



AFL Community Series pastry at Hideaway, Meda Design

**Tourism
Midwest**
Victoria

Tourism Midwest Victoria Quarterly Report

January - March 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

In Victoria's Midwest, we acknowledge that we travel across the ancient landscapes and communities of the First Peoples.

These lands have been nurtured and cared for by Traditional Custodians for thousands of years and we respect their ongoing protection.

We acknowledge past injustices against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As our knowledge grows, we hope to learn from their resilience and creativity.

When you visit Victoria's Midwest, we kindly request that you also respect the stories, living culture and ancestral ties to the land of our First Peoples

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Executive Summary

This quarter reflects a period of steady delivery for Tourism Midwest Victoria, set against a challenging and shifting environment for regional tourism.

Cost-of-living pressures continue to shape travel behaviour across the state. In particular, ongoing fuel price volatility is having a direct impact on regional visitation. While demand for travel has not disappeared, it has become more considered. Visitors are seeking value, flexibility and low-risk experiences, and are making more deliberate decisions about where and how they travel.

In this context, Midwest Victoria remains well placed. Our proximity to Melbourne, strong Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) market, and breadth of accessible, high-quality experiences position the region as an achievable and appealing option for Victorian travellers. The region's ability to offer depth without requiring long-haul travel is a significant advantage in the current climate.

Throughout the quarter, Tourism Midwest Victoria has maintained a strong focus on supporting industry capability, strengthening partnerships and ensuring the region remains visible and competitive. This has included the delivery of targeted business support programs, industry engagement and coordinated marketing activity that promotes the full breadth of the region.

The work of the Sustainable Destination Development team continues to play a critical role in strengthening the long-term resilience and competitiveness of the region. This quarter saw strong engagement from industry through briefings, workshops and targeted capability programs, alongside continued progress on strategic initiatives such as the Roam Discovery Trail.

These efforts are focused on building a more connected, accessible and sustainable visitor economy supporting operators to lift capability, improving the quality of the visitor experience, and ensuring growth is balanced with the needs of local communities. Importantly, this work reinforces a whole-of-region approach, with collaboration across LGAs, industry and partners underpinning future development.

Marketing activity this quarter has remained focused on supporting the region's visibility in a highly competitive and price-sensitive market. Campaigns have prioritised clear value, timely conversion opportunities and strong alignment with major events and seasonal moments, while continuing to build the profile of the region through coordinated paid, owned and earned activity.

Local platforms such as Ballarat In The Know have continued to play an important role in activating the VFR market, while broader campaigns and partnerships have ensured consistent representation of the region across state and national channels. This approach is essential in maintaining consideration for regional travel at a time when consumers are more selective about where they spend.

Looking ahead, advocacy will continue to be critical.

As Victoria moves toward a state election, there is a clear need to elevate the role of regional tourism within policy and funding discussions.

This includes:

- Highlighting the impact of cost-of-living pressures, including fuel, on regional visitation
- Advocating for continued investment in regional marketing and industry development programs
- Ensuring regional infrastructure, transport and accessibility remain priorities
- Supporting policies that strengthen small businesses and enable sustainable growth in visitor economies

Tourism plays a significant role in the economic and social fabric of Midwest Victoria. It supports local jobs, contributes to community vitality and strengthens the identity of our region.

This quarter demonstrates that while conditions are complex, the region is resilient.

With continued collaboration across industry, government and community, there is a clear opportunity to build on this foundation and ensure Midwest Victoria remains a strong and sustainable visitor destination into the future.

Amy Maiden

Executive Manager
Tourism Midwest Victoria

State of play

AustraliaNow consumer sentiment monitoring

Key sentiment and insights for tourism businesses in **February and March 2026**.

- **Overall mood:** Cautious and cost-conscious; confidence is fragile rather than optimistic.
- **Cost of living pressure:** Interest rates and fuel price volatility are tightening discretionary spend, increasing price sensitivity.
- **Travel intent:** Still relatively resilient, but bookings are more likely when value is clear and risk is low.
 - What travellers want: Strong value for money and transparent pricing
 - Deals, bundles and visible inclusions
 - Flexible booking (easy changes/cancellations)
- **Who's most sensitive:** Women, older Australians and regional households; affordability matters most.
- **Safety & trust:** Heightened awareness of safety, national security and social cohesion—clear reassurance builds confidence.
- **Experience drivers:** Desire for escape, wellbeing and simple pleasures remains strong despite financial caution.
- **Digital discovery:** Social media and AI play a growing role in inspiration and planning, especially under-40s.
- **Trust in tech:** Rising scrutiny of social platforms and AI—ethical, responsible use strengthens brand trust.
- **What will win business now:**
 - Empathetic messaging
 - Affordable, flexible offers
 - Clear value and reassurance
 - Inclusive, community-minded experiences

Bottom line: Tourism businesses that reduce risk, demonstrate value and build trust are best positioned in the current climate.

Tourism Research Australia

Domestic visitation to Midwest Victoria in 2025



This report uses domestic tourism data from Tourism Research Australia (TRA).

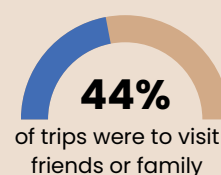
Area covered

The data is based on local council boundaries, which do not exactly match the Tourism Midwest Victoria region. It includes data for:

- City of Ballarat
- Pyrenees Shire
- Moorabool Shire
- Golden Plains Shire

Using the data

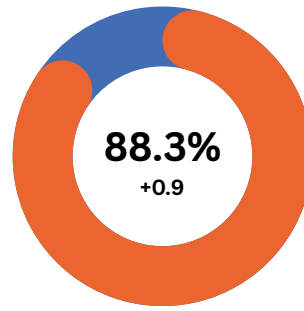
The year ending December 2025 is the first full year of data released under a new TRA methodology. Because of this change, the 2025 results cannot be compared with earlier years.



