

ST ARNAUD TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN 2022-32

July 2022



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Report prepared by DTM Tourism, reviewed by Northern Grampians Shire Council and adopted following public exhibition, comment and subsequent review.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Northern Grampians Shire Council acknowledges the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia, Jupagulk Nations, the Traditional Owners of the lands we discuss in this report. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to Aboriginal elders of other communities.

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank and acknowledge the following organisations, volunteers and participants who contributed their time and valued opinions to forming this Tourism Action Plan for the community of St Arnaud.

St Arnaud Community Action Network (SCAN)
St Arnaud Historical Society
St Arnaud Visitor Centre
Grampians Tourism
St Arnaud Arts Council
St Arnaud Raillery Hub
St Arnaud Tourism Operators
Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid
Survey respondents and Community Workshop
Participants
Northern Grampians Shire Council Staff

Images Provided by Northern Grampians Shire Council

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT THE PROJECT

ST ARNAUD, a township of approximately 2,200 people, located in Victoria’s Wimmera – Southern Mallee region and administered by the Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC). Originally settled in the mid 1850’s during Victoria’s Goldrush, the town has a deep connection with heritage and is one of the best examples of Victorian and Federation architecture in the Grampians region. St Arnaud is a service centre for the agricultural community in the region and tourism has not previously been considered a priority industry. From a tourism perspective, St Arnaud has been considered a ‘break in journey’ town due to its proximity connecting Melbourne with Horsham enroute to Adelaide.

In the past five years, the Wimmera region has attracted a new visitor segment as a result of the Silo Art Trail; Australia’s largest outdoor gallery, spanning an area of over 200kms through small rural communities. St Arnaud is ideally located as a hub for visitors to explore the region, owing to its supply of accommodation and visitor amenities. In addition, local artist Kyle Torney has painted multiple outdoor murals throughout St Arnaud, including the St Arnaud Silos. This beautiful work complements the visitor experience of the Silo Art Trail and serves to fulfill the expectations of visitors embarking on this trail.

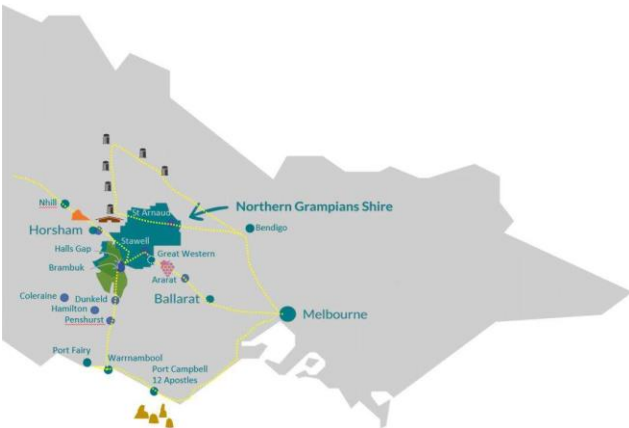


Figure 1: Northern Grampians Shire



Figure 2: ST ARNAUD Assessment Area

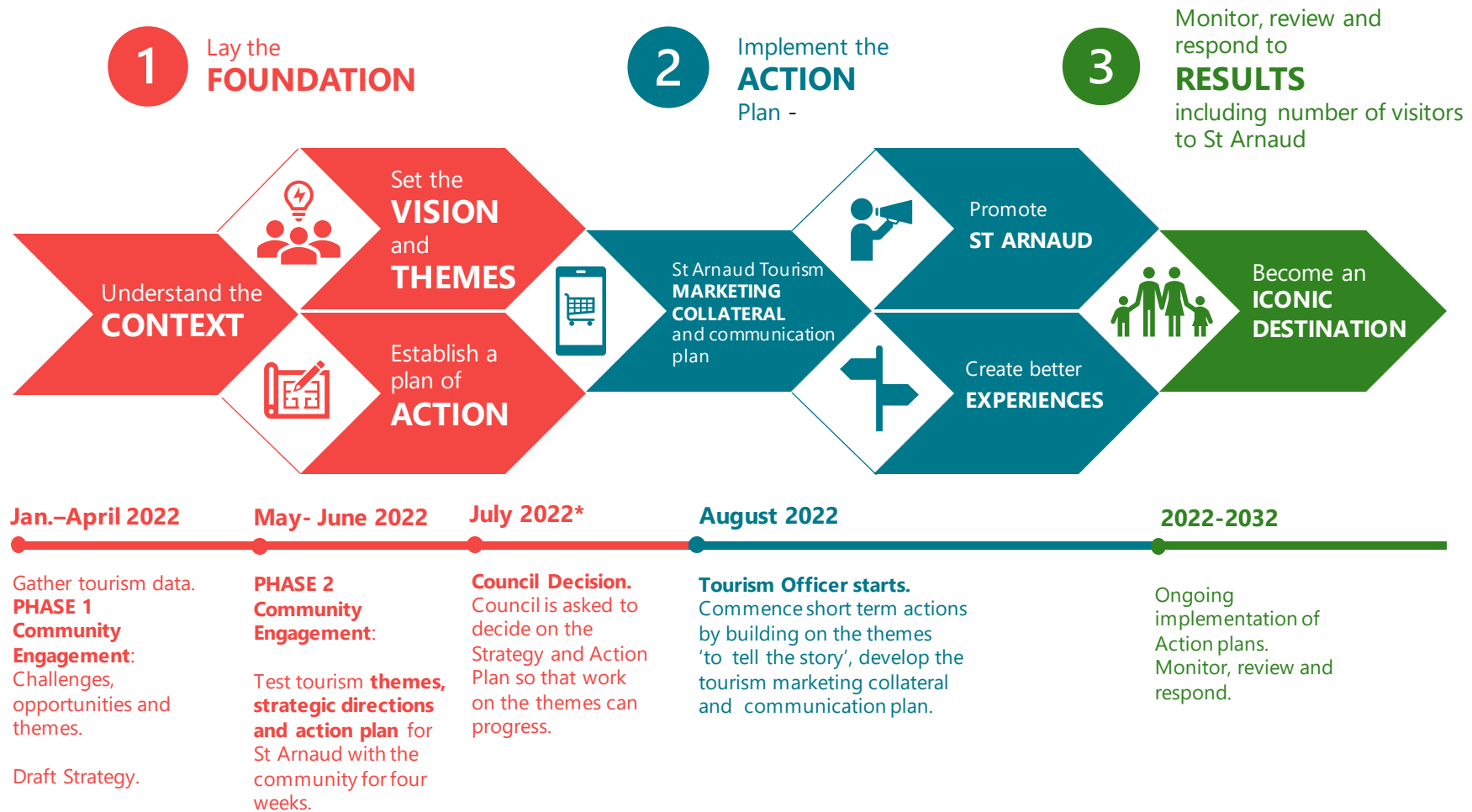
PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (SATSAP) is required to set out the vision and aspirations for the visitor economy of St Arnaud and surrounds over the next ten years. Preparation of the action plan is an essential step to ultimately growing the visitor offering and building resilience in the Northern Grampians economy. Importantly, the SATSAP will contribute to informing an overall tourism strategic direction for the NGSC, identifying commonality in experience themes in the Northern Grampians, areas of competitive advantage and opportunities to leverage major tourism projects in the wider Grampians region.

The NGSC objectives for this project are:

- To diversify Northern Grampians visitor offering to reduce impact of National Park closures following fire events
- To establish a shared vision of St Arnaud and surrounds visitor economy and enable the coordinated delivery of key actions
- To increase the competitiveness of St Arnaud as a visitor destination and enable strong promotion by leveraging off existing opportunities
- To grow jobs and visitor spend in Northern Grampians
- To unlock and facilitate opportunities for private sector investment in the tourism offering

THE PROCESS



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The development of a 10-year Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (SATSAP) will provide a road map to guide NGSC and the St Arnaud community in valuing its visitor economy as the community transitions to consider tourism as an economic driver. The plan is underpinned by a reimagined approach to enabling engagement with St Arnaud 's heritage, whilst establishing foundations for the emergence of creative enterprises.

Throughout the process of assessing the tourism opportunity for St Arnaud and surrounding communities, project consultants DTM Tourism, have maintained a clear focus to identifying projects which will be ACHIEVABLE and AFFORDABLE tourism priorities over the next 10 years.

In this context, it has been determined that establishing a clearly defined visitor -focused plan for St Arnaud will provide the best opportunity for flow-on visitor dispersal in surrounding communities. Recommendations made in this SATSAP strategically align to three **priority focus areas identified in the St Arnaud Community Plan** being:



PLACE

- Preservation of key characteristics and features that should be preserved
- Continued growth in the pride that the town projects
- Fostering opportunities for the creative community



ECONOMY

- Broadening the economic base and variety of industry by the development of the gateway to the Grampians and an investment in tourism assets



ENVIRONMENT

- A network of parks and lakes that benefit the local population and are a drawcard to visitors

Specifically, the recommendations of the SATSAP, align to the direction identified in the **Northern Grampians Economic Development Strategy objectives**.

