



## Phillip Island and San Remo

Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 - *Growing Tourism*

**Year One Snapshot 2017**

## **Introduction**

The Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 – *Growing Tourism* sets the long-term vision for Phillip Island and San Remo’s visitor economy with sustainable growth as its central focus.

This 20-year strategy has been prepared to help ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of this important sector and recognises the importance of both the community and the natural environment in achieving this outcome.

This document provides an annual snapshot of the 2016/17 year and progress on actions for the Strategy.

## **Highlights**

Key highlights for 2016/17 include:

1. The Strategy was adopted by Council and is widely supported by key government and industry bodies, community organisations, businesses and the community.
2. The Strategy was launched by the Victorian Government at the Phillip Island Visitor Economy Conference in October 2016, where the Sustainable Tourism Accord was signed by Bass Coast Shire Council, Phillip Island Nature Parks and Destination Phillip Island.
3. Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy Community Thank You was held in November to present the Strategy and thank the community for their participation in the development of the Strategy.
4. A Community Tourism Reference Group was established and has embarked on Game Changer #1 - working towards Global Sustainable Tourism Council Certification (GSTC).
5. Key stakeholders have aligned their priorities
  - a. The State government provided funding to prepare the Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry Infrastructure Business Case.
  - b. Destination Phillip Island has used the Strategy to update the Phillip Island Strategic Tourism Plan.
  - c. Planning consultants are referencing the Strategy and investors are utilising the data and recommendations when making investment decisions.
6. Cowes to Stony Point Car Ferry Infrastructure Business Case project commenced.
7. Bass Coast Shire Council Events Policy has been reviewed and will be updated to incorporate the Strategy objectives.
8. Successfully attracted six new off season events including the Australian Nationals Junior Surfing Titles, Phillip Island Literary festival, Winter Sunshine Festival, OMG Museum Conference, Laneways Festival and Luminous Streets.

## The Vision

The Strategy's Vision is that *Phillip Island is recognised nationally and globally as a world leading sustainable tourism destination, where tourism is embraced by the community.*

## Strategies to Achieve the Vision

Five strategic directions will help deliver the vision for Phillip Island and San Remo in 2035.

1. Be established as a highly desirable destination
2. Generate year-round visitation
3. Build connectivity
4. Manage growth
5. Global recognition for conservation

Each direction is designed around the region's tourism aspirations and contains at least one 'Game Changer Project' and supporting actions.

## Progress on the High Priority Year One Actions

**1. Be established as a highly desirable destination, attracting visitors that are willing to spend more per day on high-quality accommodation and quality experiences and encourage repeat visitation.**

### Action

**GAME CHANGER I:** Recognise that the environment is the economy of Phillip Island and San Remo and work towards gaining international certification as a sustainable tourism destination under the GSTC.

### Progress

Council has joined EarthCheck, world's leading sustainability benchmarking and certification program to work through the certification program. By working towards certification the Phillip Island and San Remo destination demonstrates its commitment to sustainability and to improving our destination's environmental and social performance.

Council with the assistance of the Community Tourism Reference Group are in the

process of working through the program via the EarthCheck platform. This is currently at the benchmarking stage.

The Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) establishes and manages global sustainable standards with the aim of increasing sustainable tourism knowledge and practices among public and private stakeholders.

## 2. Generate year-round visitation including mid-week visitation, from a range of both domestic and international markets.

### **Action**

Council adopt an optimal peak demand threshold of 24,500 visitors per day in the future planning for infrastructure to meet demand. This is not a visitor cap; rather additional visitors beyond this point will experience a shortage of facilities.

### **Progress**

The Strategy which includes the peak demand threshold was adopted by Council on 17 August 2016.

## 3. Build connectivity between accommodation and attractions so visitors can leave the car in the car park and enjoy the region on foot or on bicycle

### **Action**

Actively encourage the Passenger Ferry to run at an optimal level prior to building a case for the Car Ferry.

### **Progress**

The Western Port Ferry Services new contract provider for the passenger ferry service between Mornington Peninsula, French Island and Phillip Island will commence on 1 July 2017. Destination Phillip Island and Council provided Public Transport Victoria with input into the tender documents.

Searoad Ferries (trading as Western Port Ferries) has been awarded the contract to run the Western Port Ferry Service between French Island, Phillip Island and Stony Point. Searoad Ferries is a well-established ferry operator, who also run the car ferry service between Queenscliff and Sorrento. They have been contracted to run the service for five years from 1 July 2017.