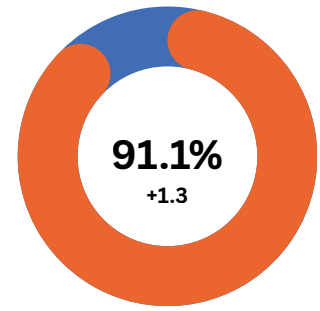
Global Review Index

The Global Review Index is a benchmark for guest experience. These scores are aggregated by ReviewPro from customer review platforms to show how businesses in the Tourism Midwest Victoria region are meeting guest expectations.

This data represents reviews from January to March 2026 compared to the same quarter last year.



TMV accommodation and attractions



TMV hospitality

Accommodation insights

- Across all months, hotel/motel accommodation consistently records higher occupancy and higher RevPAR than Airbnb-style accommodation, particularly by 2026.
- Airbnb-style accommodation maintains higher ADR than hotels in every month and year, however, lower occupancy erodes overall performance, resulting in consistently lower RevPAR than hotels.
- Hotels demonstrate steady improvement across all three metrics from 2024 to 2026, especially RevPAR (e.g. January RevPAR rising from \$122 to \$139).

749

Available Airbnb listings
-5.4% on March 2025

Monthly accommodation averages

Occupancy

	Hotel/motel accommodation (STR)			Airbnb-style accommodation (AirDNA)		
	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
Jan	65%	67%	71%	51.2%	51.2%	49.7%
Feb	73%	64%	71%	44.9%	43.3%	47.1%
Mar	72%	71%	73%	54.9%	52.7%	52.1%

Average Daily Rate (ADR)

	Hotel/motel accommodation (STR)			Airbnb-style accommodation (AirDNA)		
	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
Jan	\$185	\$189	\$195	\$230	\$226	\$219
Feb	\$167	\$172	\$186	\$220	\$199	\$200
Mar	\$179	\$179	\$190	\$235	\$219	\$213

Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)*

	Hotel/motel accommodation (STR)			Airbnb-style accommodation (AirDNA)		
	2024	2025	2026	2024	2025	2026
Jan	\$122	\$126	\$139	\$118	\$116	\$109
Feb	\$123	\$110	\$134	\$99	\$86	\$94
Mar	\$130	\$130	\$141	\$129	\$115	\$111

Source: STR Accommodation Data and AirDNA

*RevPAR is a measurement of Revenue Per Available Room and is calculated by Average Daily Rate X Occupancy to demonstrate room revenue and its relationship with the number of rooms available.

Advocacy

Advocacy activity this quarter has focused on aligning regional priorities and strengthening a unified voice for Midwest Victoria ahead of the state election.

TMV have met with the CEO's of all LGAs across the region to identify shared priorities, with a particular focus on catalytic tourism infrastructure investment, accessibility, product development and the role of tourism in supporting regional economies.

In parallel, we have supported multiple partners in the preparation of funding submissions, providing letters of support and ensuring projects are well-positioned, evidence-based and aligned to broader state priorities.

We have continued to engage closely with key industry bodies, DJSIR and Visit Victoria, and maintained a strong presence at both the VTIC Vision Summit, the national RTO forum and Destination Australia (Tourism Australia), contributing to broader national and state-level conversations around the future of the visitor economy.

These forums have been critical in both representing the region and identifying emerging opportunities for growth, investment and collaboration.

Our advocacy has also included direct engagement with State and Federal Members and the Minister for Tourism, reinforcing the importance of sustained investment in regional tourism and ensuring Midwest Victoria is well represented in policy discussions.

We also attended the National Tourism Awards, where local operator Sovereign Park Motor Inn was awarded gold, an important recognition of the strength, professionalism and competitiveness of our regional industry.

Collectively, this work reflects a coordinated and proactive approach to advocacy, positioning the region strongly to secure future investment, improve connectivity and support a resilient and sustainable visitor economy.



The Sovereign Park Motor Inn team having just taken our Gold at the 2025 Victorian Tourism Awards.



March briefing at Mars Stadium

Sustainable Destination Development

Engaging with industry

286
Active ATDW
listings

Engagement events

	Date	Registrations	Purpose
Why International? Workshop with Visit Victoria	18 February	27	Visit Victoria and Great Southern Touring Route shared how they take operators to market internationally, and how to be involved
Roundtable: International Audiences	4 March	12	This practical roundtable brought Ballarat tourism operators together to build a collaborative, Ballarat-first approach to international markets.
Industry Briefing	16 March	121	Explored how authentic storytelling, collaboration and place-based identity can strengthen visitor experiences, and how operators can better connect with visitors and position Midwest Victoria in a competitive tourism landscape.
Position for growth with the MICE market	24 March	35	Update on business events trends and opportunities with Melbourne Convention Bureau and Business Events Victoria, creating new connections through peer networking.

Industry Excursions

Designed to upskill local front line customer service staff about all things Ballarat and surrounds, with behind the scenes insights into what makes some of our key experiences tick, and who customer service staff should be recommending to their guests.

