What benefit does your customer get purchasing your products or services?
- > How do you describe your business to consumers what features do you highlight?

BRANDING

Once you've identified your UVP, you're ready to create a unique brand identity. The TNE team can talk through ideas and considerations with you, or you may wish to use a branding specialist.

Your brand is far more than a logo, a tagline or a catchy jingle – a brand that clearly articulates your business can create an emotional connection with your target customers.

Your branding should reflect your UVP and convey the personality and identity of your business, what you stand for and what you can deliver. Having a clear and consistent approach to branding can be crucial to success.

Once your brand identity is developed, maintaining it through all consumer touchpoints (website, social media, packaging, signage, advertising, uniforms etc) adds to your credibility and professionalism in the eyes of your customers.

MAXIMISING YOUR MARKETING CHANNELS

Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)

There's one easy way to get exposure on hundreds of tourism websites, including all TNE's regional sites plus <u>visitvictoria.com.au</u> and <u>australia.com</u>. It's called the ATDW and it's currently FREE!

You simply upload your entry online, and have total control over the content and images used. Your listing provides you with a call to action to your own website. If you already have an ATDW listing, make sure it is in tip-top shape. Update your images, highlight your new products and experiences and make sure all your details are correct.



To arrange your complimentary ATDW voucher simply complete the online form here (tourismnortheast.com. au/free-atdw-listings/)

Your website

Your website is often the first place a consumer will go to for more information.

So – make sure you have one! There are lots of well priced 'do it yourself' options out there, and the TNE team can help you with some suggestions.

Don't let the thought of building a website scare you, it doesn't have to be a complex.

Consumers are looking for websites with:

- > A fresh and modern feel
- > Lots of well-shot imagery that tell the story of your business
- > Easy to read text (short paragraphs, headings)
- > Easy to navigate make it easy for people to find what they are looking for

Top Tips



- > A website isn't set and forget, make sure you review it regularly. Are the images current, is the text up to date, are your opening hours correct, do all the links work?
- Once you've updated your website create a calendar reminder to review again in six months' time.





Your social media

Consumers are searching and devouring content at a phenomenal rate. 2020 saw a spike in numbers across social media platforms, from time spent looking at it, to how many people were using it on a daily basis.

Now is not the time to neglect your social media channels; you have an unprecedented opportunity to engage and connect with your customers.

Here are some of the ways you could consider using social media:

- > Positive and inspirational content is what consumers are looking for so keep an upbeat message with lots of beautiful photos
- > New news did you launch a new product or service, have you been updating your business.
- > Try your hand at Instagram stories they are a great way to get in front of your audience and can be a lot of fun
- > Think about all the different elements your business offers and make sure you showcase them by posting a variety of content
- > Short form video content is really hitting the mark, so try your hand at creating video content to inspire your audience and showcase your business

Workshop: Top 5 digital assets

This workshop takes you through 5 digital assets and shares best-practice use, and some great ideas to get you started!

Booking

Head to the TNE Eventbrite page <u>here</u> (http://tne_id.eventbrite.com).

Content calendar

"Social Media is a marketing tool!" Repeat in front of the mirror 3 times every morning!

When you are using social media remember this is a free marketing tool with millions of Australian users that are looking to connect and engage.

Respect your free marketing tool, by creating a marketing plan for it. Sit down and spend some time creating a plan for WHEN and WHAT you are going to post. You'll save time in the long run – and there's less chance of neglecting it when the hours in the day run out.

Top Tips



- > Plan at least two weeks in advance. Think about what is happening in your business, the natural environment and the social environment. This will form the bones of your plan and give you something to centre your content around.
- > Create a collection of images and videos that you regularly add to. This means you'll have lots of content on hand to use and give you inspiration.
- > Think about what you want your audience to know, think or feel and consider what your audience might be doing at those times – it will help you select the right time and day to post.
- > Remember to be flexible too if something happens that you want to tell your audience about, squeeze in that extra post. If it's exciting your audience wants to know about it.

