



# SOUTHERN FORESTS & VALLEYS

“a world away  
from the everyday”

# THE FUTURE OF TOURISM

2023

Prepared by the  
Warren Blackwood  
Alliance of Councils



# WARREN BLACKWOOD ALLIANCE OF COUNCILS

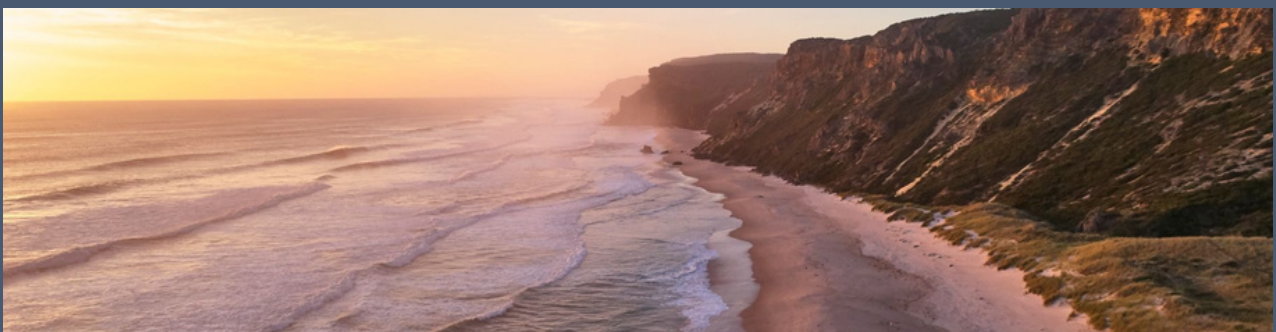
The Warren Blackwood Alliance of Councils (WBAC) is a voluntary regional organisation of Councils representing the Shires of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook Balingup, Manjimup and Nannup.

The WBAC exists to help develop a prosperous and sustainable region in the Warren Blackwood and to improve the quality of life for residents in the area. The WBAC acts as an advocacy group by supporting or undertaking significant projects relating to promoting economic development and diversity, and encouraging regional population growth.

Over the past 22 years the WBAC has established, progressed and executed many projects for the member local governments. Our priorities and future plans are embedded within the Warren Blackwood Sub-Regional Growth Plan.

Since 2013 the WBAC has led the progression of a collective tourism brand to undertake marketing for the region. Today, the Southern Forests & Valley tourism brand is a project of the WBAC. This document is the second version of 'The Future of Tourism' and supersedes the 2018 document.

## OUR TOURISM TEAM



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# SOUTHERN FORESTS & VALLEYS

*A world away from the everyday*

The Southern Forests & Valleys region is located in the heart of Australia's South West, and stretches from Balingup to Walpole, Nannup to Boyup Brook and encompasses Bridgetown, Pemberton, Greenbushes, Manjimup and Northcliffe.

The Southern Forests & Valleys region is undiscovered. We have unique nature and amazing adventure, we have an abundance of art, heritage and culture, and we are the food bowl of the South West.

Our region is home to some of the most beautiful natural landscapes and charming small towns. Our region is a world away from the everyday.

## EPIC ADVENTURE

Experience an adventure playground like no other with stunning national parks, state forests, white sandy beaches, tranquil rivers, rolling hills, starry skies and picturesque landscapes. Walk, cycle, paddle, drive, or horse ride, there's an experience waiting for you.

## CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Immerse yourself in our region's art, heritage, and culture. Discover living heritage, artistic experiences, historic sites, traditional and indigenous cultures, music, and performing arts.

## TASTE LOCAL

Satisfy your taste buds with farm-fresh produce in the food bowl of the South West. From farm gates stalls to farmers markets, cafes, restaurants, wineries, and breweries, there are so many opportunities to taste the region.

## CHARMING TOWNS

Each of our towns is unique, with its own charm, attractions, characters, experiences, and events that showcase the very best of our region. Take a glimpse into what makes our region so special.

## UNWIND AND RECONNECT

Experience a slower pace of living, and travel at your own pace whilst experiencing our culture, food experiences, and nature. The Southern Forests & Valleys offers a unique connection to nature that will leave you feeling refreshed and reinvigorated.

# SOUTHERN FORESTS & VALLEYS

Tourism is a vital industry that has the power to transform regions and contribute significantly to their economic, social, and cultural development.

The Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand has the opportunity to be a driving force for regional growth and sustainability.

The Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand has a clear mission to deliver strategic tourism leadership, guide the development of the visitor experience, support the development of industry capacity, and grow customer awareness of the region's tourism offering.

The aim is for the Southern Forests & Valleys region to be recognised as a highly desirable visitor destination, with a prosperous and sustainable tourism industry contributing to the region's sustainable future.

[www.southernforestsandvalleys.com](http://www.southernforestsandvalleys.com)





# WHAT WE DO

## *And why we do it*

**The primary objectives of the Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand is to showcase, promote and highlight the region's tourism operators, attractions, events, and trails to increase visitation to the Southern Forests & Valleys region.**

By delivering strategic tourism leadership across the Southern Forests & Valleys region, the brand is working to ensure that visitors have the best possible experience and that the region continues to thrive. Together with stakeholders, the Southern Forests & Valleys aims to grow the visitor economy through leadership, promotion, and development. By building the region's image, driving visitation, and boosting the economy, the brand is working to create a sustainable future for the region.

The Southern Forests & Valleys tourism region is home to a diverse range of natural and cultural attractions, and the brand is working to ensure that these are showcased and promoted effectively. By doing so, the brand is helping to generate economic growth and employment opportunities for the region's communities.



In addition to its economic impact, tourism also has significant social and cultural benefits. By attracting visitors from around the world, the Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand is helping to promote cultural exchange and understanding. Visitors to the region can learn about the history, traditions, and customs of the local communities, which can help to foster greater appreciation and respect for our different cultures.

Tourism also has important environmental benefits. By promoting sustainable tourism practices, the Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand is working to protect the natural environment and preserve the region's biodiversity. By doing so, the brand is helping to ensure that the region's natural resources are protected for future generations to enjoy.

# TOURISM IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

## *Who we work with*

*The South West of WA is more than just a destination – it's a hotspot for once-in-a-lifetime experiences, breathtaking scenery and quirky wildlife encounters.*

Australia South West

Tourism Western Australia is the state tourism organisation. Their goal is to grow tourism by marketing WA as an incredible holiday and business events destination; attracting and promoting world class sporting, cultural and arts events; and improving access, accommodation and tourism experiences. The Southern Forests & Valleys supports all marketing initiatives of Tourism WA.



WA is divided into five tourism regions: Australia's Golden Outback, Australia's Coral Coast, Australia's South West, Australia's North West and Destination Perth. The Southern Forests & Valleys region is nestled in the heart of Australia's South West (ASW) as is one of four sub-regions that make up ASW along with Bunbury Geopraphe, Great Southern and the Margaret River Region.



ASW's objective is to build the region into one of the top performing destinations in Australia for the leisure market. The WBAC has a Memorandum of Understanding with ASW which outlines how we work together to maximise the tourism potential within the Southern Forests & Valleys region, and how we are developing a strategic partnership.

The Southern Forests & Valleys represents the towns of Balingup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown, Greenbushes, Manjimup, Nannup, Northcliffe, Pemberton and Walpole which encompasses five local governments areas (LGAs); the Shires of Bridgetown-Greenbushes, Boyup Brook, Donnybrook Balingup, Manjimup and Nannup. The WBAC LGAs work together to progress tourism and each LGA is involved with funding and / or operating visitor centres in their towns.

The partnership between the WBAC LGAs, ASW, and Tourism WA will ensure the continued growth of the Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand for the region.





An aerial photograph of a lush green forest. A suspension bridge with a white railing and a small tower is visible in the upper left. The forest is dense with various shades of green trees. In the lower left, there are some colorful structures, possibly part of a park or festival. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

# BRAND AWARENESS

## *Our identity*

**By creating a strong brand identity, engaging with visitors, and promoting sustainable tourism practices, the region can attract more visitors and provide meaningful and authentic experiences that benefit both the visitors and the local community.**

Increasing brand awareness, engagement, and driving visitation to the Southern Forests & Valleys region is essential to the region's sustainable future. The tourism industry is an important economic driver for the region, providing jobs and economic benefits to the local community, therefore it is crucial for the Southern Forests & Valleys brand to attract visitors to the region, increase their length of stay, and encourage them to spend money in the local economy.