	Date	Registrations
Hidden Lanes Walking Tour	30 March	12

Below image: The Sovereign Hill team taking note at the March briefing



Engaging with industry

Digital engagement:



12 industry newsletters

More than 1047 email subscribers

Increase of 8.8% to previous quarter



39.4%

 Email open rate

Above industry benchmark of 25.91%

Top performing newsletter:

Ballarat's Best Pie 2026 and BEV workshop [View here](#)

LinkedIn

- 14 posts
- 1,141 followers (up by 45)
- 10,279 impressions
- 369 reactions
- 18 comments
- 4 reposts



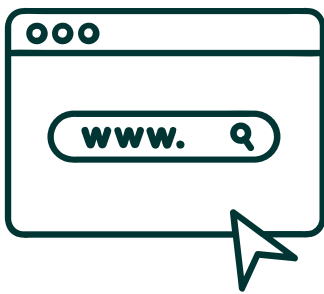
Top performing post:

[TMV team huddle!](#)

1,339 impressions

64% engagement rate

60% click through rate



6 web stories

Top performing story:

[Ballarat's Best Pie is back for another bite in 2026!](#)

Major projects update

Roam Discovery Trail

The Roam Discovery Trail Project secured State Government funding through the Victorian Visitor Servicing Fund. Led by TMV in partnership with six LGAs and multiple consultants, the project is developing a wayfinding solution that blends physical and digital signage with storytelling to enhance visitor experiences, dwell time and regional dispersal across the Goldfields (Ballarat-Bendigo). Ballarat's Lydiard Street has been selected as one of the six pilot sites.

Progress update

This quarter the project went out for community consultation for the Ballarat pilot site on Lydiard Street. Through 23 survey responses, targeted stakeholder engagement, and outreach to 150 local businesses supported by broad digital reach across social media, the community expressed strong pride in Lydiard Street's architectural integrity, cultural institutions, and heritage character.

Feedback highlighted a desire for accurate, inclusive storytelling that reflects both well-known and under-represented histories, along with sensitivity to the street's visual and pedestrian experience. These insights are now guiding content refinement, cultural consultation, and design adjustments to ensure the project delivers an engaging, respectful, and authentic interpretation of Ballarat's identity for both residents and visitors.

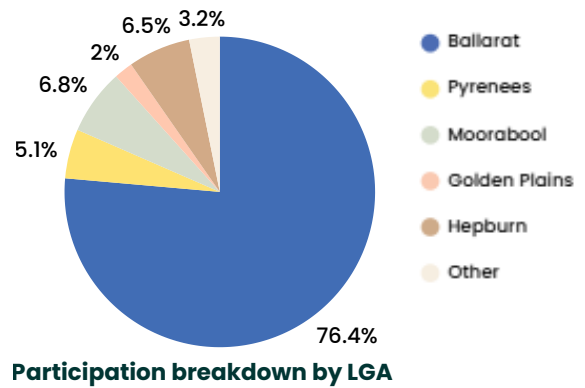


Industry and product development

We continue to support the development of new tourism products and experiences through a variety of training and business development opportunities.

\$225K+

Value in development programs delivered so far this financial year



Program feedback from industry:

“Thank you for the high-quality event on social media. [We] were both impressed and came away with some solid ideas.”

“Top highlights were listening to the panel speak and give their own views on the topic, and meeting other industry members.”

Recently or partially completed programs

Program	Value per participant	Status	Participants	Purpose
Cycle Business Incubator	\$3,300	In progress	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 x 1-hour mentoring sessions, site visit and workshop Building capability for early-stage business concepts and enhancing yield from cycle trail infrastructure
Distribution Mentoring	\$1,810	Complete	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x 30-minute mentoring sessions and workshop Improving market readiness and visibility across domestic and international channels
Level Up Your Canva Toolkit	Up to \$2,300	In progress	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 x 1-hour sessions, brand guideline and templates Upskilling operators in brand storytelling and digital marketing through hands-on design training
Digital Marketing Essentials	\$750	In progress	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 x 1-hour sessions and digital health check report Building core digital marketing capability to help businesses connect with target audiences
Accommodation Business Support	\$2,999	In progress	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 hours of mentoring and implementation support Built operator capability in revenue management, sales and strategic planning to strengthen the region's accommodation sector
Hospitality Excellence Accelerator	\$7,250	In progress	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 x 1-hour sessions, a half-day site visit and roadmap Strengthening the region's position as a leading culinary tourism destination renowned for provenance
Business Coaching	\$1,200	In progress	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 x 1-hour coaching sessions Helping operators strengthen strategy, operations and decision-making. Supported sustainable business growth and resilience across the region
Tourism Awards Support 2026	Up to \$6,500	In progress	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored application support Championing business excellence and encouraging growth through improved back of house systems, certification and implementing measures of success.

Figures reported as of EOM March 2026, excluding GST. Programs may run over multiple quarters, figures reported for one quarter only.

Programs coming up next quarter

Program	Value per participant	Status	Participants	Purpose
Accessible Experience Accelerator Program (AEAP)	\$9,000+	Advertising	10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive 6-month mentoring program to help develop or refine a new or existing accessible experiences • Group workshop • Up to \$5,000 funding available per participant
Mobile Video Content Workshop	\$200	Advertising	20-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 4-hour practical workshop to show tourism businesses how to create their own videos using their smartphone
AI Mentoring	\$4,000	Advertising	5-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One on one mentoring for 2.5-hours with an AI expert to find systems and tools to improve business efficiencies
Advanced Sales Training	\$750	Advertising	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day intensive workshop tailored for experienced conference and event venue staff to sharpen their sales skills
Foundation Sales Training	\$750	Advertising	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full day intensive workshop tailored for beginner conference and event venue staff to sharpen their sales skills

Below image: Distribution mentoring workshop at Mercure Ballarat



International

Tourism Midwest Victoria is now full-steam ahead with its delivery of the International Project Implementation Plan (PiP). Meaning our destination will be putting in place the first steps of delivery and selling Ballarat to our international markets, in collaboration with our major attractions. This enables an increase in dispersal to the region and increases our profile within major markets.

