

Wimmera Mallee Tourism Strategic Marketing Plan

2022-2023

Summary Document

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Executive Summary

Wimmera Mallee Tourism comprises of the four LGAs Buloke, Yarriambiack, Hindmarsh and West Wimmera. This Strategic Marketing Plan builds on the selling proposition of Silo Art Trail and the surrounding products and experiences that make the region unique.

With a limited budget and still uncertainty with new State governance structures, this plan is about getting the basics right and setting up the foundations for success.

This marketing strategy was informed through stakeholder engagement including interviews, an industry survey, site visits and direction and support through the Wimmera Mallee Tourism Project Control Group.

At the tail end of Covid-19, the big question we're all now faced with is what will be the 'new normal'? But the question should be, 'what is the best future we can craft?' There is opportunity to address the issues tourism can carry socially, environmentally, and culturally to deliver a sustainable, resilient future to drive a faster, stronger recovery.

The real power of tourism is in its ability to create connectivity. A connection to place, people, and stories. It broadens and empowers perspective on a global scale making tourism an incredibly powerful industry to drive change and protect those invaluable assets we all so heavily rely on for business to survive. It is because of this we have a responsibility to lead with purpose and position the Wimmera Mallee region as a 'must do' trip to connect with the colours of the land, people and place using the largest outdoor gallery of Silo Art Trail as the unique selling proposition.

Today's customer is highly likely to be converted on the couch through their mobile phone. International travel is slowly coming

back, but the stakes are higher domestically with over 300,000 operators fighting for the same share in Australia. Travellers are looking to holiday closer to home, but they also have competing interests now with tourism up against a building boom, luxury cars and even children.

The playing field for marketing attention is levelled – with smaller councils on smaller budgets having similar capacity to create campaigns on the small screen as those who far outweigh their size. This is an advantage for the partners of Wimmera Mallee Tourism. This marketing strategy is heavily weighted on investing in digital conversion, collaboration, building owned channels, clarity of roles and responsibilities, reducing duplication and good content and storytelling.

To differentiate, it is important for the Wimmera Mallee region to evolve its brand that can be used creatively to target Lifestyle Leaders in the Baby Boomer, Generation X, Generation Y and younger family categories. A campaign brief has been developed designed to differentiate the region using the distinctive colours under each of the new brand pillars of Big Space and Nature, Arts and Creativity, Culture and Heritage and Agriculture and Food.



Our Marketing Vision for Wimmera Mallee Tourism

At Wimmera Mallee Tourism, we are in the business of attracting visitors to our region and making things memorable for them through our amazing places, people, and really big silo art.

Our Marketing Mission for Wimmera Mallee Tourism

To grow and develop a tourism industry that support the brand pillars of Big Space and Nature, Arts and Creativity, Culture and Heritage and Agriculture and Food resulting in increased visitation and economic spend in the region.

Our Marketing Goals at Wimmera Mallee Tourism

1. Increase the awareness of our region to potential visitors
2. Increase visitation to and spend in our region through new and returning visitors
3. To support and develop our tourism industry through regular communication, partnerships, and training.

Our Markets

Tourist visitation in the Wimmera Mallee region generated over 500,000 day and overnight visits in the 2018 and 2019 years. These numbers have dropped by an estimated 56% during 2020 and 2021 (Tourism Research Australia data) and, in the post-COVID 19 recovery period, it is expected numbers will rise substantially. There is opportunity to convert the 6.6 million trips that Aussies were taking overseas to domestic trips in Australia. Some of this will play into the caravanning market with trips around Australia and caravan sales increasing twofold to pre pandemic times.

As International markets open, we will see some travel in 2022 with business travel resuming before leisure. However, it is unclear if the China market will reach the lofty visitation levels of pre pandemic.

These levels may never return with new Asian and Indian markets likely to increase. New Zealand is the big opportunity here and will be targeted in the forthcoming colours campaign.