Leveraging Victoria's High Country social media

Tourism North East manages a suite of social media platforms and channels to help raise the profile of the region's tourism experiences.

These social media accounts align with our strategic pillar brands and marketing campaigns. They target specific audiences and encourage user-generated content sharing to showcase the region.

As of May 2020 there are over 150,000 followers across these accounts, which generate engagement rates above the industry standards!

#DontForgetYourHashtag #BeSeen #BeIncluded

Hashtags are used by Instagram to categorise images – so using hashtags is a great way to help other people see your photos.

If you have an Instagram post that you think is relevant don't forget you can use the hashtags #seehighcountry #feasthighcountry #walkhighcountry #ridehighcountry

Top Tip



Connect and engage with Victoria's High Country social channels – it will help strengthen your own social presence and you'll have lots of examples of content to take inspiration from!



Brochures and printed collateral

Brochures and printed collateral may be something you are considering as part of your marketing budget.

Before you get started think about:

- Where will your target market be sourcing their information – is it more likely to be from the internet than a brochure?
- > Where and how will the publication be distributed, and what will that cost?
- > How will you get your material in front of the guest before they make purchasing decisions?
- > How will you update and refresh the publication should your operations change suddenly?

Top Tip



You need to include a well thought out (and budgeted) distribution plan in your marketing budget to ensure your hard work (and \$\$) ends up in the hands of potential customers.

Local and regional publications

There are a number of publications produced annually that cover a wide regional area and include a number of different businesses. Key TNE publications include the Ride High Country Guide and the Feast High Country Guide.

There is usually a fee associated with inclusion in the publications which is offset by the advantage for the business operator that they will be produced and distributed for you.





MEDIA AND YOUR BUSINESS

Tourism North East collaborates with regional tourism businesses to generate positive media stories about High Country experiences to stimulate and encourage visitation around the region.

This involves a targeted and proactive national, metropolitan and regional media relations program across all types of media including print, digital and broadcast outlets.

TNE works closely with leading travel and lifestyle editors and journalists as well as news desks, producers and niche media outlets such as cycle or food and beverage-specific writers and publications.

TNE'S VISITING JOURNALIST PROGRAM

Publicity coverage is closely aligned with, and underpins, TNE's seasonal marketing campaigns. Integral to this is a visiting journalist program in which leading journalists undertake short or multi-day programmed itineraries in region, aimed at highlighting and showcasing the best visitor experiences the High Country has to offer.

The itineraries may highlight accommodation, dining experiences, cellar door or brewery visits, guided experiences, self-guided tours, suggested walks or scenic places to visit, cycle, ski or swim, depending on the season.

Annually these media 'famils' generate extensive publicity coverage for the High Country and its tourism industry, reaching audiences of millions of readers, viewers and subscribers.



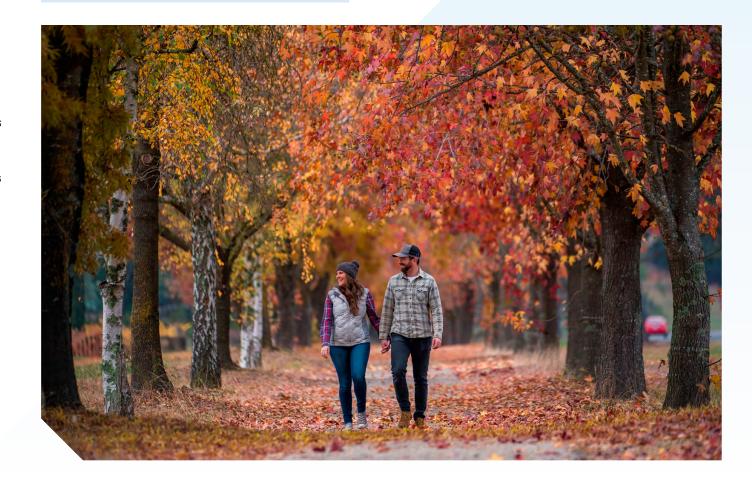
HOW CAN MY BUSINESS WORK WITH TNE AND MEDIA?