Explore Victoria: February 23 – 24 2026

Ballarat enjoyed strong representation at the recent ATEC Explore Victoria 2026 event, delivered in partnership with Visit Victoria, where the region was actively showcased to more than 35 international and domestic buyers through high-value B2B (business to business) trade appointments. Across two days of engagement, Ballarat operators joined 40+ Victorian sellers in promoting the depth and diversity of the region’s visitor experiences, helping position Ballarat as a must-visit destination for future itineraries. From networking at the standout evening event at Eureka 89 to participating in over 1,400 targeted B2B meetings at Melbourne Zoo, Ballarat’s presence contributed to meaningful commercial conversations and future business opportunities, supporting the region’s growing profile as a high-quality, relevant visitor destination.

MARKET FEEDBACK <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. FIT (<i>Free Independent Traveller</i>) Asian2. High-End Luxury Travellers (European, NZ & North America)3. Day Trip Package – Asia (China & India)	NEW OTAs <i>(Online Travel Agents)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Klook• Get Your Guide• KK Day	160+ TEAM BALLARAT MEETINGS
	+ SALES LEADS Journey Beyond – 27/28 & 28/29 Day Trip Season	35+ BUYERS
		41 B2B MEETINGS
	WELL RECEIVED PRODUCT	• Hotel Vera • Sovereign Park Motor Inn



Image: Team Ballarat at the B2B Appointments



Image: ATEC Leadership Group / Keeley is YATEC Chair



Image: Group photo following B2B appointments

In addition, to our first trade show as a destination, we have begun our new audience roundtable for international ready product. Great discussions and outcomes took place with our major attractions and the commitment to working collaboratively on a number of projects in the future.

Business Events

AIME: February 9 - 11 2026

Held in February 2026, AIME was a highly successful event delivering over 50 face to face appointments with conference and event buyers interested in regional Victoria. We exhibited as part of the Business Events Victoria stand, alongside Sovereign Hill and The Goods Shed.

The event generated eight qualified leads, with one already converted for the Law Institute of Victoria, to be hosted at Mercure Ballarat. A further two site inspections are currently being scheduled for UDIA and CEDIA.



Business Events Victoria and Melbourne Convention Bureau Workshop

As part of the Business Events Victoria (BEV) Regional Roadshow, BEV and the Melbourne Convention Bureau (MCB) hosted a presentation at the Sovereign Hill Hotel for the business events community. The session focused on a domestic business events update, alongside insights into international incentive opportunities. BEV provided an overview of its Domestic Business Events Report and shared outlook insights, while MCB outlined its current business mix and highlighted opportunities within the corporate meetings and incentives market. The event was well attended with over 20 businesses from the region in the room.

We have become a destination partner of the Melbourne Convention Bureau. This partnership enhances our exposure to the international conference and incentives market and strengthens our ability to attract high-value business events to the region. As part of this engagement, two international familiarisation programs are scheduled to visit the region, including a hosted Indonesian group in May, followed by a Chinese cohort in June.





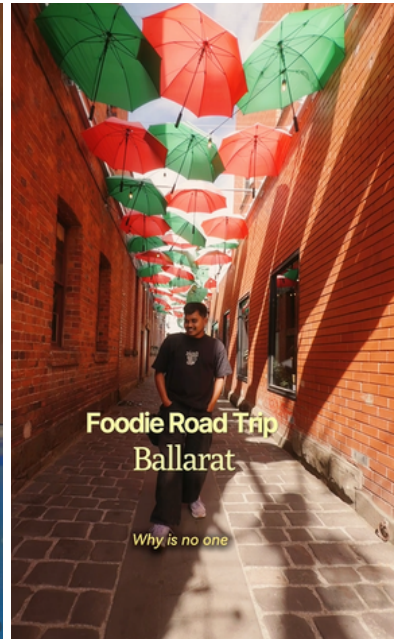
Ballarat Begonia Festival display, Einwick

Marketing

Campaign highlights



L-R:
AFL Community Series photo shoot;
Print ad featured in Geelong + Surfcoast Living magazine;
Destination content produced with the Vixens netball players;
Vegan road trip reel from Indian content creator Sarath Vegasana



Brilliantly Unexpected

This quarter saw a broad mix of print and digital activity in market for Brilliantly Unexpected. Alongside the continued rollout of broadcast video-on-demand, search marketing and programmatic digital banners, two new audio ads were recorded for streaming platforms. Digital ad impressions for the quarter totalled 7,564,559.

To make the most of Australian Open traffic, billboard pasteups were featured at prominent supersites on Swan Street, Victoria Parade and the intersection of Johnston x Hoddle Streets in Melbourne. Ballarat was featured in the autumn editions of the Visit Victoria Official Visitor Guide and Geelong + Surfcoast Living, as well as the February edition of Indian Link magazine.

A tactical campaign to attract domestic Chinese and Indian visitors was synced to Lunar New Year, Ballarat Begonia Festival and the blooming of the sunflower fields at Dunnstown. This included online editorial and social amplification across Indian media outlets, advertising on Chinese social platform RED, as well as six content creator itineraries. This included a vegan guide to Ballarat and a V/Line daytrip itinerary (published immediately prior to the announcement of free public transport in April).