Tourism Australia data suggests that visitors to the Wimmera Mallee when compared to the rest of Regional Victoria are more likely to come from interstate (37 per cent vs. 14 per cent), stay for shorter periods (2.0 nights vs. 2.8) and are less likely to have a single stopover (56 per cent vs. 88 per cent). Demographically, they are more likely to be male (64 per cent vs. 51 per cent), 55+ (40 per cent vs. 34 per cent) and travel alone (34 per cent vs. 27 per cent).

The target markets WMT will target are Lifestyle Leaders that are medium to high users of social media. These are:

Intrastate (Regional Victoria, Greater Melbourne)	Interstate (South Australia / New South Wales)	International (New Zealand)
Families	Families	Pre-kids and empty nesters
Baby boomers	Baby boomers	Gen X and Y
Generation X and Y	Generation Xers	

The Visitor

Today fewer visitors want to be identified as tourists - they want to seek out experiences that immerse themselves in a destination. They want to live like a local, enjoying the best a destination has to offer. Local knowledge and insight are more valuable than ever. Visitors are involved and inspired at all stages of the decision making and planning cycle – through advertising, publicity, online content, review sites, social media and word-of-mouth stories and recommendations from friends and family.

EXPLORE



"I want to explore and have unique experiences"

LEARN



"I want to understand the history and culture"

DISCOVER



"I want to connect to art and creativity"

EXPERIENCE



"I want to connect to the land and good food"

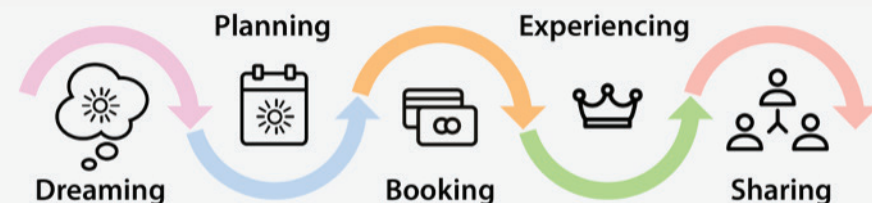
Today's visitors are mostly prosumers. They are consumers that produce media and stories. The visitor journey is now fractured by thousands of digital micro moments. Moments posted by businesses, news services and the new prosumer.

At the heart of a destination is storytelling. Good stories can compel people to change how they feel, think, act, and behave. A destinations soul and personality are often through its people. In marketing to attract visitors, we need to be active in the moments that matter. This is the first three stages of the visitor journey.

1. I want to get away
2. Time to make a plan
3. Let's book it moment
4. Can't wait to explore

When people travel, they are largely in search of stories to tap into and retell. It is generally the people we meet and experiences we have. People are a strength of the Wimmera Mallee region.

Tourism Australia's new campaign, Don't Go Small, Go Australia has good synergy with the Wimmera Mallee region. Visit Victoria will launch the "Get Set" campaign into New Zealand in the 2022 calendar year. This campaign can offer opportunities for WMT to re post through socials through a deal with Visit Victoria to also repost the new WMT campaign. This would form part of the PR and partnership strategy.



The Wimmera Mallee Value Proposition

The Wimmera Mallee region is home to many outstanding tourism destinations unique to Victoria and distinctly different from neighbouring tourism regions. The Silo Arts Trail is the jewel in the crown proudly positioned as the world's largest outdoor gallery. These painted silos are located throughout the region around national parks, natural and historic destinations, rural towns, and community operated tourism attractions.

The Wimmera Mallee region has unique big space and colours. Colours represent the whole region with sub regional local government areas (LGAs) contributing different colours of the landscape, art and produce punctuated by the change of seasons, grain and colourful canola crops.

Colours represent the vibrant artwork on silos, the landscapes, the wildflowers, the sky and through towns and attractions. There are seasonal, sunrise and sunset colours. Night sky viewing around Lake Tyrrell is one of the best star gazing locations in Australia with no light bleed from any nearby town. Colour can play an important role in conveying information nonverbally, creating certain moods, and even influencing the decisions people make. This can play a role in campaign executions creating a unique value proposition for the region.