2. SUSTAINED ECONOMIC GROWTH

a. Iconic Destinations

- Ensure our visitor economy offers diverse, unique, high quality and enriching experiences and dispersal across the Northern Grampians
- Protect, enhance and celebrate our natural and heritage assets

In addition, the development of visitor experiences have been considered to meet the demands of visitors to the wider Grampians region. **'Lifestyle Leaders' are the priority visitor segment for Grampians Tourism**, accounting for 29% of Australia's population. Importantly, this group buys into regional short breaks, with a focus on nature, food and wine, providing an opportunity to:

- ✓ Position St Arnaud within the consideration set of this priority audience segment
- ✓ Build a sense of intrigue around St Arnaud's authentic visitor experience and capitalise on St Arnaud's competitive advantage
- ✓ Leverage region-wide strategic focus, including Grampians Cycle Tourism, Wine and Culinary tourism in the Grampians, Arts and Events
- ✓ Positively influence current perceptions of the visitor experience in St Arnaud
- ✓ Build awareness of St Arnaud through quality communication and the development of a unique tourism brand

It is recommended that outcomes of the SATSAP be captured through the measurement of key performance indicators and reported to Council and community in annual reports. An annual review will ensure the SATSAP is up-to-date and relevant with the changing environment in the shire, broader region and the tourism industry.

A FUTURE-FOCUSED TOURISM VISION



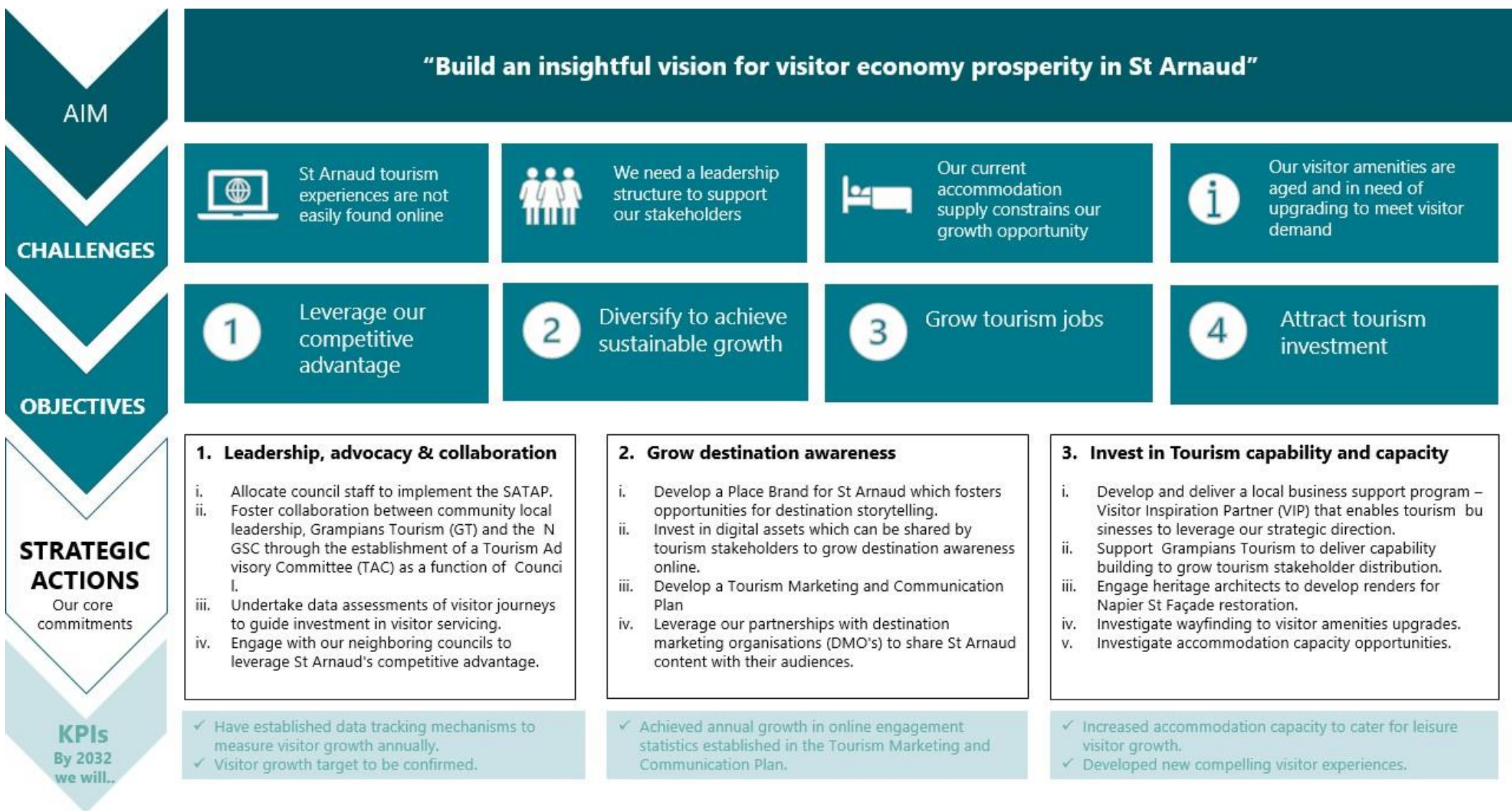
The future for St Arnaud's visitor economy will capitalise on the town's rich heritage both built and told; 'one and only' visitor attractions, and unexpected, artisan experiences. We aim to connect visitors, inspired by adventure in the Grampians and the culinary delights of the Pyrenees Wine Region, to make St Arnaud a central base to explore and experience life in an agricultural town with a difference.

Over the next 10 years, visitors will be attracted to St Arnaud through inspiring imagery, intriguing stories and new visitor experiences. Visitor servicing commitments will ensure that St Arnaud is open for business and visitors are welcome. Young families, with an increased interest in rural and regional areas as an alternative to metropolitan living, will recognise that St Arnaud is a vibrant, colourful community which offers a safe and friendly place to stay and play.

WE WILL

- Value our HERITAGE and its preservation
- Create a community where ARTISANS can thrive
- Immerse ourselves in NATURE and wellbeing
- Embrace new opportunities to establish an AGRITOURISM future

STRATEGY ON A PAGE



TOURISM SNAPSHOT



VISITOR SUMMARY

VISITOR NUMBERS

Tourism Research Australia (TRA) is the federal government authority which collates tourism statistics as a division of Austrade. The last LGA profile report for the Northern Grampians was produced in 2019 and is an unreliable indicator of visitor numbers for St Arnaud specifically.

Accommodation operators in St Arnaud are not sizeable enough for room nights to be captured under Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reporting. However, a product audit of St Arnaud's accommodation operators indicates capacity for approximately 200 visitors per night – 70,000 overnight visitors per year. Anecdotally, most operators report that approximately 60-70% of occupants during the week are business travellers.

ST ARNAUD VISITOR CENTRE

The St Arnaud Visitor Centre is open daily from 10am to 4pm and whilst it is currently managed by Grampians Tourism under contract to the NGSC, the Council will take back visitor servicing in August 2022.

The St Arnaud Visitor Centre will continue to be staffed by volunteers, but their coordination of will be overseen by council staff. This visitor servicing model capitalises on authentic, passionate local ambassadors, but it is a challenge to maintain consistency and sustainability in an aging community such as St Arnaud.

The most successful visitor centres exist where they are collocated with a major attraction and are intrinsically connected to their LGA or RTB to support destination marketing. In line with the NGSC's aspirations for St Arnaud's role as a regional hub, Shire management of the VC is likely to achieve positive outcomes in establishing activation within the VC precinct.

Quality assurance and implementing visitor data tracking will assist in decision making for visitor amenities. Anecdotally, the SVC reports that leisure visitors are motivated by the Silo Mural and are discovering the street art on arrival.

GRAMPIANS VISITOR STATISTICS

TRA statistics for the wider Grampians region indicates that although day trip and overnight visitors are down approximately 35% compared to pre Covid-19 arrivals in September 2019, the average length of stay has grown and domestic overnight spend is up by 16%, indicating that a new customer is finding the Grampians for a short break. This is an important consideration for the STAP as it demonstrates the opportunity to grow the value of tourism when visitors understand the destination, which encourages them to plan to stay overnight.

Knowledge of St Arnaud as a service and amenity hub to facilitate visitation to the greater region will stimulate growth and build on the improving the footprint of the destination.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA PROFILES, 2019 NORTHERN GRAMPIANS (S), VIC

AREA POPULATION: 11,402



	TOURISM BUSINESSES		DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	
	TOTAL		VISITORS	NIGHTS
Non-employing	59		62K	189K
1-4	65		236K	530K
5-19	33			
20+	5			
Total	167			

TOP INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE	VISITORS	NIGHTS
United Kingdom	7K	18K
Germany	6K	14K
Netherlands	3K	6K



KEY TOURISM STATISTICS FOR NORTHERN GRAMPIANS (S)

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Visitors ('000)	40	298	252	591
Nights ('000)	118	718		836
Average nights	3	2		2
Expenditure (M)	\$9	\$98	\$21	\$128
Spend per trip	\$212	\$329	\$85	\$217
Spend per night	\$73	\$137		\$128
Spend per night comm accom	\$86	\$175		\$160

TOURISM STATISTICS INSIGHTS

Click themes to display data



Reason

Travel party

Age group

Accommodation

	INTERNATIONAL	DOMESTIC OVERNIGHT	DOMESTIC DAY	TOTAL
Visitors				
Holiday	39K	211K	167K	416K
Visiting friends and relatives	np	55K	np	93K
Business	np	np	np	np
Other	np	np	np	np



Holiday

Visiting friends and relatives

Business

Other

Data based on a four year average from 2016 to 2019.
'np' = Data is not publishable as the survey error is too high for most practical purposes.