Production this quarter included development of our lo-fi content bank in collaboration with The Digital Picnic and a brand shoot focusing on the begonia display in Robert Clark Conservatory.

This quarter also saw the finalisation of the **Beyond Ballarat** sub-destination brand work, with implementation to commence in Q4.

Shoulder season sports partnerships

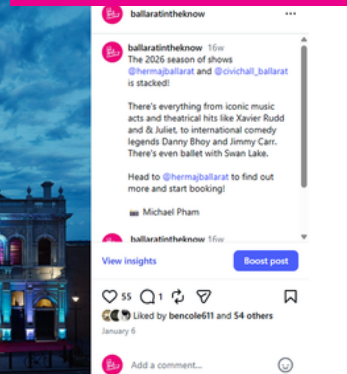
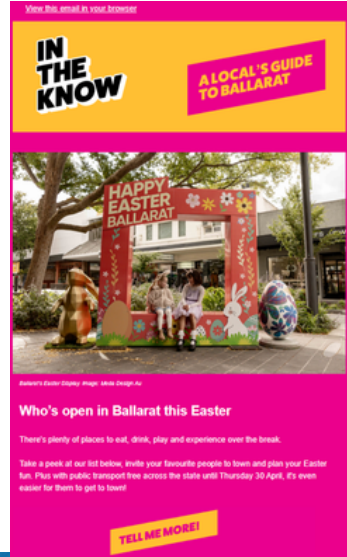
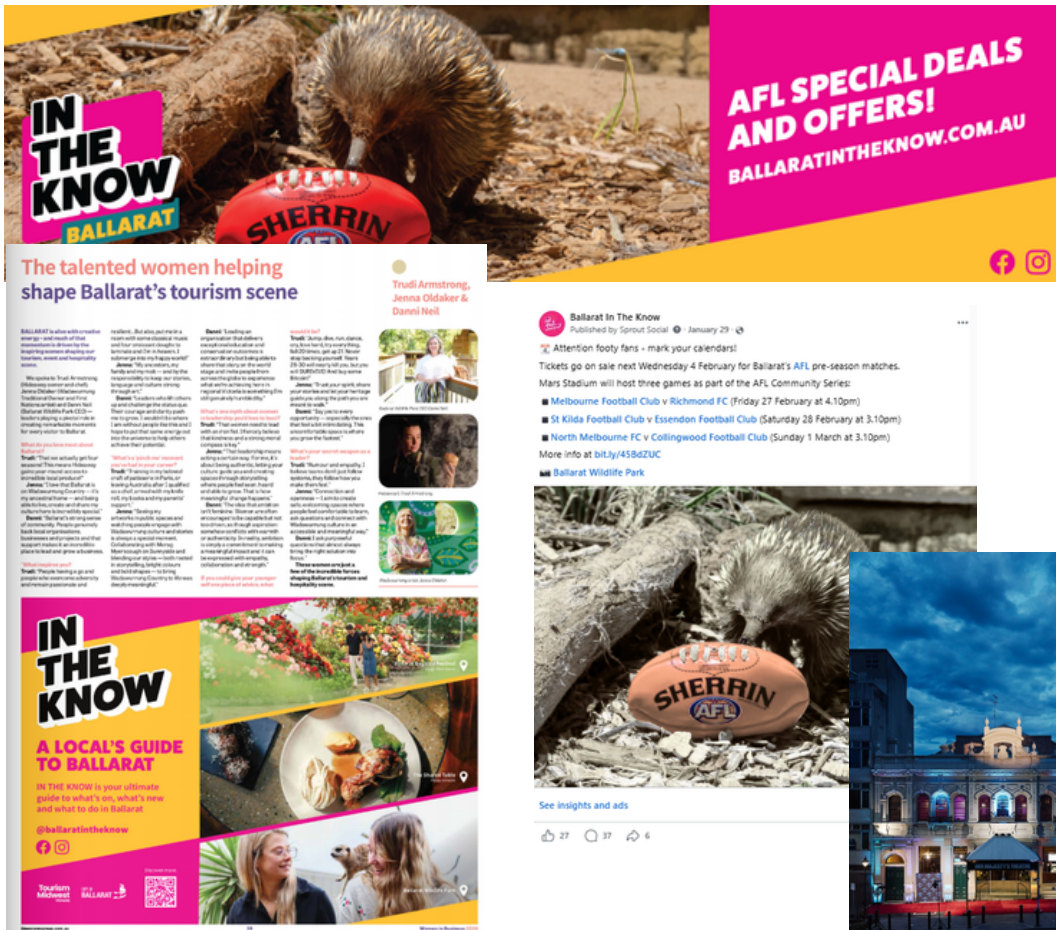
Three AFL pre-season games hosted at Mars Stadium in late February attracted local and metro audiences alike. A suite of exclusive industry deals were professionally photographed and promoted to footy fans across the weekend. This included everything from Sherrin pastries to Froyo toppings in club colours. Ticketmaster showcased these deals in online editorial prior to the games.

As part of our pre-season partnership with the Melbourne Vixens, three players captured content at the Sanctuary Day Spa and Roy Hammond, where they enjoyed yum cha and a mocktail-mixing class. Custom content and brand placements were featured during the Ballarat Blitz at Selkirk Stadium, via social channels (89k reach with 117k views) and embedded in the popular online live stream of the game (198k views).

Ballarat video ads were streamed on Kayo during the Ballarat Gift.

A full-page ad featuring Ballarat Wildlife Park was also included in the printed program for Basketball Australia's U20 and IB National Championships.