Collaboration Opportunities

The collaboration opportunities for WMT range from partnerships with regional tourism boards, tourism touring routes, local government, state and national bodies and industry. For WMT to truly attract visitors to the region and build its database, collaboration is essential given minimal marketing budget.

Regional Tourism Boards

The obvious RTB to collaborate with is Grampians Tourism. This is suggested to be a collaborative marketing campaign that could build itineraries into the Road Trip concept. Murray Tourism could also be

considered for a Road Trip campaign. Through RTBs, WMT can also connect with Visit Victoria and Tourism Australia.

Local Government

The Economic Development, Communications and Tourism arms of Local Government should meet monthly with WMT to ensure the calendar of events, promotional campaigns and social media activity is coordinated and amplified by each partner where possible.

Industry

The colours campaign will include the deliverable of an industry toolkit where businesses can pay to play. This collaboration with WMT will extend the budget reach and activity of the campaign through co-branding.

Traditional Owners

The Barengi Gadjin Land Council is one of the Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) determined by the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council. Traditional Owners from the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk family groups are represented by Barengi Gadjin and have so much to offer in terms of storytelling, experiences, and a culture rich in history. WMT will work with them to develop product and experiences that highlight the regions unique colours and big space. Consideration to use indigenous names for places should be part of this collaborative effort. For example, in aboriginal language, Lake Tyrrell means big space opening to the sky.

State Projects

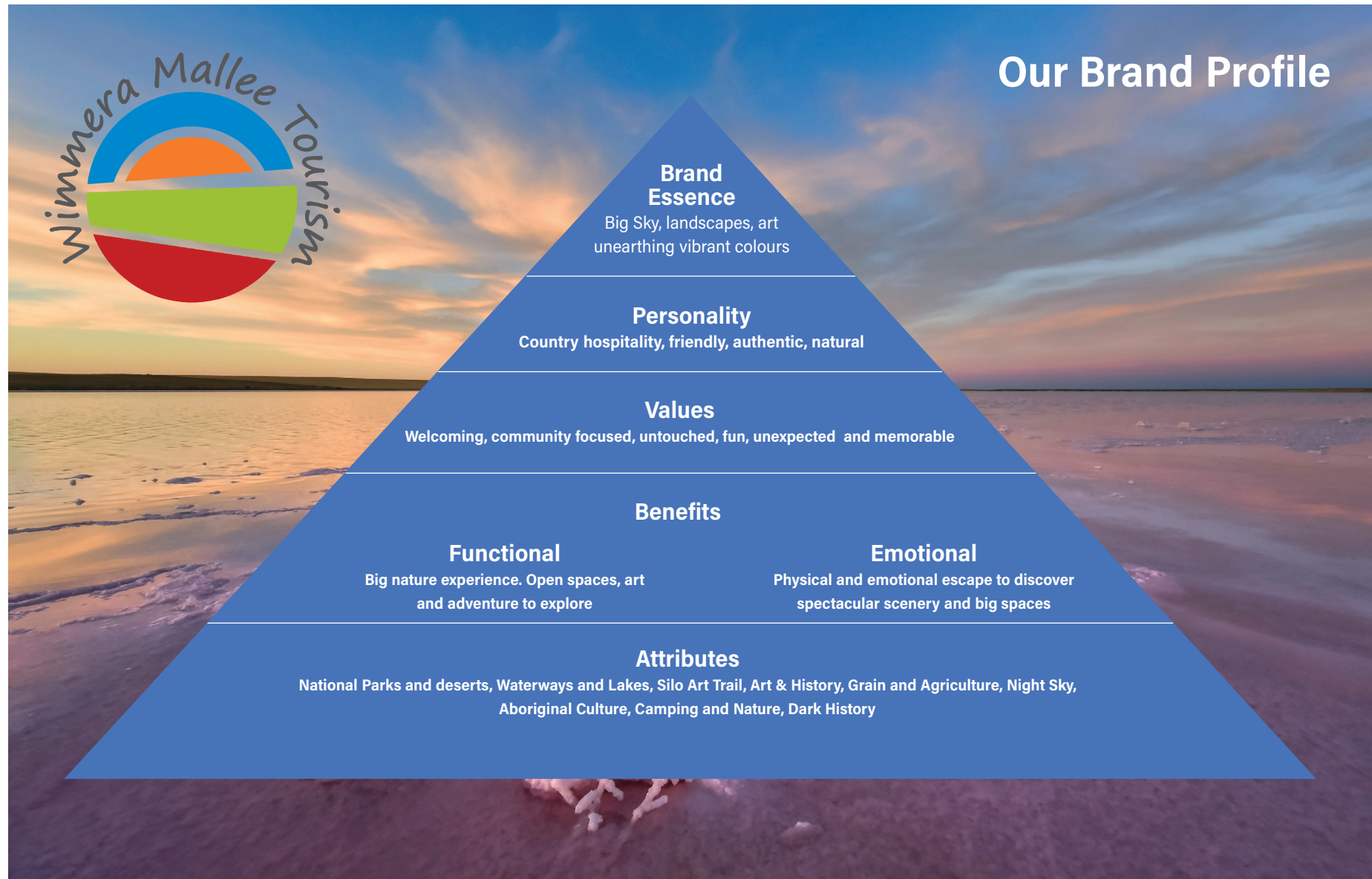
It is important for WMT to integrate strategies and activity into existing programs and activities as different projects progress throughout the region. This includes the Stay West Road Trip project, the signage project, the Digital Reality Strategy and Action Plan, the Rainbow Silo Viewing platform project, Silo Night Projection trials and the WMT Strategic Plan.