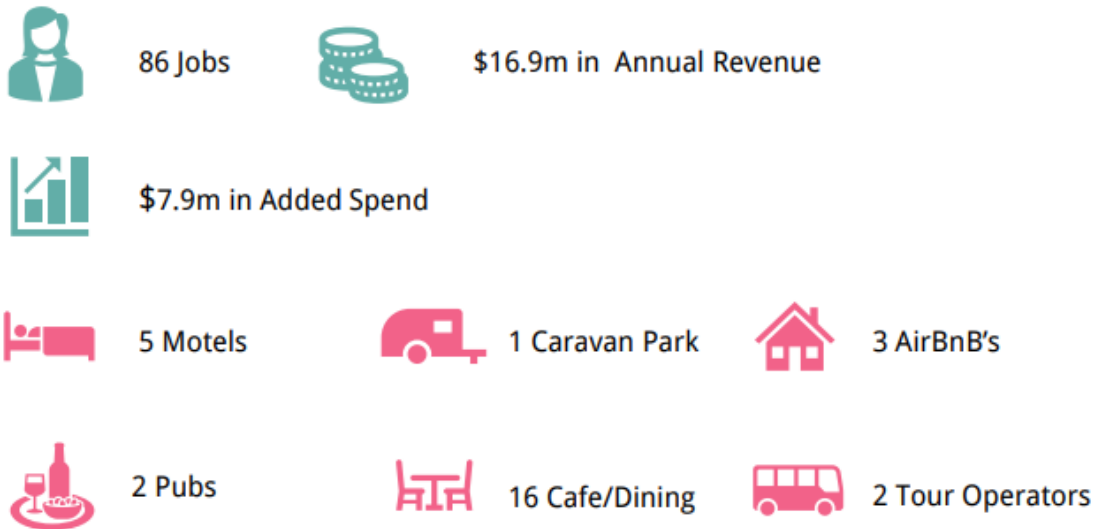
Figure 3: NVS LGA Profile Northern Grampians

Source = <https://www.tra.gov.au/Regional/local-government-area-profiles>

VISITOR ECONOMY PROFILE

Growth in tourism has a significantly positive economic and social effect across a region like the Northern Grampians. Tourism supports industry and employment across a number of sectors from agriculture and manufacturing through to healthcare, retail, and education. Businesses gain from tourism spend, ultimately increasing economic returns, and subsequently resourcing community infrastructure and enterprises. In the short term, the supply of tourism services is sufficient to meet visitor demand. However, the intent of the St Arnaud Structure Plan (currently under development) is to grow St Arnaud as a regional hub. Accordingly, tourism services will need to be assessed to meet growth aspirations.

Currently, tourism in St Arnaud delivers:



Source = Remplan Economy Jobs and Business Insights St Arnaud



MAJOR STRENGTHS

ACCESS

St Arnaud is positioned on two highway routes connecting major regional centres in Central Victoria. Its proximity to the Pyrenees Wine Region in addition to Rupanyup, where Victoria's Silo Art Trail begins, indicates that St Arnaud has a primary opportunity to be considered a hub from which to explore these two regions. It is the opportunity to leverage market awareness of these 2 profile regions.

HERITAGE ARCHITECTURE

According to project managers for the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid, St Arnaud represents the best example of a complete, gold heritage town in the Grampians region. There are currently approximately 500 records of significance listed on the Victorian Heritage Database for St Arnaud. Investing in heritage preservation will be vitally important to establishing a place brand.

- The Crown Land office, St Arnaud, is of historical and architectural significance to the State of Victoria.
- Toddington Shearing Shed & Homestead is of architectural, historical, social and scientific significance to the State of Victoria
- St Peter's Church at Carapooee is of architectural and historical significance to the State of Victoria.
- St. Arnaud Railway Station is historically and architecturally significant to the State of Victoria.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES – 'Only in St Arnaud' attractions can be drivers of visitation

- The oldest fire station in Victoria
- The only known public garden designed by revered landscape designer, Edna Walling
- Largest township collection of Silo and Street Mural Art in Australia
- Locally crafted ornate wrought-iron lacework
- St Arnaud Railway Station the most intact example of the largest standard station building designs, erected during the 'light lines' era (c.1869 - c.1884).



CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

There is significant tourism value in St Arnaud that when harnessed effectively, will have a positive impact for livability in the community and the visitor economy. To achieve tourism growth, priority attention is need in 4 focus areas.



LEADERSHIP

- There is a perceived gap in coordination of project information at NGSC with plans for visitor servicing, tourism suppliers and community groups.
- The tourism community in St Arnaud needs an endorsed leadership role connecting key stakeholders and the NGSC.
- A committee of council including tourism representation can achieve consideration of the visitor economy in Shire planning.
- Built heritage preservation has been undervalued at NGSC and a heritage overlay is needed in the St Arnaud Structure Plan.

DESTINATION AWARENESS

- Quality online content is difficult to find, leading to an undervaluing of the tourism experience in St Arnaud and community group websites are not optimised for search.
- There is a need to tell St Arnaud's stories more effectively online.
- Community group brochures are of low quality and not representative of rich storytelling.
- Establishing a VisitStArnaud page on the NGSC website is a minimum requirement, with investment in quality images to be shared with Grampians Tourism.

ACCOMMODATION

- Accommodation is consumed by workers leading to gaps in supply and upgrade investment for leisure tourists.
- Accommodation supply study is required to project future needs, aligned to town growth aspirations
- Land at current caravan park restricts growth and a new site should be considered where chalets can be added.

AMENITIES & SERVICES

- Wayfinding is unanimously recognised as a major gap and current interpretive signage is in disrepair
- Signage is urgently needed for the Silo Art and Mural Trail as a major attraction
- Upgrades to walking and cycling paths, public amenities upgrades for all abilities, is needed in public parks to encourage visitors to plan to stop in St Arnaud

TOURISM MARKETING



MARKETING CONTEXT

DOMESTIC OUTLOOK

In 2020, domestic tourism in Australia was impacted by a seismic shift in demand as a result of a 'once in a 100 year' bushfire season and the Covid-19 global pandemic. Over \$10 billion of travel spend was cancelled as borders closed to international travel and across domestic boundaries.

HOW COVID HAS RE-SHAPED THE DOMESTIC MARKET

Like most small regional towns around Australia, St Arnaud is reliant on domestic visitors, mostly VFR holiday makers and regional travellers from within a relatively short proximity. Border restrictions and rising Covid-19 cases in all states of Australia has resulted in Melbourne consumers taking to short road trips and exploring regional areas that have not traditionally been in their consideration set. The caravan and camping market has seen significant growth in the last two years, particularly for active families. 'Lifestyle Leaders' who would have traditionally travelled overseas are now seeking equivalent quality experiences domestically.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ST ARNAUD?

As 'Lifestyle Leaders' are seeking new experiences closer to home, the opportunity for St Arnaud is to take immediate action to create awareness for existing, quality experiences and rich storytelling. In a recent report released by Urban List, the challenge for domestic destinations like St Arnaud, has been identified as being one of perception: "We have a job to do to overcome our decades-old cultural cringe, to unpack a pretty deeply entrenched second-best psyche, and undo this preconceived notion that what's going on "over there" (ie. Internationally) is more culturally enriching and worthy of our most precious resources: money and time. We need to convince Australians that our destinations aren't just places — they are cultural experiences every bit as worthy of their investment; experiences that are at their very best in this moment — uncrowded, safe, restorative" Urban Insights: Wanderlust or Wanderbust; Travel Marketing In Australia 2021

Urban Insights: Wanderlust or Wanderbust; Travel Marketing In Australia 2021

LOOKING FORWARD

Since April 2020, Tourism Australia has been tracking 'Travel Sentiment' for Australian travel consumers, measuring confidence, attitudes to travel and booking intent. As at 25 January 2022, the outlook for Australians to travel domestically indicates:



- The Omicron variant has had a significant impact on consumer confidence
- Fear of contracting COVID is now the biggest barrier to domestic travel and at a higher level than anytime since this sentiment tracking series commenced; however



- 53% of travel intenders cite the need for a holiday is the biggest driver to take a holiday. VFR remains the 2nd biggest driver of intent

In Victoria:



- 34% of consumers are thinking about their next holiday
- 33% are cautious about travelling within Australia for a while
- 46% have an intention to travel domestically in the next 2 years
- 67% are considering to travel domestically in the next 4 years

Overall confidence in flying domestically has declined as a result of the Omicron variant. International travel intent within the next 1-2 years has trended down, with 31% of consumers now not sure/will not travel internationally.

In 2019 77% of the visitor spend in Australia was from the domestic market. This is unlikely to change soon. As a drive destination, **St Arnaud has a primary opportunity to attract domestic travellers who are curious to seek new destinations** within the duration of this plan

<https://www.tourism.australia.com/content/dam/digital/corporate/documents/tourism-australia-travel-sentiment-tracker-16-22-march-2022-domestic-31032022-v1.pdf>

THE CUSTOMERS WE WANT



OUR TARGET AUDIENCES ARE ADVENTURERS @ HEART!

A renewed tourism direction for St Arnaud will seek to make connections with target audiences across multiple demographics. They will have an appreciation of nature and wellness in the outdoors; a desire to seek out good food, heritage and artisan experiences. Within the 'Lifestyle Leaders' psychographic segment, St Arnaud's primary demographic audiences are:

- Active Couples
- Active Families

Aligned to visitor source markets for the wider Grampians region, visitors will primarily be regional from within a 2-3 hour drive. The target source market for St Arnaud is Melbourne.

