

## **Quarterly Marketing Report**

**January - March 2025**

### **Introduction**

The first quarter of 2025 was a challenging period for tourism in the region, as bushfires impacted the Grampians and Little Desert National Parks, prompting a temporary pause in all marketing activities. The fires disrupted travel plans and created uncertainty among potential visitors, making the need for a strong recovery strategy essential. In response, the "Open for You" campaign was launched, aiming to rebuild confidence and encourage visitation. This report outlines the key marketing efforts undertaken to support the region's recovery and drive tourism back to the area.

### **Marketing Campaigns and Activities**

With the fires contained and conditions stabilizing, the "Open for You" campaign was launched as a rallying call to visitors. This campaign was designed to showcase the resilience of local businesses, highlight the beauty of the region, and assure travelers that the Grampians and surrounding areas were ready to welcome them once again. A combination of digital marketing, social media engagement, traditional advertising, and public relations was utilized to amplify this message.

The campaign featured a series of videos spotlighting ten local businesses, allowing them to share their stories and invite visitors back. These videos were promoted across social media and YouTube, generating over 470,000 views, with the majority of the audience being new to the region's content.

Traditional media played a key role in amplifying the message, with newspaper advertisements running in The Ballarat Courier, Bendigo Advertiser, and Warrnambool Standard. Radio spots were strategically placed across metropolitan and regional stations, reaching over 4.3 million listeners through the Australian Traffic Network. Additionally, a partnership with GAWK secured free digital billboard placements, reinforcing the message in high-traffic areas.

A key collaboration with Visit Victoria helped extend the campaign's reach through their owned channels. This included a dedicated solus EDM, a main feature in another EDM, and two social media posts promoting the region. Additionally, a partnership with Parks Victoria resulted in three social media posts, an interview-style video, and a blog article, all designed to reinforce the recovery messaging and highlight the natural beauty of the area.

The Meet Me in the Wimmera Mallee campaign also continued, shining a light on the unique stories of small towns within the region. Through digital storytelling and targeted promotions, this initiative sought to highlight the charm and character of these communities, encouraging road trips and overnight stays.

The upcoming Big Deal Energy campaign, launching on April 1 and running until May, will further drive visitation by promoting special deals across the Grampians. This initiative will target value-conscious travelers and reinforce the region's attractiveness for short getaways.

Social media remained an important platform for visitor engagement, though all activity was temporarily paused during the bushfires. Once marketing resumed, owned channels returned to regular posting, focusing on recovery messaging, business spotlights, and itinerary inspiration. Content was curated to reassure visitors, addressing concerns about safety while celebrating the many experiences still available.

## **Public Relations and Media Exposure**

Earned media played a significant role in the recovery efforts, with extensive coverage across major outlets. A total of 6,959 media mentions were recorded, reaching an audience of over 313 million and generating an advertising space rate (ASR) value of AUD 67.8 million. Much of this media exposure was achieved in conjunction with Visit Victoria, leveraging their strong industry presence to amplify messaging.

Radio partnerships also contributed significantly to awareness-building, with ACE Radio conducting outside broadcasts in January and another scheduled for Dunkeld in the coming months. These broadcasts provided an opportunity to share real-time updates from the region and encourage immediate visitation.

Events also played a role in promoting the region, with participation in the Melbourne Caravan and Camping Show, the Wimmera Machinery Field Days, and the Formula 1 Grand Prix. These high-profile events allowed for direct engagement with potential visitors, reinforcing key tourism messages and driving interest in future travel.

The Grampians Grape Escape campaign also gained strong media traction, with features in Timeout Melbourne, Channel Nine's Postcards, and Dani Valent's food and travel content. These placements reinforced the message that the region was not only open but thriving with events and experiences.

## **Looking Ahead**

The region's tourism recovery is an ongoing process, and marketing efforts will continue to focus on strengthening visitor confidence. Future strategies will include further collaboration with local businesses, targeted seasonal promotions, and a dedicated Visiting Friends & Relatives (VFR) campaign to harness the power of local ambassadors. Additionally, refining crisis communication strategies will be a priority to ensure the industry is better prepared for future challenges.

While the fires posed significant setbacks, the resilience of the community and the swift activation of recovery marketing have set a strong foundation for renewed growth. Moving forward, the focus remains on reinforcing the region's appeal and ensuring that visitors feel inspired and confident in their travel choices.