Following on from our partnership with We Are Explorers in 2025, a reel highlighting adaptive mountain biking at Djuwang Baring (Creswick Trails) was added to our paid social media deck.



Images L-R: BITK activated across print (IWD in the Ballarat Times), DOOH including AFL Community Series, organic social media and eDM.

Ballarat In The Know (BITK)

Our local communication platform continued to deliver strong results and provide inspiration for visiting friend and family hosts in Q3.

Website visits:

39,064 – increase of 25% YOY

Meta advertising impressions

1,706,744 – increase of 61% YOY

Organic social media views

437,855 – increase of 72% YOY

Organic social media engagements

9,251 – increase of 34% YOY

Facebook - 11k followers - top posts:

- AFL Community Series on sale date: 664 engagements 19,853 impressions
- Her Maj/Civic Hall 2026 season: 647 engagements 16,041 impressions
- Ballarat Blitz: 605 engagements 21,051 impressions

Instagram post - 6,705 followers - top posts:

- Good Food Chef Hat Awards: 86 engagements 3,414 impressions
- Kitteltys pop-up bake sale: 84 engagements 2,614 impressions
- Her Maj/Civic Hall 2026 season: 60 engagements 2,240 impressions

EDM - Easter in Ballarat / Deals & offers view [here](#)

- 7,027 recipients
- 1201 opens - 17.2%
- 364 clicks - 5.2%

Social media content in Q3 focused on:

- Ballarat's Faves campaign in collaboration with PowerFM
- AFL Community Series and associated operator offers and deals
- Easter in Ballarat
- What's on
- Forage and Feast
- New openings


Story content on the website highlighted:

- IWD Women in Ballarat shaping the tourism scene
- AFL Community Series
- Begonia Festival
- Easter opening hours including **highlighting free train transport in response to the fuel crisis**

Paid advertising focused on:

- AFL Community Series deals and offers
- Easter Opening Hours
- Thrifty travel to Ballarat
- IWD Women in Ballarat in tourism (Ballarat Times)


This Regional Victorian City Just Dropped One Of The Most Unexpectedly Vibrant Autumn Event Calendars



Trending Topics

01. Where To Eat, Play and Stay in Ballarat This Summer
02. When is the Best Time to Visit Western Australia? A Month-by-Month Guide
03. The Ultimate Adventure: Tasmania's Coast, Mountains, Food & Great Road Views
04. The Perfect Day Trip to Pictorial Hills: History, Scenery & Country Charm
05. Fast Forward in 48 Hours: A Morning Coastal Meander
06. Join us on Socials

A Brand New Design Festival Is Coming To Ballarat



Mark your calendar

Mar 14
Wine and Cheese Fest
 Where: The Timber Yard
 READ MORE

Until Mar 22
Dunnstown Sunflower Field
 Where: Dunnstown
 READ MORE

Saturday - Sunday
Clunes Booktown Festival
 Various locations in Clunes



secretmelbourne

secretmelbourne [LINK IN BIO] From world-class dining to floral wonderlands and regional escapes, here's what you can't miss this weekend:

- Melbourne Food & Wine Festival
- Treasure Kallbaron
- Clunes Booktown Festival
- The Art of Dining
- Museum of Desire
- Vintage Clothing & Collectables Sale

Find your weekend plans via link in bio

297 likes
 14 hours ago

TAKE TWO... CRAFT CULTURE



1 BATHURST, NSW
 Rare and traditional trades, including blacksmithing, dry-stone walling, furniture making, embroidery, lace making, and traditional Aboriginal tool and weapon making, go on show at the Bathurst Heritage Trades Trail on April 11-12. The fair at Bathurst Showgrounds is celebrating its 10th year, with over 100 skilled artisans, fun and hands-on experiences.



2 BALLARAT, VIC
 The goldfields city – a Unesco Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art since 2019 – is hosting exhibitions, rare trades workshops, talks and maker experiences for the inaugural Ballarat Craft and Design Week from May 1-10. The event includes paid and free experiences.

Images L-R: Ballarat and surrounds featured in Ripe, Dunnstown Sunflower Picking featured in TimeOut, Clunes Booktown featured on Secret Melbourne Instagram and Ballarat Design and Craft week featured in the Sunday Mail.

Public relations & content partnerships

This quarter, the Ballarat region featured in **34** articles with a reach of **4,701,183** and an advertising value of **\$107,448**.

Key media highlights include coverage from Secret Melbourne ([Best Things to do in Melbourne this Weekend](#)), Ripe ([This Regional Victorian City just dropped one of the most Unexpectedly vibrant Autumn event calendars](#)), Time Out Melbourne ([Dunnstown Sunflower Picking](#)), as well as a national syndication across News Corp and Australian Community Media featuring the inaugural Ballarat Craft and Design Week.

Easter buzz: Media kits

Brilliantly Unexpected Ballarat Easter media kits were distributed to a curated list of leading Melbourne media outlets, including Good Weekend, Time Out, Broadsheet, Concrete Playground, News.com.au and Pedestrian.

Each kit showcased a selection of Ballarat-made products and indulgent treats, including Ruby Pilven, Ballarat Candle Co and the Ballarat Chocolate Experience Shop, offering media a tangible taste of the region's creativity and craftsmanship.

EVENTS

SOON

Featuring more than 250 works by arguably the world's most elusive artist, **Banksy Limitless** will open in The Rocks precinct in Sydney after captivating more than 120,000 visitors in London during its sold-out run. The exhibition will run for at least a year. Look out for the famous artwork, *Cinderella at Dismaland*.