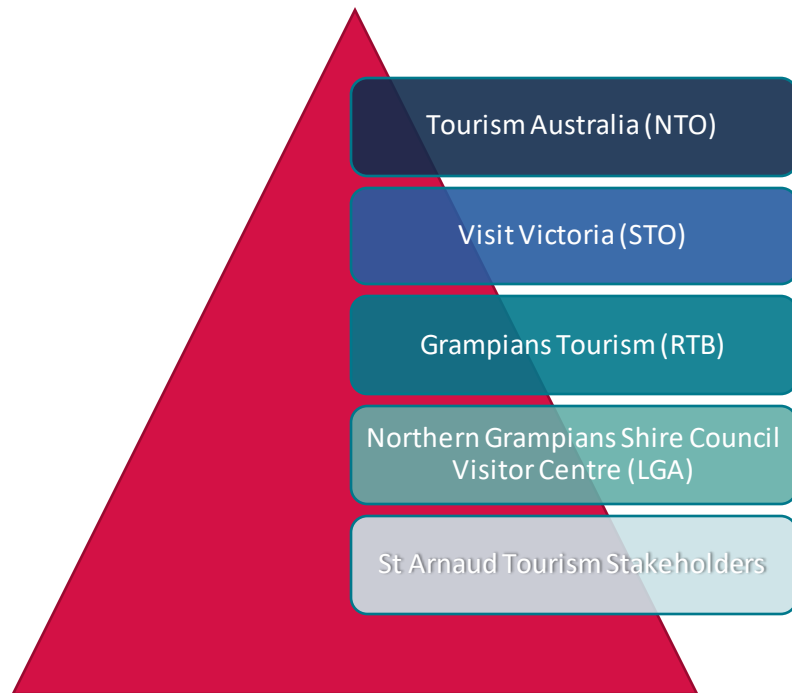
Grampians Tourism describes the mindset of 'Lifestyle Leaders' as:

"Lifestyle Leaders come in all shapes and sizes, across varying socio-economic groups and market segments. They have the means and propensity to travel and purchase at local businesses. They are progressive, curious, socially and technologically active, adhere to and seek status, follow trends and love to advocate.

They are socially active with friends and family and are always looking for something better. They view experiences as life enriching and value the great outdoors, adventure and feeling free."

MARKETING ALIGNMENT

Whilst Covid-19 is impacting tourism beyond any destination's control, the reality is that markets will rebound. Australia will be viewed as a 'safe' destination; a country of amazing natural wonders and unique attractions. Attracting sustainable visitor growth means that new markets will need to be explored. Accordingly, the SATSAP needs to consider how it aligns to the tourism messages that Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO's) take to market.



TOURISM AUSTRALIA is the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) and a division of Austrade in the Australian Government. Their role is to influence travel to and within Australia through marketing inspiring content, targeted to High Value Travellers.

VISIT VICTORIA is the State Tourism Organisation (STO). When Australia is in a consideration set for international consumers, V V's role is to position Victoria as an exciting destination with plenty to do. They partner in market with travel agents to enable bookings.

GRAMPIANS TOURISM is the Regional Tourism Board (RTB) in which St Arnaud resides. Primarily, GT's role is to partner with tourism operators and stakeholders to promote inspiring, region-wide itineraries; mostly for a domestic market. Their campaigns channel bookings directly to their members and they provide rich content to support V V's in-market promotions.

NGSC is the Local Government Authority (LGA) responsible for promoting tourism to which St Arnaud

and six other LGA's. Their role is to promote very localised experiences and demonstrate how a visitor can move through the region, aiming to increase length of stay. Their primary market is Melbourne and regional Victoria.

St Arnaud's destination marketing role aims to share authentic storytelling and local knowledge with all DMO partners to raise awareness for St Arnaud and to leverage their significant social audiences.

Quality destination marketing is the responsibility of every service business in St Arnaud which can have a positive impact on visitors. The aim is to reach, inspire and assist visitors early in their planning, making it a seamless experience to choose to visit St Arnaud..

EXPERIENCE THEMES



Of course, there's much more to life in St Arnaud that will be of interest to visitors. A thorough audit of visitor experiences has revealed four priority themes, which will be used to guide tourism development and destination marketing recommendations for St Arnaud over the life of this tourism action plan.

EXPERIENCE AGRICULTURE

We are a farming town. We love our way of life and we're willing to share the fruits of our labour with others.

EMBRACE NATURE

National Parks and lakes on our doorstep. We are a community that understands wellness in the outdoors.

CELEBRATE HERITAGE

Gold is part of our story. We value our history and are committed to preserving our built environment and our shared origins.

DISCOVER ARTISANS

We nurture creativity in our community to create a vibrancy for our residents and visitors.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The NGSC appointed external consultants DTM Tourism to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including the community to lay the foundation for to grow St Arnaud's tourism economy.

The purpose of phase one of the engagement process was to gaining insights on challenges, opportunities, priority needs, a vision for the future and key themes to guide the development of St Arnaud's unique story (brand).

Phase one engagement activities included:

- 17 x Stakeholder Interviews
- 3 x Site visits to ST ARNAUD tourism attractions
- 2 x Online community surveys (45 responses)
- 4 x Project Control Group (PCG) meetings
- 1 x ST ARNAUD community workshop

Phase 2 Engagement

The purpose of phase two of the engagement process was to test the vision, themes and actions developed in the draft action plan.

Appendix 1: What we heard, details the results of key engagement activities.



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan (SATSAP) is designed to guide the community and NGSC in the process of growing the visitor economy and achieving the vision for tourism in St Arnaud over a 10-year period.

TOURISM ASSESSMENT MODEL

DTM has developed a model which recognises nine key components to drive growth in a tourism destination.

Ultimately, activity in each of the focus areas will provide the destination with the best opportunity to implement successful marketing campaigns, which are targeted, visitor centric and can be measured.

Inattention across a range of areas will have a direct impact on the growth of tourism in St Arnaud, i.e. without Compelling Experience enacted through a focus on Product Development, Destination Marketing is diluted through lack of destination appeal.

This model has been used to reconcile the data and community insights in the form of key strategic direction. This strategy has combined element two and nine into one strategic direction.

The following section outlines the eight strategic directions and provides the rationale for action, with the intent that over subsequent years, action plans will be reviewed, analysed and updated budgets applied.



1. FACILITATE STRONG LEADERSHIP

The SATSAP for 2022-32 is intended to guide destination development considerations for the NGSC. It is intended that this will be a living document where budgets, responsibilities and delivery are considered nimble, to respond to market changes. The actions in this stage are designed to establish a strategic overview for all further actionable tasks.

Implementing the NGSC's tourism strategic direction requires the establishment of **Local Leaders**, which is equally about resourcing clearly defined tourism roles within the NGSC as it is about identifying community leadership. The most effective tourism outcomes in local government are achieved where council staff responsible for tourism are included in decision making across the LGA, to assess impact of council decisions on the visitor economy.

Facilitating economic development and tourism:

- Identifying capability gaps in community leadership to provide operational support
- Working with stakeholders to increase local employment, and support small business development, startups and innovation
- Supporting the development of tourism hubs

2. BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO DEFINE OUR STORY?

Storytelling is the compelling experience that stays with visitors long after they have left a destination. It's also a driver of curiosity which encourages visitors to seek out a destination in the 'dreaming' and 'planning' phase of the purchase cycle. St Arnaud has a rich story to tell, however, currently it's difficult for consumers to engage with online and not adequately told when a visitor finds themselves in town.

Storytelling is owned by the community at a granular level, where authentic content needs to be developed. Currently, the quality of content is a major gap for St Arnaud's community and inadequate to share with Destination Marketing Organisations (DMO). Establishing a program of support for St Arnaud's tourism stakeholders and community groups to understand St Arnaud's Destination Story, whilst providing guidance on how to engage with the narrative in their own communications, will create a critical mass of awareness for St Arnaud's visitor experience promise.

HOW IS OUR STORY TOLD?

A brand is the collection of associations that people have about a product, business or place. Assumptions are made about people by the way they dress, the behavior they exhibit and their personalities. It is the same process which helps consumers to associate with place brands. A place brand helps determine how visitors feel about a destination, and how they would describe it to others. A brand is more than just a logo.

Your brand is uniquely yours and tells your story. It defines your competitive advantage and speaks your truth. Your brand should be consistent wherever customers interact with your destination. This includes its physical location and its online presence, including your website, social channels, signage and all printed marketing materials. Each point at which the customer engages with the brand is a 'touchpoint' where the brand and its promise is reinforced, and the visitor experience and value perception starts to be built.

A consistent brand will help visitors recognise St Arnaud and its visitor experience promise, no matter where they interact or connect with it.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ST ARNAUD?

With the transitional approach to economic diversification being a priority for St Arnaud, tourism is now coming into sharp focus. Investment in tourism infrastructure and experience development is needed and the expectation of tourism outcomes will be high. However, simply building the infrastructure will not ensure visitors will engage with it. To position itself as a destination of choice, St Arnaud now requires a clear and succinct place brand which it can uniquely own. A place brand for St Arnaud is about the experience promise that St Arnaud can take to market, which defines its competitive advantage.

The development of a place brand for St Arnaud will include:

- A memorable tagline
- An inspiring positioning statement
- A compelling story

Stylistically, a place brand for St Arnaud should be complimentary to the visitor experience but designed to appeal to the target audiences of the region developed through a robust process.

2. BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND (Continued)

BUILD A COMPELLING STORY AND PLACE BRAND

SOCIAL MEDIA APPROACH

Social media channels are now a major part of the entire customer journey, delivering content at all stages from Dreaming through to Sharing. As the NGSC plans to take back Visitor Centre operations across the shire in 2022, inspired social media management is a core capability to effective visitor servicing operations and requires dedicated resources, coordination and a content plan.

To establish a tourism voice online for St Arnaud, it is essential that the NGSC increases both the frequency (volume) and relevance (inspiration) of tourism-related social media content, moving to a coordinated and unified approach. Visual assets are needed as a priority, depicting target audiences engaging with St Arnaud's tourism experience.

Establishing memorable #hashtags and @handles for use by all tourism associations and operators in St Arnaud, will build the point of difference that St Arnaud needs as a unique destination with the known Grampians region. Once established, this can be amplified through planning and leveraging digital marketing budgets.

IMPROVE WEBSITE AND BOOKING CAPABILITY

Website capability is a major gap for St Arnaud's volunteer community groups. Limited time and skill results in a poor online experience for visitors. Online bookings at accommodation properties are in place, but the quality of information loaded into portals is relatively limited. Most are not adequately connected with major distribution partners.

There is an immediate need to assist tourism stakeholders with business support to improve the online presence of St Arnaud's tourism experience. When searching St Arnaud online, very few accommodation properties or attractions generate a 1st page search return on Google. The silo and mural art does not appear and neither does the NGSC website, indicating that the Council's site is poorly indexed for Search.

At a minimum, tourism information is needed on the NGSC site. Quality information and storytelling will achieve positive impact in attracting residents and investment. It is not sufficient to include a link to Grampians Tourism as a sole source of information. Linking to GT should be a component of a link strategy that adds value to a visitor experience online.

The Shire of Murray in Western Australia is an example that has two towns in the shire that has developed a clear digital presence to reflect the tourism assets and to drive visitation.

[Visit Dwellingup - Where Trails Meet - Dwellingup - Destination Murray](#)
[Pinjarra - Accommodation and Things To Do - Destination Murray](#)

The two sites are managed by the council but are tourism focused. Last year Dwellingup won the "Top Small Tourism Town in Western Australia".

MOBILE FRIENDLY

Over 70% of travellers have done travel research on their mobile. It is essential that all visitor servicing touch points and information are mobile friendly and functionable. Creating visitor servicing content that includes itineraries, trip planners, booking functionality and location activated prompts ensures a seamless experience for a visitor. Mobile devices also hold a range of intelligence that will enable a deeper understanding of customer flow, their customer profile and track engagement and spend. Accessing this data can provide the quantified information that the NGSC requires for planning.

MANAGING CUSTOMER DATA

Customer data is a key region asset, which needs investment across the NGSC. Being able to continue conversations and build relationships with customers, beyond a single 'transaction', is the key to success. By capturing customer data and insights, then sharing these back with industry bodies and operators to use, new opportunities can be revealed and leveraged to increase repeat visitation, drive experience development and become more efficient in region marketing.

3. DEVELOP COMMUNITY BUY-IN

The success of the SATSAP relies on the local tourism community and residents alike to understand that tourism is an economic driver which will either directly or indirectly affect their prosperity. The message needs to be relatable for residents. Ultimately, visitors want to experience a destination 'like a local'. We want all St Arnaud residents to value their town and welcome visitors with open arms.

The SATSAP should therefore align with the new Tourism Marketing and Communications Plan which promotes local advocacy. This is the opportunity for NGSC with relevant community groups including SCAN, the St Arnaud Community Resource Centre and the St Arnaud Visitor Centre to co-ordinate the messaging of St Arnaud's community groups, that often work in isolation from each other.

Advocacy needs to be co-ordinated through council and communicated through all channels including:

- Council website
- Local group social media pages
- E-newsletters
- Dedicated tourism websites

AMBASSADORS & VOLUNTEERS

Reliance on volunteers in St Arnaud is challenging due to the availability of time for volunteers still in the workforce and the ageing population of St Arnaud. However, visitors rate the social engagement with roving ambassadors and volunteers as making a valuable contribution to their enjoyment of a destination.

St Arnaud is a highly connected community within niche interest groups and the intent of the SATSAP is to harness the knowledge of the community, enable positive ways for the community to share their stories and establish a process of recognition for the vital role that ambassadors and volunteers contribute to a vibrant community.

The first step in building strong advocates for St Arnaud is to establish a network of ambassadors, who positively share St Arnaud's tourism value. Their involvement in engaging with visitors may be ad hoc, but they are recognised for their influence in growing St Arnaud's visitor experience. Valuing ambassadors leads to volunteering and commitment of time, which contributes to community wellbeing and positive visitor engagement.

4. PROVIDE QUALITY AMENITIES AND SERVICES

The tourism supply eco-system for St Arnaud is aged and in need of revitalisation to meet the needs of visitors travelling through the region currently and to preempt the needs of an emerging visitor, motivated by the Silo Art Trail and the Pyrenees Wine Region. The priority in the first year, is to attend to WAYFINDING and interpretive signage. This is the low-hanging fruit opportunity to improve the visitor experience in the short term.

5. DEVELOP COMPELLING EXPERIENCES

Developing compelling visitor experiences in St Arnaud starts with understanding the core themes of experience identified in the place brand strategy, assessing the needs of target audiences and identifying gaps.

This strategic direction specifically relates to the four identified GAME CHANGERS for St Arnaud, endorsed by community consultation. In addition, St Arnaud has a competitive advantage to drive visitation from niche interest groups:

- Garden enthusiasts
- Rail heritage enthusiasts

For this reason, restoration of the Edna Walling Garden in Pioneer Park is considered a priority opportunity. Followers of architectural garden design would specifically travel to see a restored Edna Walling design – the only known public park example of her work in Australia.

Rail journeys and heritage is also an emerging experience trend globally. St Arnaud's heritage rail station is of STATE significance to Victoria. There is an opportunity to tell the story of the station and leverage it for rail themed events.

<https://foodandwine.events/event/14727346-a/f-o-o-d-train>

6. CAPABLE TOURISM OPERATORS

Tourism stakeholders in St Arnaud are relatively misrepresented on major platforms because they need better understanding of consumer behavior, general marketing skills, and education to establish partnerships in the wider industry.

Most accommodation suppliers have online booking systems which allow them to be instantly bookable. However, they are not connected to major Online Travel Agents. The compounding risk for St Arnaud as a destination is that it is perceived that there is nothing to do.

The top five St Arnaud experiences on Tripadvisor are:

1. Queen Mary Botanic Gardens
2. Pioneer Park
3. The Bible Museum
4. Wax Garden Conservation Reserve
5. St Arnaud Heritage Trail

HOW TO BUILD CAPABILITY AND INCREASE DISTRIBUTION

Capability building is about taking a tailored approach to tourism industry training to guide businesses to develop refreshed visitor experiences, aligned to the SATSAP.

The most effective way to build capability is to undertake one-on-one business mentoring to enhance tourism operations and marketing skills which will establish strong foundations to encourage entrepreneurship and grow reach through new partnerships in the wider tourism sector.

Key objectives of capability building are:

- support new and established businesses in product and service development, trade market-readiness, and business diversification and expansion
- develop the skills and expertise of tourism operators to enhance business productivity;
- encourage and support business collaboration
- prepare businesses to aim for 'best in class' quality assurance to achieve tourism accreditation.

WHY DOES ST ARNAUD NEED IT?

Demonstrating that there is plenty to do through distributing purchasable product online, directly increases visitor volume, creating jobs, increasing regional gross product and driving economic transformation by encouraging visitors to stay longer and do more.

7. VISITOR SERVICING

A foundation of visitor servicing is to be where customers are. This requires the development of new customer engagement points at key nodes throughout the NGSC region. Visitors don't see boundaries in the way that residents or local governments do.

A common misconception is that visitors disengage with traditional visitor servicing in preference to seeking visitor information online. The reality is that visitors require quality visitor servicing both online, in-centre or collocated in businesses or existing Council services. Engaging with authentic locals is a priority need for visitors in new destinations. They seek reinforcement to confirm their online planning from a trusted source. Visitor Centres equally play an important role in welcoming potential new residents to a community.

As NGSC will resume operations of the St Arnaud Visitor Centre in 2022, visitor information will need to consider where social posts link back to content on the current NGSC website and that of Grampians Tourism.

Quality visitor information allows visitors to plan to stay longer, making a direct and positive impact to St Arnaud's visitor economy.

St Arnaud's visitor experiences have a low digital footprint, leading to a perception that there is nothing to do. A quick, simple and effective solution is to create listings for St Arnaud visitor attractions and locations on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). This is a content aggregator platform which shares content to state and national tourism partners.

<https://atdw.com.au/distributors/current-distributors/>

8. EVENTS

Covid has impacted the ability for regional events to operate since 2020, however, as protocols for event management in respect of Covid are now well defined, preparation for the reintroduction of events, which have the potential to drive visitation, should be considered as part of St Arnaud's marketing strategy.

Events serve the purpose of showcasing a destination experience and spiking visitation at a given moment in time, but with the intent to encourage repeat visitation. Development of tourism events need to align with destination experience themes. Timing should be considered to encourage visitation where accommodation capacity is achievable and/or to leverage awareness of events in neighboring areas.