By increasing brand awareness, the Southern Forests & Valleys can position the region as a highly desirable visitor destination. This involves creating a clear brand identity, highlighting the region's unique selling points, and communicating the value of visiting the area. Through effective marketing and promotional campaigns, the brand can reach a wider audience and build awareness of the region's attractions, experiences, and cultural offerings.

Engaging with visitors is another fundamental element of increasing visitation to the region. This involves working with operators to create memorable and authentic experiences that connects with visitors on an emotional level. By providing experiences that reflect the region's unique character and cultural heritage, visitors are more likely to have a positive experience and recommend the region to others.

Driving visitation to the Southern Forests & Valleys region is important not only for economic benefits but also for the preservation of the natural and cultural resources that make the region special. Sustainable tourism practices are critical to ensuring that the region's environment, wildlife, and cultural heritage are preserved for future generations.



# TARGET AUDIENCES

## *Visitors and residents*

**The Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand has clear target audiences consisting of families, couples, and groups of friends who live within Western Australia, the Southern Forests & Valleys region, and neighbouring regions.**

Families are attracted to the region for its family-friendly activities and attractions. The Southern Forests & Valleys region offers a range of activities suitable for children, including outdoor activities in the national parks, farm stays, swimming pools and dams, adventure playgrounds, skate parks, family recreation, adventure sports, family friendly eateries, and educational experiences.

Couples are drawn to the region for its picturesque landscapes, gourmet food and the opportunity to immerse in nature. There are a range of activities including wineries, breweries, cafes and restaurants, quirky collections, eco tours and river cruises, national park adventures, artisanal food and farm gate produce, off grid camping, luxury stays, beach walks, drive trails and a wide range of events.

Groups of friends visit the region for its outdoor adventure activities, festivals and events, and vibrant foodie scene. Friends have the opportunity to experience tree top walks, world class trails, indulgent food festivals, sporting events, celebrations and live music, local markets, farm-to-table experiences, freshly caught seafood, stunning wildflowers, boutique shops and locally made products.

To engage with our target audiences effectively, the Southern Forests & Valleys tourism brand focuses on creating content that appeals to their interests and preferences. The brand's content strategy includes a mix of social media posts, blog articles, videos, and newsletters, all tailored to the needs and preferences of our target audiences. By creating content that appeals to our audiences' interests and preferences, we can effectively engage and attract visitors to the region.





# TOURISM VISITATION

*How are people experiencing our region*

According to the latest available data\*, the average length of stay for visitors to Australia's South West is 3.5 nights. At the time of writing, there is no specific Southern Forests & Valleys data, but as a region within the South West, we can take insights from their factsheet, in particular the details around interstate visitors.

Interstate visitors to ASW, based on 2018/19 annual average:

## Visitor Demographics

- 253,000 visitors
- 1,175,000 overnight stays
- 47% Female
- 53% Male
- Most popular purpose of travel: Holiday 62%

## Length of stay:

- 9%: 1 - 3 nights
- 37%: 4 - 7 nights
- 16%: 8 - 14 nights
- 19%: 15 + nights

## Age of visitor:

- 23%: 20 - 34 yrs
- 22%: 35 - 49 yrs
- 31%: 50 - 64 yrs
- 21%: 65 + yrs

## Seasonal Highlights:

Summer: Enjoy the Boyup Brook Country Music Festival, a refreshing swim at Greenbushes Pool, and the Outdoor Film Festival in Bridgetown.

Autumn: Walk through the striking autumn colours of the Golden Valley Tree Park in Balingup, and cast a line out to hook an Australian salmon at Windy Harbour.

Winter: Book a truffle hunting experience in search of the alluring black truffle in Manjimup, and catch Beedelup Falls in full flow near Pemberton.

Spring: See wildflowers in bloom through the forest in Northcliffe, attend the Tour of Margaret River cycling event in Nannup, and explore the giant Tingle Trees in Walpole.

Year-round: Enjoy self guided foodie trails for delicious local insights, visit farmers markets, farm gates stall and taste the region at wineries, cafes and restaurants.

The Southern Forests & Valleys is a popular destination for tourists, with a diverse range of activities and accommodation options available. The regions natural beauty, gourmet food, and outdoor adventures make it an attractive destination for domestic and international visitors alike. As visitation increases to the Southern Forests & Valleys, our region will continue to benefit from increased revenue and economic growth.