Marketing Actions and Measurement

WMT Marketing Actions and Measurement Areas 22/23	Actions	Measures and Success factors
New Campaign Positioning	Brief approved for Colours campaign position and competition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New campaign in market Additional funding and partnership sought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign approved Funding received Campaign to go live – Spring 2022 Campaign measurement
Branded Content and Social Media	Produce content to support each of the WMT brand pillars. Aim for significant follower growth through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer competition Industry product partnership 4 Social Media Posts per week. Storytelling framework established with LGAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facebook growth from VisitWM 4.2K – 8K Facebook growth Silo Art Trail 12.7K to 15K Instagram visitWM 684 to 5K Instagram Siloart 36K to 40K Ensure 4 posts per week FB/Inst target engagement 5% Social media playbook developed
Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to add content to new website, at least one piece of written content per month. Include ATDW listings on website Inclusion of itineraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic increase from 4.4K sessions per month to 5K sessions per week Deliver 2 touring routes with maps by 6/23 TOS average 2 mins. PVs average 2
PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement PR plan to support each brand pillar. Ensure product brand has a media plan to raise awareness. Create Listicles by brand pillar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average of one media piece per month Promotion of listicles via social media (one per month)
eDM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of new eDM list and platform Produce monthly eDMs with paid listings to generate additional revenue – Target \$3K p.a Use website and social to increase subscriptions with offer-based sign ups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce monthly content based eDM with partner ads. Establish email database to 5K by 6/23 Investment in eDM platform (suggest Mailchimp)
Collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce revised Silo Arts Trail brochure with suggested itineraries and surrounding must dos. WMT Map to be reproduced and updated Update Wimmera Mallee Highlights brochure with touring routes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silo Arts Trail x 1 WMT Map x 1 Wimmera Mallee Highlights x 1