The new contract will boost the number of services by more than 30 per cent, including a new daily service directly from Stony Point to Phillip Island.

The additional services will start in September and coincide with the introduction of a brand new vessel to the route, which has capacity for 95 passengers and better luggage storage.

#### **4: Manage growth of day visitors and low-value experiences to ensure sustainable long-term growth.**

##### **Action**

Update the Tourism Section (21.03-4) of the Bass Coast Planning Scheme to reflect the recommendations and vision of the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 – Growing Tourism to include a new Tourism Policy (Section 22).

##### **Progress**

Council's Strategic Planning Team is currently reviewing existing provisions (new local policy that came into effect via Planning Scheme Amendment C140) to determine what has already been incorporated into the planning scheme, and where local planning policy can be improved to meet this recommendation. Any amendments will be incorporated into the Planning Scheme review project for efficiency purposes.

#### **5: Be recognised globally for our efforts in conservation and sustainable tourism through improvement in the quality of the landscape, ecosystems and quality of life measured through benchmarking to the Global Sustainable**

## Tourism Criteria (GSTC).

### Action

**GAME CHANGER 10:** Support the implementation of the Summerland Peninsula Master Plan.

### Progress

Advocacy for capital investment in the development of Phillip Island Nature Parks to world class standard is included in the current Destination Phillip Island (DPI) Strategic Tourism Plan. DPI will work with Phillip Island Nature Parks (PINP) in further stages of the development. PINP have created a walks project which is the next stage and are seeking funding for this project from Government.

### Enablers of Success

Further to the Strategic actions identified, the success of the Strategy is underpinned by the following year one enabling actions.

Enabler Action	Progress
<p><b>Gain State endorsement for the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035 and provide copies of the Strategy to all partner agencies.</b></p>	<p>The Strategy was adopted by Council on 17 August 2016 and launched by the Victorian Government at the Phillip Island Conference on 4 October 2017.</p> <p>Copies have been provided to partner agencies.</p>
<p><b>Create a 'Sustainable Tourism Accord' to be signed by Council, PINP and DPI.</b></p> <p><b>The Accord will be supported by a Steering Committee made up of Council, PINP, DPI,</b></p>	<p>The 'Sustainable Tourism Accord' was signed at the Phillip Island Visitor Economy Conference on 4 October 2016 and commits the leading organisations to work together in good faith to support the delivery of outcomes of the Strategy.</p> <p>The partners to the Accord support the key principles that will:</p>

**representative of the Community Tourism Reference Group and DELWP.**

**The Committee will implement the Strategy and ensure alignment to the GSTC criteria in the annual work plans of each organisation.**

1. Not only preserve but enhance Phillip Island and San Remo's natural environment through sustainable development and management practices.

2. Seek to enhance the lifestyle of the local community of Phillip Island and San Remo through creating certainty of employment, supporting community facilities, enhancing conservation, and supporting local events.

3. Foster continued job creation and workforce retention through an increased demand for skilled, quality people.

4. Improve the economic value of the region by focussing investment and marketing activity on extending visitor length of stay – shifting day trips to overnight visits.

5. Focus on helping to diversify the region's market mix to promote year-round visitation opportunities, alleviate nonpeak visitation troughs and promote dispersal.

**Create a Community Tourism Reference Group that will assist Bass Coast Shire Council in relation to:**

**Co-ordination of the GSTC process for Phillip Island and San Remo;**

**Preservation of beaches and natural beauty;**

**Prevention of deterioration of its foreshore;**

**Maintenance of wildlife reserves; and**

**Improvement of facilities that would lead to the better enjoyment of the Island.**

The Community Tourism Reference Group was launched on 27 March 2017.

The Group is chaired by Cr Michael Whelan and is made up of representatives from the community, Council, Destination Phillip Island, Phillip Island Conservation Society, Phillip Island Nature Parks, Phillip Island Tourism and Business Association, San Remo District Traders Association and San Remo Foreshore Committee.

The key priority of the Group is to help implement the Phillip Island and San Remo Visitor Economy Strategy 2035.

One of the Groups' first actions for 2017 will be Game Changer Project #1 - working towards Global Sustainable Tourism Certification.

Members of the Group will act as advocates for priorities of the Strategy, and increase networking and collaboration between key stakeholders in the tourism sector and the community.