Festival of St Arnaud <http://www.starnaudfestival.com.au/>

St Arnaud Young Farmers – Harvest Event

St Arnaud Show <https://www.starnaudshow.com/> Victoria's only two-day horse event with show jumping and ring events.

PARTNERSHIPS: Regional Arts Victoria <http://www.rav.net.au>

GAME CHANGER OPPORTUNITIES



MAKING THE MOST OF OUR ASSETS

Creating a vision for tourism development in St Arnaud resides in the need to find a solution to encourage regular visitors passing through St Arnaud to stop, stay and spend, rather than pass through. In a future-focused plan, there is a need to consider and understand the needs of emerging markets who demand fresh and contemporary visitor experiences. GAME CHANGERS are considered as long-term visionary projects which not only reflect the aspirations of the community but are assessed as having merit to enable destination development. Four priority locations have been identified as GAME CHANGERS, that when developed, will create inspired spaces that will benefit the local community as a priority and appeal to visitors.

1. NAPIER STREET RETAIL FACADES
2. QUEEN MARY BOTANIC GARDENS HERITAGE PRECINCT
3. RAILWAY STATION/SILO ART
4. TEDDINGTON RESERVOIR



CASE STUDY – HERITAGE FACADES

THROSSELL STREET REVITALISATION, COLLIE, W.A.

Collie has been undertaking a transformative approach to industry diversification through investment in tourism experiences and infrastructure projects. In 2020-21, The Shire of Collie, in partnership with the WA State Government and local property owners, undertook a streetscape revitalisation project to repair and upgrade historic building façades to boost first impressions for tourists. Heritage architects, H&H Architects, were appointed to design streetscape renders and manage the project delivery to repair and upgrade the façades of 11 buildings. The project involved revitalisation works featuring nostalgic elements including bullnose verandas, ornate detailing and hand-painted signwriting.

BUDGET:

1.1 Million in state funding was contributed to this project, with matched funding from business owners.

OUTCOMES:

The contract for revitalisation was awarded to local builders, creating construction and trade jobs for the life of the project. In addition to investments in Mural Art (Collie is home to the largest dam wall mural in the world) and trails infrastructure, Collie is experiencing significant growth in visitors. The facades project has encouraged visitors to stop and wander the revitalised street. In the short to medium term, it is hoped that investors will consider new retail opportunities in response to increased footfall.



NAPIER STREET FACADES AND RETAIL

CELEBRATE HERITAGE

Our story begins in Gold. We value our heritage and are committed to preserving our built environment and our shared origins.

DESCRIPTION

One of the highlights of St Arnaud is the unique architecture in Napier Street, however, facades, balconies and verandahs have fallen into disrepair. A program of repair creates a first and lasting impression.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Restoration of signage for buildings at entry points would lessen the impression that the buildings are rundown
- Illuminated signage would create vibrancy at night, e.g., Farmers Arms
- Hard to implement. Buildings are privately owned. Time is of the essence.

PROJECT PRIORITY - HIGH

Project Managers for the Central Victorian Goldfields World Heritage Bid, have advised that there is a competitive advantage for St Arnaud as a historic town compared to other regions in the Central Goldfields and the Grampians. They regard St Arnaud to be the best example of a complete heritage town in the Grampians. Whilst the town may not have locations that would meet World Heritage assessment criteria, it would be well positioned to fulfill visitor expectations of a heritage town and therefore draw high visitation from the promotion of a World Heritage trail.

A program of restoration is recommended. The NGSC is encouraged to take a lead role in developing a heritage architectural master plan, required to source grant funding and private investment. It is recommended that the NGSC leads a visioning workshop to understand the will of current owners to participate in the restoration program, demonstrating the benefit of façade restoration, contributing to higher quality retail and rents.

St Arnaud Structure Plan - Emerging Themes

Enhance the lifestyle, character and heritage features that make St Arnaud special.

QUEEN MARY BOTANIC GARDENS HERITAGE PRECINCT

CELEBRATE HERITAGE

Our story begins in Gold. We value our heritage and are committed to preserving our built environment and our shared origins.

DESCRIPTION

The southern end of Napier Street is St Arnaud's opportunity to create a first impression of an attractive heritage town for visitors. Creating a heritage precinct that connects the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens to the Visitor Centre in the Crown Land Office, Courthouse, Shire Hall, Fire Station and Botanical Hotel will create a linger zone for visitors to stop and explore. Activation at night could include projections and food truck events.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Landscaping is a priority
- Seating and covered picnic areas are needed
- Story telling interpretive signage is needed throughout the park and adjacent to heritage buildings
- Restoration of the Botanical Hotel façade is needed

PROJECT PRIORITY – MEDIUM

It is recommended that the NGSC undertakes a beautification and activation plan for the precinct to include additional alfresco seating, landscaping, public art and wayfinding at the primary entry point from Melbourne via Sunraysia Hwy to create a welcoming, first impression to St Arnaud. Visitor Centres are most successful when co-located with an attraction and/or on a primary access route. This area could be an active zone for community as well as visitors. Improving public amenities in the Queen Mary Botanic Gardens is recommended to delineate a heritage zone of interpretive walkways, starting at the Visitor Centre and ending at the Historical Society, encouraging visitors to stop, linger and spend, rather than moving on.

The NGSC is encouraged to develop a wayfinding trail which will communicate St Arnaud's rich heritage story and drive a high visitor perception and value when linked to the Raillery Gallery and Silo Art Trail in addition to the heritage precinct circuit.

St Arnaud Structure Plan - Emerging Themes

Create the opportunities to expand the network of high-quality public spaces.



RAILWAY STATION / SILO ART

DISCOVER ARTISANS

We nurture creativity in our
community to create a
vibrancy for our residents and
visitors

DESCRIPTION

The St Arnaud Railway Station and Raillery Hub has been developed as a gallery for artists to showcase their art and also provides a retail outlet for local produce and handicraft. It is in close proximity to two Silo Art and Street Mural locations but is currently disconnected as a visitor experience.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Landscaping is a priority
- Supportive of precinct development
- Signage is important for all murals in St Arnaud

PROJECT PRIORITY - HIGH

Creating a precinct starting point for the St Arnaud Mural Trail at the Raillery Hub will drive visitors to a key attraction and a linger zone which defines a core competitive advantage for St Arnaud, contributing to positive consumer perception and valuing of the creative community.

A wayfinding Mural Trail, creates dispersal through town leading to increased footfall and support for local businesses. As a priority experience for St Arnaud, it is recommended that the NGSC invests in quality images and collateral for distribution at the St Arnaud Visitor Centre immediately.

Collaborating with St Arnaud's artistic community groups to develop a proposal for interpretive wayfinding is recommended as a priority for the relevant council officer. QR coded content for additional storytelling would appeal to target audiences.

St Arnaud Structure Plan - Emerging Themes

Explore opportunities to enhance the 'Gateway Experience' into town



EMBRACE NATURE

National Parks on our doorstep. We are a community that understands wellness in the outdoors.

DESCRIPTION

Water and nature-based tourism activity have been identified by the community as being of high value to enhance livability in St Arnaud and surrounds. Development of this kind is a priority focus for Visit Victoria and Teddington Reservoir is currently being investigated as an opportunity to develop tourism infrastructure, including recognition of its cultural significance.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Additional recreational water locations and supporting infrastructure/facilities to cater for the surrounding communities and increased tourism. Walkers Lake is not adequate.
- We need a lake with proper amenities and powered sites; this will provide accommodation and a reason for travelers to hang around.
- Mountain bike track with accommodation, more natural bush guiding and camping.
- Refill Teddington Reservoir.

PROJECT PRIORITY – MEDIUM

Parks Victoria has advised an update on the progress on this project. Joint management assessment is underway, however a time-frame is undetermined. The project will include upgrades to camp sites and facilities. Cultural Heritage opportunities exist in the park. 4WD and walking trails are of good quality.

The recommendation is that the NGSC works with Parks Victoria to facilitate water management to the top dam. Improved experience will create an attraction for St Arnaud and Stuart Mill, which will align to core tourism markets for the Grampians region, specifically active families and visitors motivated by the awareness of the Grampians trails.

The management of the National Park is done in conjunction with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans as part of a land use agreement. This provides the opportunity to introduce indigenous tourism product to the park and to the region in general. The NGSC is currently progressing the Reconciliation Action Plan and this could be the vehicle to introduce the indigenous tourism opportunities across the region which are an important pillar in driving visitation and understanding.

St Arnaud Structure Plan - Emerging Themes Enhance

St Arnaud's unique landscape setting connection to the State Parks.