WMT Marketing Actions and Measurement Areas 22/23	Actions	Measures and Success factors
Conversion Marketing	Competition for visitors will be fierce in the short term. Complement brand marketing with 'offers'-based campaigns, where partners' products are conveyed to our audience via website, social and eDM	Integrated into activity
Acquisition Marketing	WMT will run four seasonal marketing campaigns (colours), with consumer competitions, amplified with a digital marketing partner, in FY22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions to generate new database and industry partnerships (min 6) • Monthly competitions during campaign
Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTBs • Industry • LGAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in one collaborative marketing campaign with a neighbouring RTB to increase consumer exposure • Create an industry database for updates and potential future revenue streams. • Utilise LGA tourism/marketing opportunities to amplify destination message and call to action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA collaborative campaign x 4 per annum • RTB collaborative campaign x 1 for year • Set up industry database and grow to over 100. Current 58.
Improved Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with VV and DJPR to improve the quarterly visitation report to include demographic/psychographic insights into visitors and potentially micro-region stats (e.g., township level) • Develop new customer profiles with industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better data and reporting tools subject through closer relationship with state (WDA) • Develop new Customer Profiles with industry (industry development funding)
Visit Victoria support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATDW • Campaign/brand/famils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Visit Victoria and RTBs to advocate for famils and campaign support • Increase ATDW representations in region with free training for industry. • Advocate for Wimmera Mallee to be a sub brand of Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ADTW members from 11 to 25 • Advocate for sub brand for region • At least two famils in region p.a.
Industry Communications	Establish Industry database for WMT for regular communications on marketing activity, industry support, grant funding and training	One industry eDM every six weeks
Visitor Servicing	Investigate production of one visitor guide for region. Integrate colours campaign in POS displays inside VICs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Guide review and costing • Campaign in VICs and staff briefed.

The Wimmera Mallee Tourism Brand



Our Brand Pillars

Big Space and Nature EXPLORE	Arts and Creativity DISCOVER	Culture and Heritage LEARN	Agriculture and Food EXPERIENCE
OUR REGIONAL STORY			
We have the best colours and landscapes We have the smallest mountain in the world We have the biggest inland Salt Lake in the world We have the best night skies for star gazing We have the most wide and open spaces We have big wilderness and outback deserts We have big events in big spaces	We have the largest outdoor gallery in the world We have a creative culture around our towns We have outdoor sculptures and installations We have performing arts and live music We celebrate art and creativity	We are connected to our land and people We have towns untouched by time We tell stories through our community and traditional owners We are proud of our history and uniqueness We showcase the past through art and museums	We have unique grain and salt stories We are the home of the mallee bull We have the best vanilla slices in Australia We have the best pub feeds in rural Australia
FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS			
Big nature experience and adventure to explore Best night sky viewing Explore national and state deserts Explore and discover flora and fauna	Big art and creative culture to explore. Vibrant colours provide an emotional escape from the dreary Buy unique art and treasure Take instagrammable photos	Traditional Owner stories. Explore charming rural towns Learn stories of first settlers and border disputes Learn the sad story of the Maryvalle murders and the uplifting story of the lost children plus others	Taste local produce of region Visit farm gates and retail stores Connect to stories of early farming and grain
TARGET MARKET & ATTRIBUTES			
"I want to explore and have unique experiences" Families Baby Boomers / International market Gen Xers Socially and environmentally aware Campers and caravanners	"I want to connect to art and creativity" Pre-kids and empty nesters Baby Boomers / international market Gen X and Y Families with older kids Campers and caravanners	"I want to understand the history and culture" Families Empty nesters International market School groups	"I want connect to the land and good food" Baby Boomers Pre-kids and empty nesters Financially secure Discerning
EVENTS, PARTNERSHIPS and SUPPORTING PRODUCT Can be added under each brand pillar			

Digital

Social media is a commitment like any other marketing effort and is growing in value daily. Data and insights on the people who follow WMT on social media are useful. Through the ever-improving analytics, insight on followers and their demographics can be gleaned.

Australian Facebook users are some of the most active advert clickers in the world - an average of 22 adverts clicked per month vs the global average of 12. This is in the top 8% of countries globally. (Source, Analysis: Genroe). 89% of consumers say they will buy from a brand they follow on social media and 84% will choose that brand over a competitor. All age groups are now spending more online and planning their next trip through technology. Social media can create the inspiration to travel and discover.