\*Tourism Research Australia, National and International Visitor Surveys, 2021

# DELIVERABLES

*What we strive to achieve*

## Keys deliverables

- Consistent regional branding
- Regional tourism website
- Active social media channels
- Regional brand guides
- Regional image library
- Tourism Advisory Group
- Partnerships with Visitor Centres
- Regional and town mapping
- Trails content, development and mapping
- Training and resources for operators and associated businesses
- Content collation and development
- Point of contact for Tourism WA, ASW & Tourism Council WA
- Point of contact for media outlets for regional media articles and inclusions
- Evolution of regional visitor guides
- Marketing campaigns and branding activities
- Regional events guide
- Advocating for the tourism industry
- Collation of regional research and data
- Industry newsletters
- Visitor newsletters
- Support to new and emerging tourism offerings





# SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

## *Platforms and performance*

**Social media is a powerful tool that enables the Southern Forests & Valleys brand to reach a wide audience, connect with potential visitors, and showcase the unique and authentic tourism experiences the region has to offer.**

The Southern Forests & Valleys recognises the importance of a strong social media strategy in achieving its goal of increasing brand awareness, engagement, and driving visitation to the region.

By leveraging social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, the Southern Forests & Valleys can effectively engage with target audiences, build relationships, and increase brand awareness. Through regular updates, posts, and user-generated content, the brand can showcase the region's tourism offerings, events, and attractions, encouraging visitors to explore the area and experience its unique and authentic experiences.

In addition, our social media presence provides a platform to engage with our followers, respond to feedback, and address concerns. This not only helps to build trust and credibility with potential visitors but also helps to foster a sense of community and belonging among existing visitors.

The Southern Forests & Valleys social media strategy is an important tool for driving visitation to the region. By promoting events and attractions, offering travel tips and advice, and sharing information on local accommodations, dining, and transportation options, we can encourage visitors to plan their trips and book their stays in the region.

By leveraging social media platforms to increase brand awareness, engagement, and drive visitation to the region, the Southern Forests & Valleys can achieve its mission of delivering strategic tourism leadership, guide the development of the visitor experience, build industry capacity, and grow visitors awareness of the region's tourism offerings.



# REGIONAL TOURISM WEBSITE

## *Showcasing the regions offerings*

The new Southern Forests & Valleys regional website serves as an information hub for visitors and residents, providing comprehensive information on tourism attractions, businesses, operators, national parks, events, and trails in the region. The website enables visitors to plan their trip, access information, and book experiences, which in turn increases the likelihood of them visiting the region.

The Southern Forests & Valleys regional website includes suggested itineraries and travel inspiration to help visitors plan their trip and make the most of their time in the region. This not only enhances their experience but also encourages them to stay longer and spend more money in the local economy.

The website highlights the region's unique selling points, such as the natural beauty, wildflowers, adventure tourism, events, cultural heritage, agritourism, and culinary experiences, to differentiate our region from other destinations and position us as a must-visit destination.

Throughout the website, visitors are directed to, and encouraged to visit, one of our nine local visitor centres. By driving traffic into the visitor centres, it will enhance the visitors experience in our region and encourage them to support the local economy.

The regional tourism website is an essential tool for promoting the Southern Forests & Valleys and increasing visitation to the region.





# VISITOR CENTRES

## *Enhancing the visitor experience*

**Working in partnership with all of our local visitor information centres is a key component to the success of the Southern Forests & Valleys region.**

Visitor information centres are often the first point of contact for tourists when they arrive in our region and they are an essential resource for tourists who need assistance or advice during their stay.

Visitor centre staff and volunteers ensure that tourists receive the support they need to make the most of their stay in the region, include providing information about local transport, accommodation, trails, or dining options, as well as advice on the best places to visit and things to do. By working with the local visitor centres, we can ensure tourists receive accurate and up-to-date information about the region's tourism offerings.

The visitor centres are the public face of the Southern Forests & Valleys region and we will support them by providing regional promotional materials such as brochures, maps, and guides, as well as keeping the regional website up to date so it is their key source of information about regional attractions, activities, events, trails and more.

Working in partnership with local visitor centres will help build strong relationships within the local community. By collaborating with Visitor Centres and other local organisations who provide a visitor information service, the Southern Forests & Valleys can create a sense of unity within the region, which will strengthen the local tourism industry and support the local economy.



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*Get in touch*

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