ACTION PLANS



1. LEADERSHIP

Items 1.1 to 1.4 are tasks for both Stawell and St Arnaud

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-25	MID TERM 2032-27	LONG TERM 2028-2032
1.1	Delegate relevant council staff to establish a tourism mentoring program to assist the officer with the execution of the SATSAP	NGSC			
1.2	Foster collaboration between community local leadership, Grampians Tourism (GT) and the NGSC through the establishment of a Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) as a function of Council but driven by local leaders	NGSC			
1.3	Develop a Visitor Intercept Survey to map the visitor 'information' journey, including their preferred method of visitor information consumption, so that we can reach more visitors that come to NGS	NGSC			
1.4	Establish a quantified tourism growth target for the 10-year strategy based on projected accommodation capacity	NGSC			
1.5	Engage with Yarriambiack Shire Council to leverage opportunities between St Arnaud's Street Mural Trail, accommodation supply and visitor demand for the Silo Art Trail	NGSC			
1.6	Engage with the Pyrenees Grape Growers & Winemakers (PGW) to leverage opportunities between St Arnaud's Street Mural Trail and visitor amenities with visitor supply gaps to experience the Pyrenees Wine Region	NGSC			

2. STORYTELLING AND PLACE BRAND

Items 2.1 to 2.3 are tasks for both Stawell and St Arnaud

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
2.1	Develop a place brand strategy, including the development of new brand elements and assets	NGSC			
2.2	Review collateral needs at St Arnaud Visitor Centre and reproduce with a new St Arnaud place brand, aligned to NGSC style guide	NGSC			
2.3	Develop a Tourism Marketing and Communication Plan incl: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. content and social media plan, including PPC strategy to increase website traffic ii. budget to procuring visual assets, specifically in videography and imagery to target active families and adult couples, which can be shared with tourism stakeholders and DMO's to promote St Arnaud visitor attractions iii. Consolidate all tourism content for St Arnaud and consider a network site structure to point a www.visitstarnaud.com.au domain to a St Arnaud tourism microsite. iv. Establish new social accounts as #visitstarnaud and @visitstarnaud 	NGSC			

2. STORYTELLING AND PLACE BRAND (CONTINUED)

Items 2.4 to 2.7 are tasks for both Stawell and St Arnaud

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
2.4	Implement 'St Arnaud's Destination Story' across all channels and share with DMO partners and tourism stakeholders	NGSC/GT			
2.5	Develop and deliver a local business support program – Visitor Inspiration Partner (VIP) that enables tourism businesses to implement quality storytelling content outcomes in support of St Arnaud's place brand and destination story	NGSC			
2.6	Engage with Grampians Tourism to share content on www.visitgrampians.com.au and support tourism industry familiarisations	NGSC/GT			
2.7	Implement training for the relevant council officer to load content for all NGSC tourism assets and locations on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW), connecting to Visit Victoria, Visit Grampians and national distribution partners	NGSC			

3. COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Items 3.1 to 3.3 are tasks for both Stawell and St Arnaud

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
3.1	Release St Arnaud’s new tourism direction with community briefings and PR releases	NGSC			
3.2	Develop a ‘Local Legends’ Ambassador Program for community members who can add value to visitor experience at key locations eg: the Raillery Hub and Historical Society Museum	NGSC			
3.3	Grow the network of NGSC volunteers to experience tourism as a new volunteering opportunity at the St Arnaud VC	NGSC			

4.

AMENITIES AND SERVICE

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
4.1	Undertake a wayfinding audit to include directional and interpretive signage	NGSC			
4.2	Family-friendly accommodation is a major gap in St Arnaud. An audit of accommodation supply and visitor projections is needed to support new accommodation development prospectus.	NGSC			
4.3	Investigate a location for a 2nd caravan park with intent to include chalet accommodation, meeting the needs of regional workers	NGSC			
4.4	Develop an annual visitor survey to identify retail, dining and hire services gaps in preparation for a business start-up prospectus to attract new business investment in St Arnaud	NGSC			
4.5	Investigate Community wellness public amenity upgrades to include restoration of walk paths, accessible toilets in public parks, water re-fill stations near major attractions	NGSC			
4.6	Investigate a pet-friendly exercise park and coffee station in upgrades to Pioneer Park to encourage visitors with pets to stop	NGSC			
4.7	Establish defined entry statements on major highway approaches to St Arnaud with place branding and sustainable landscaping. Visitors should understand they are entering a heritage town	NGSC			

5. COMPELLING EXPERIENCES

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
5.1	Develop a master plan for the activation of the Botanical Gardens Heritage Precinct	NGSC			
5.2	Engage heritage architects to develop renders for Napier Streed Façade restoration	NGSC			
5.3	Facilitate digital storytelling experience development, collateral and image assets for the St Arnaud Mural Trail in partnership with Artspace	NGSC			
5.4	Partner with the St Arnaud Historical Society to develop a restoration plan for the Edna Walling Garden in Pioneer Park	NGSC			
5.5	Support the Raillery Hub to develop an annual rail-themed event for St Arnaud	NGSC			

6. CAPABLE TOURISM OPERATORS

Items 6.1 to 6.3 are tasks for both Stawell and St Arnaud

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
6.1	Support Grampians Tourism to introduce a capability building program to mentor tourism operators in the improvement of their online visibility and distribution partnerships	NGSC / GT			
6.2	Establish internal protocols which can assist new tourism startups in the NGSC to navigate LGA and State approvals, and connect with priority tourism support services including Grampians Tourism and VTIC	NGSC / GT			
6.3	Establish a library of visual assets that St Arnaud tourism stakeholders can access for the purpose of sharing quality content for St Arnaud's priority tourism attractions	NGSC			

7. VISITOR SERVICING

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
7.1	Establish processes to manage visitor data tracking. Door counts and simple post code data collection will provide a starting point in year 1 which can be easily managed by volunteers	NGSC			
7.2	Work with local media and community groups to share positive experiences which encourage new volunteers to join the St Arnaud Visitor Centre	NGSC			
7.3	Establish a static visitor servicing co-location at the Raillery Hub in partnership with Artspace, engaging local ambassadors to interact with visitors	NGSC			
7.4	Evaluate visitor journey data to establish priority distribution locations for visitor information collateral and static displays	NGSC			
7.5	Source merchandise from across the Northern Grampians; specifically, art, curios and local produce to generate additional retail revenue for St Arnaud VC	NGSC			

8. EVENTS

REF	TASK	ASSIGNED	SHORT TERM 2022-24	MID TERM 2025-27	LONG TERM 2028-32
8.1	Support event organisers to navigate permit and approval requirements and achieve compliance	Events/ NGSC			
8.2	Establish a communication protocol between event organisers and NGSC to share PR and events information through NGSC owned channels	NGSC / Events			
8.3	Support niche community groups to plan new event concepts in advance, to take advantage of grant funding opportunities	Events/ NGSC			
8.4	Develop an events strategy to showcase the regional assets of Gold and Agriculture together with nature-based forums and conferences	NGSC			

Appendix 1: WHAT WE HEARD

St Arnaud Engagement Plan – Phase One and Two

Engagement Activity	Numbers of people engaged
Stakeholder Workshop	17
Site visits to St Arnaud tourist attractions x 3	25
Online surveys x 2	45
St Arnaud community workshop	15
St Arnaud Expo (on site @ Market Square)	15
POZI comments wall	10
Written submissions	2
Total people engaged in the draft	122

Phase 1: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, WHAT WE HEARD

In February 2022, approximately 15 people participated in a community workshop in the Perry Room in St Arnaud.

The following outlines findings from the workshop.

Q. Which words would you use to describe St Arnaud and its culture?

- Historic streetscapes
- Surrounded by bush
- Gardens
- Pretty
- Architecture is in good repair and representative of the town
- Central, easy access, good place to stop

Q. Which words would you use to describe the people of St Arnaud (the community)?

- Friendly,
- Accepting of others, welcoming,
- Long history and traditional, proud, helpful

Q. Which words would you use to describe life in St Arnaud?

- Relaxed
- Appeals to diverse interests
- Opportunity for families
- Sports and great community facilities
- Safe

Q. Which three values do you think define St Arnaud and its community?

- Proud – Caring – Passionate = Advocates

Q; What's the one thing holidaymakers don't know about St Arnaud that you wish they did?

- Place where you want to be... There's a lot to like...

Q. Thinking about neighbouring regions or shires, what sets St Arnaud apart?

- Good supermarket
- Best Gardens
- Caravan Park
- Surrounded by bush
- History
- Climate

Q. Imagine St Arnaud in 50 years' time. How do you hope it will be described?

St Arnaud:

- Flourishing
- Great place to stay and live
- Has maintained its value in heritage
- Shops only on Sunday

Phase 1: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, WHAT WE HEARD (continued)

PRIMARY Themes of Experience

- Heritage
- Artisan
- Nature-based
- Agritourism

SUPPORTING Themes of Experience

- Food and wine
- Parks and gardens
- Shopping and markets
- Self-drive
- Events



Phase 1: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP, WHAT WE HEARD (continued)

There are multiple experiences which align to these themes; however, St Arnaud suffers from a distinct lack of online content to allow potential visitors to plan their visit and ideally, stay for a few days. A clear understanding of the visitor experiences within core themes determines the imagery and videography that is needed to promote St Arnaud. The list, whilst not exhaustive, provides topics which can shape a social media plan and highlights gaps where inspiring content needs to be created that includes relevance for priority target audiences in destination marketing.