A good strategy brings gradual, solid, and enduring outcomes. The strategy for WMT social media is built around the following objectives:

- Long term follower growth
- Shifting perceptions about destination product or experience
- Increased results in search across the web
- Content generation
- Entry into new markets and support for products or experiences.

The following tactics support the strategy:

- Competitions, giveaways, and polls
- Promotion of events and seasonal offers
- Playful ways to grow followers and fans - storytelling
- Advertising or promoting content to increase awareness and gain new followers – campaign driven

WMT has responsibility for two websites. Visitwimmeramallee and siloarttrail. During the second quarter of 2022, a new website for WMT was created and launched. This website needs to reflect the new brand

and positioning once the campaign brief has been fulfilled. For WMT to shine in the digital landscape, focus will be on engaging content, powerful imagery (photos/videos) and good storytelling from each of the four brand pillars.

Further Opportunities

Through stakeholder engagement, several opportunities were identified for consideration:

- Development of educational experiences which provide contemporary interpretation of current assets, and food and beverage experiences which leverage from the produce history of the region.
- The development of existing and new events by brand pillar.
- Salt and grain sculptures linking different parts of region and Silo Art Trail.
- Establish a SAT Festival. Silo Art Trail Festival.
- Visiting Friends & Relative (VFR) market and events growing opportunity.
- Market to higher yield visitors not just caravanning set.
- First nation story to be better integrated with product.
- Farmgate/agricultural/ grain /salt opportunity to develop.
- Establish a canola maze. Sacrifice a parcel of land.
- 21 Oct 2022 – Nov Astronomers Society meeting at Lake Tyrrell. Need to have an annual night sky event.
- People are ready for QR codes for visitor information/inspiration.
- Many untold stories in region – James Fry (grain), Maryville Murders.
- Customer Profiles to be developed to help target higher yielding visitors.

Campaign Brief – Colours

The Wimmera Mallee offers a physical and emotional escape to discover spectacular scenery, big spaces, big art, local towns, people, products and experiences all bound by colour. The colour of big sky's, lakes, landscapes, wildflowers, wildlife, and crops. The campaign will build on the three target markets to experience the colours of the Wimmera Mallee linked to all four brand pillars with Big Nature, Art and Creativity, Culture and Heritage and Agriculture and Food (taste colour – grain, salt, local produce, and the best vanilla slices!).

The idea is for a two-tiered competition for each market to find their colour. This could be to find a new or existing colour. The first would be a competition for the hunt of a consumer that would be paid to be an influencer through social posts, receiving free accommodation, airfares, car hire, meals and spending money. In other words, a free holiday for two with a little bit of posting. The best job in the world?

The second call to action is for visitors to the Wimmera Mallee to tag Wimmera Mallee in a colours campaign to go into the draw to win a prize every month. This would lead to hashtags and user generated content with the chance to win local experiences or even cash prizes. The campaign tone will be upbeat, slightly humorous and have an uplifting impact on the viewer using the brand pillars to accentuate the Silo Arts Trail and surrounding landscapes, lakes, deserts, and product. The brand personality of the Wimmera Mallee will flow through featuring local personalities and businesses with storytelling in a friendly, authentic, and natural way.

Budget

The marketing budget for the 2022/23 year has been confirmed at \$94,000. The following is an estimation of how this limited budget can be spent for the maximum return on investment.

Wimmera Mallee Tourism Draft Marketing Budget 22/23

Advertising	Amount
Campaign – Colours	\$40,000
Competitions	\$10,000
Social Media Advertising	\$3,000
Marketing & Digital	
Public Relations	\$5,000
Content Creation	\$5,000
Mail Chimp – Database/ Newsletters	\$2,000
Photography	\$2,000
Collateral and Printing	
Design	\$5,000
Silo Arts Brochure	\$6,000
Map	\$5,000
Wimmera Mallee Highlights	\$5,000
Partnerships	
Regional Tourism Board	\$1,000
Industry	\$5,000
Total	\$94,000

Colours of the Wimmera Mallee