- > To be a part of TNE's visiting journalist program, you'll need a current ATDW listing (refer pg. 16). ATDW is your gateway to inclusion on the <u>victoriashighcountry.com.au</u> and <u>ridehighcountry.com.au</u> sites. These are our primary marketing platforms to visitors and our call to action for all media stories. So it's important that your business is included.
- > TNE's PR effort relies on businesses extending hospitality to media either free of charge or at a discounted media rate. If your business is involved in a media program, TNE's PR Manager will discuss these arrangements with you ahead of time.
- > TNE's PR program proactively supplies news leads and story angles to the media and to Visit Victoria's PR team. Seasonal media releases highlighting 'new news' are developed, including the provision of new images from tourism businesses. These are distributed regionally and nationally to ensure the High Country (and your business) regularly features in media coverage. New news tips/ideas for High Country stories are always appreciated.

Top Tip



Keep us informed and up-to-date – if we don't know your great news we can't tell anyone else!





HOW CAN I GET MEDIA-READY?

Put your best foot forward! If your business is included in a media famil, make sure you and your business are ready and warmly welcoming, accommodating and showcasing your offering in the best possible light.

Preparing a media release

If you don't have one already, draft a one page media release or short overview of your business and yourself. Five paragraphs maximum is all you need. Highlight who you are, where you are, what you do and what's different/fun/unique about your business.

Create your own media kit

If you need a hand preparing content for the media we've put together a guide with lots of handy tips – including how to write a media release, who to send it to and when!

A picture tells a thousand stories

Quality high resolution images are vitally important to securing publicity coverage. It's worth considering having a professional photographer shoot your business or experience. Images should ideally be colourful and lively, a minimum of 3 - 5mb and if possible, highlight beautiful surroundings, interiors or sense of place.

CONTACT

For further information on the media programs and how to become involved, contact Sue Couttie sue.couttie@tourismnortheast.com.au.

Top Tips



- > Make sure your media release includes your contact details if media are keen to talk, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to get hold of you.
- > Always include your social media details, hashtags and website and some images with your release, journalists love it when you give them a hand!



To download the Media Kit guide click <u>here</u> (tourismnortheast.com.au/online-resources/mediapr/).



CHECKLIST

Revisit or create a business plan and complete a SWOT analysis to **YOUR NOTES** help understand your business and what it is capable of achieving. 2. Identify your target markets to help direct your product development and marketing towards those who are willing to pay for your product or service. Create an online tourism business listing by signing up to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and get exposure on hundreds of tourism websites, including our regional sites, visitvictoria.com.au and australia.com. Sign up to the Tourism North East Industry Newsletter for industry news pertaining to your business. Sign up to the Tourism North East Industry Facebook page for industry specific information and discussion from like minded businesses. Book an industry development session with TNE to review your content and changes.

CONNECTING YOUR BUSINESS

TOURISM NORTH EAST WEBSITE

Head to the Industry Hub on the website for a number of support tools and information. You'll also find a range of resources including regional tourism strategies, research and data.

tourismnortheast.com.au

INDUSTRY FACEBOOK

Stay up to date with news through the Tourism North East Industry Facebook page.

INDUSTRY NEWSLETTER

The TNE Industry Newsletter is distributed regularly via email. It covers key topics, up-to-date information and timely notifications of issues relevant to industry.

NETWORKING

TNE hosts a range of industry networking sessions that facilitate interaction between tourism operators and with TNE.



To start connecting with TNE and your industry click here (tourismnortheast.com. au/online-resources/

CONTACTS

The TNE team is here to help you – whether it is for interpreting research, providing guidance and advice on business planning and marketing direction, or simply as a sounding board for your next big idea! Shoot us an email or give us a call and we can talk!

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Tourism North East

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Bright

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