HERITAGE

- Walking Tours
- Photography Tourism
- Interpretive Signage
- Driving Tours
- Gardens (Eg Pioneer Park)
- Built Heritage
- Natural History
- Pebble Church
- Love's Cottage
- Gold Mining Trail
- Historic Flour Mill
- Gold Prospecting

ARTISAN

- Raillery Hub
- Silo Art
- Cast Iron Lace
- Murals
- Mosaic Wall
- Artists of Note
- Art Show in September
- Orchid Show
- Musicians – Brass band and Pipe band, buskers
- Country Music Events and Festival

NATURE

- Mountain Bikes Trails
- Kara Kara National Park
- Wax Gardens
- Lookouts
- Wildflowers
- Public Gardens
- Geocaching
- Walkers Lake
- Teddington Reservoir

AGRITOURISM

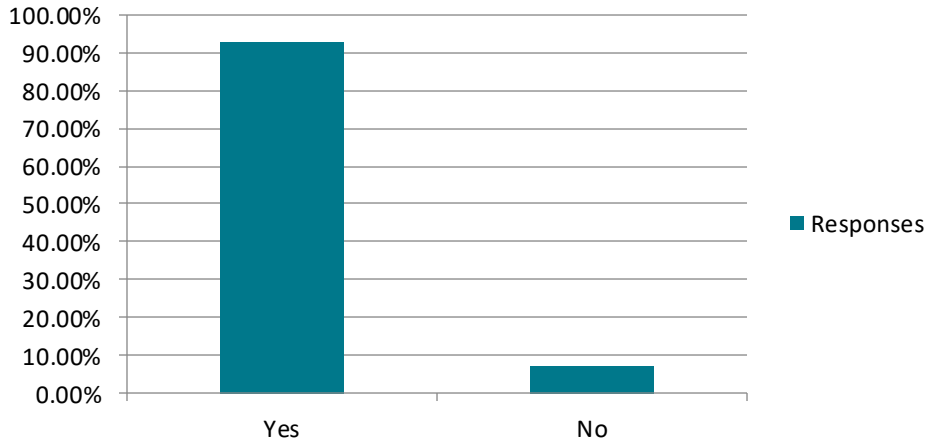
- Redbank Alpacas
- Kara Kara Winery
- Canola Blooms
- Events – Young Farmers
- Agricultural Show
- Farmstay – to be developed
- Harvest Festival
- Uncle Bob's Producers Market
- Olive Groves
- Farmgate Producers

Phase 1: COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

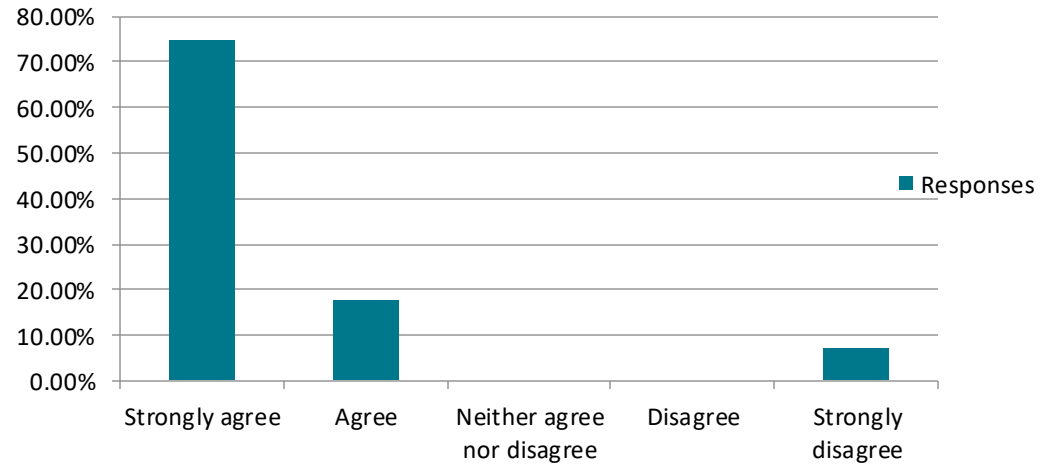
In January 2022, 28 people completed a project survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify opportunities and challenges around growing the visitor economy in St Arnaud.

The following outlines the survey findings.

Do you support the Northern Grampians Shire Council's intent to grow tourism in St Arnaud?

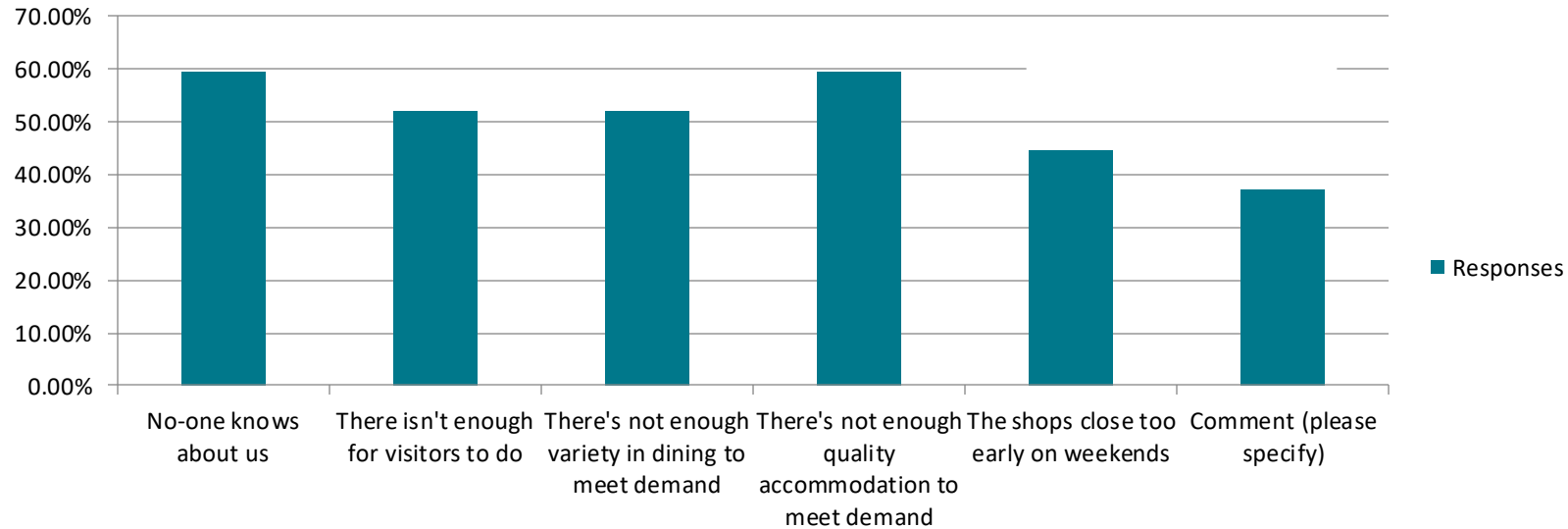


Do you agree that investment in tourism infrastructure benefits both tourists and our local community?



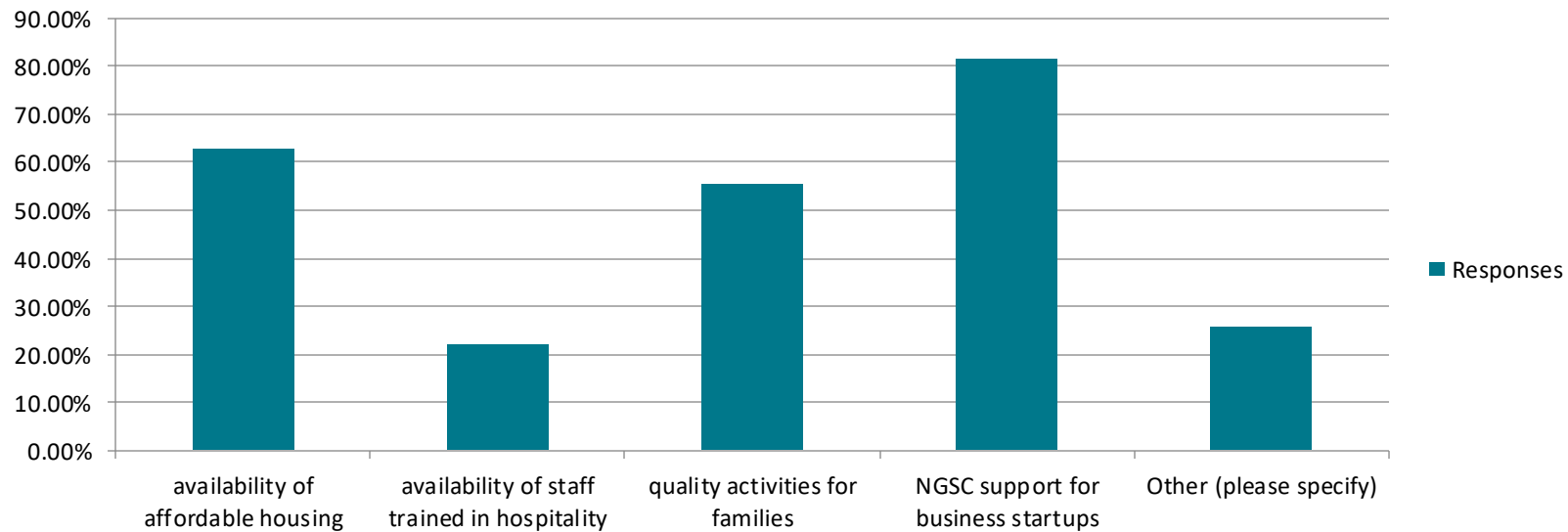
Phase 1: COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

What do you think is the challenge in attracting visitors to St Arnaud right now?
(Tick all that apply)



Phase 1: COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHAT WE HEARD

What do you think would encourage new businesses to open in St Arnaud?



Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes

Over May-June 2022 Council invited the community to provide feedback to the draft St Arnaud Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. Council received four respondents.

What we heard	Response
Pebble Church committee pleased with the inclusion of the church in the plan and would suggest using pictures of it as it is a very unique building.	Included a picture of the Pebble Church
What role is SCAN playing in implementation of task identified.	Council commitment to engage with a broad range of community groups as necessary.
Council should advocate for recreational water such as Teddington Reservoir or Walkers Lake.	Strengthen reference of water and nature-based tourism.