WHEN: From April 1; banksylimitless.com/sydney



COMING UP

The inaugural **Ballarat Craft and Design Week** - complete with hands-on workshops, talks and retail opportunities - will take place over 10 days in the Victorian regional city, which has been recognised as a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art since 2019.

WHEN: May 1-10; creativeballarat.com.au



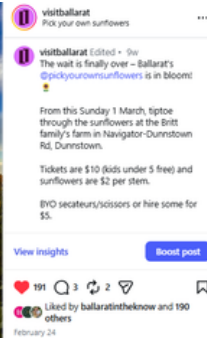
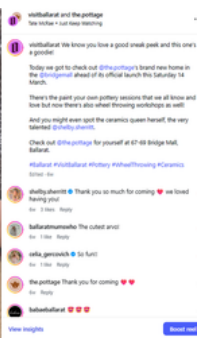
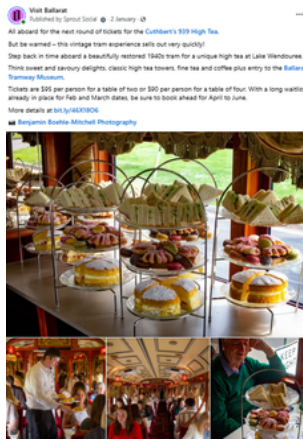
LATER

The Curated Plate food and drink festival will return to the Sunshine Coast under the culinary direction of chef, author and television presenter Peter Kuruvita (pictured). More than 40 events will be part of the program this year, including chef-led dinners, cooking classes, farm tours, markets and family events.

WHEN: July 24 to August 3; thecuratedplate.com.au



Ballarat Craft and Design week as featured in the Sunday Herald Sun.



Visit Ballarat organic social media

Our visitor-focused social media channels are all about spotlighting the Ballarat region's unexpected moments – the things that make us stand out.

Organic social media views

3,315,767 – increase of 5.24% YOY

Organic social media engagements

114,551 – decrease of 1.58% YOY

Facebook – 81,424 followers (increase of 4.2% YOY)

Top Q3 posts

- [Afternoon tea in the dahlias at Bungaree's Florelie flower farm](#): 12,092 engagements, 166,344 views
- [High tea on Cuthbert's vintage tram at Lake Wendouree](#): 8,708 engagements, 99,315 views
- [Open garden at Ballarat's North Haven](#): 6,303 engagements, 81,300 views

Instagram – 36,817 followers (increase of 12.5% YOY)

Top Q3 posts

- [Aurora Australis at Coghills Creek](#): 381 engagements, 6,137 views
- [Sneak peek of The Pottage \(reel\)](#): 361 engagements, 27,000 views
- [2026 opening of Dunnstown's Pick Your Own Sunflowers](#): 288 engagements, 6,581 views

EDM – 18,207 subscribers

- [7 EDMs](#)
- 20,584 opens
- 3,132 clicks

Social media content and stories in Q3 focused on:

- What's on
- What's new
- Free V/Line travel
- Summer school holidays
- Summer Sundays
- Forage and Feast
- Lunar New Year
- AFL Community Series
- Melbourne Vixens' Ballarat Blitz
- Labour Day long weekend
- Begonia Festival
- Easter in Ballarat
- Clunes Booktown
- Pyrenees Unearthed
- Pick Your Own Sunflowers

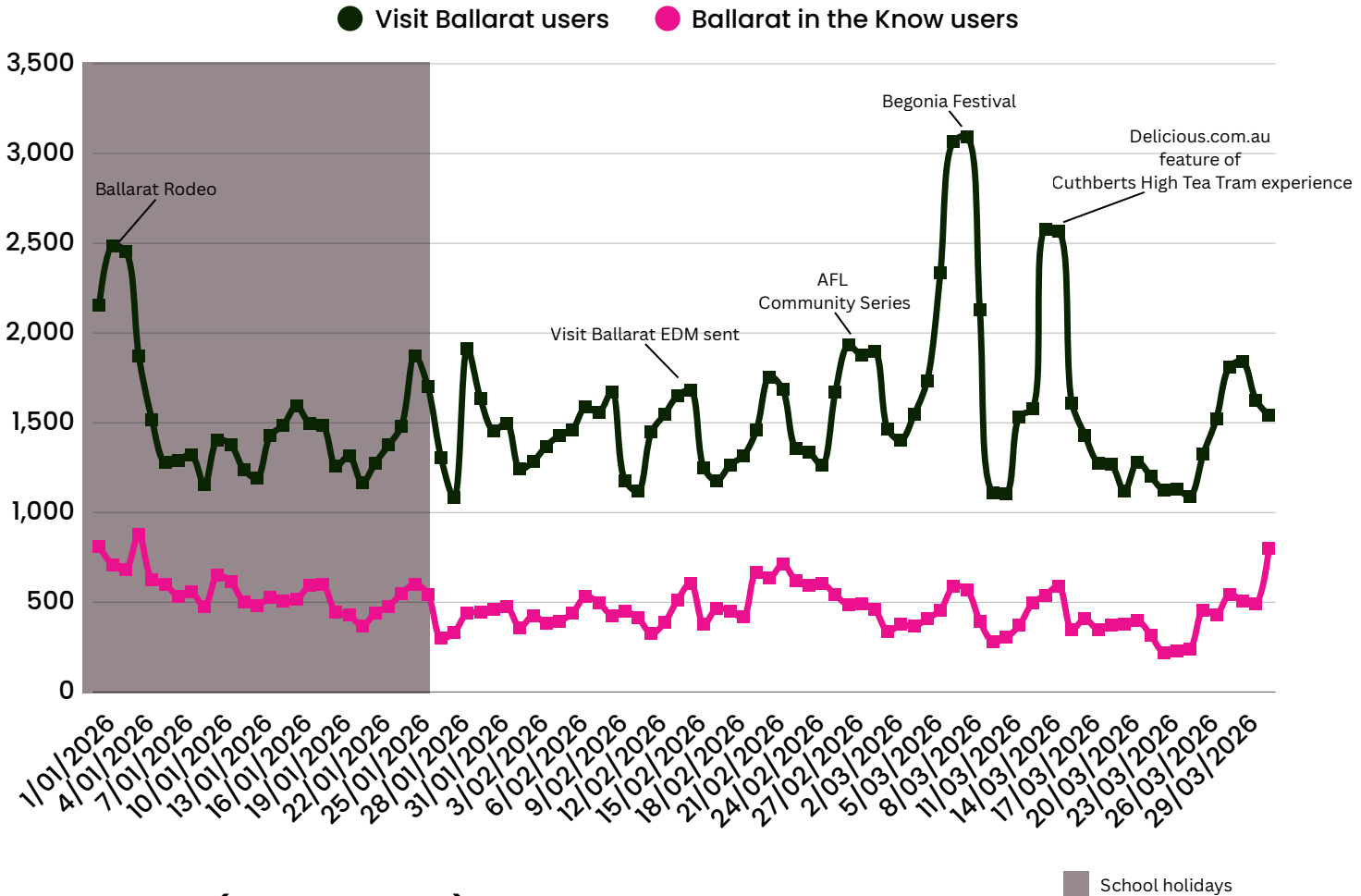
Fuel crisis support included:

- Stories on the VB website (eg. [10 things to do within a 10-minute walk of the Ballarat Train Station](#); [20 things to do in Ballarat under \\$20](#); and [Thrifty Ballarat: Visit Ballarat on a budget](#))
- Pointers on the VB homepage linking to the above stories
- [Social media posts](#)
- [EDM inclusions](#)

Website traffic

The data here helps to paint a picture of how many people are visiting our websites, how they get there and what sort of content appeals most to them.

Daily website traffic



Top stories (Visit Ballarat)

- 7 unexpected Ballarat foodie moments (8557 views, 7905 users)
- AFL Community Series in Ballarat (6214 views, 4228 users)
- Three trails in Ballarat that make adventure accessible for everyone (3415 views, 3310 users)
- What's on in Ballarat this March long weekend (4890 views, 2910 users)
- 4 brilliantly unexpected Ballarat experiences (2975 views, 2524 users)

Total ATDW operator views

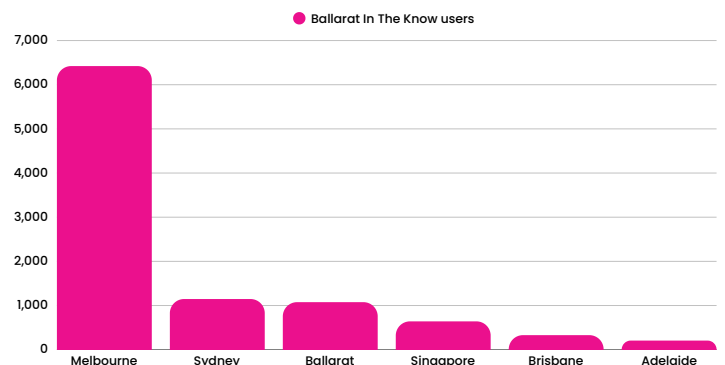
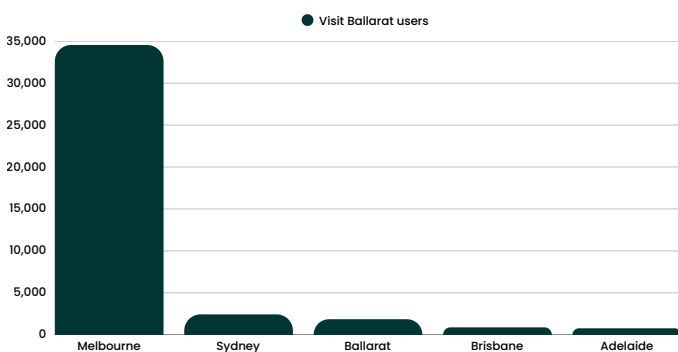
61,614

Total ATDW event views

81,517

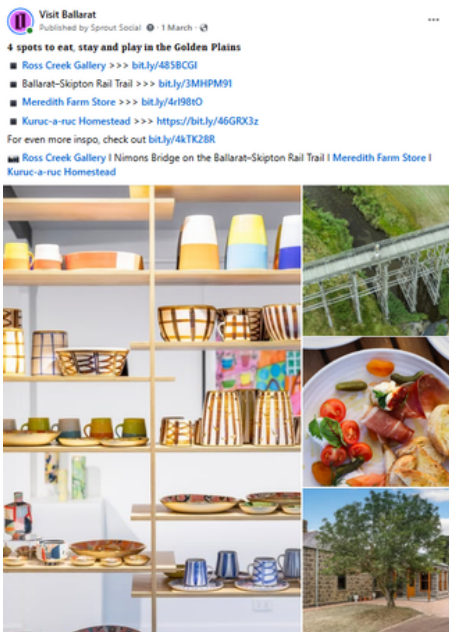
Where are our website visitors coming from?

Note: this is based on the user's IP address in Google Analytics



Regional marketing report

The following pages capture how the broader TMV region has been included in the Marketing team's campaign activity across owned, earned and paid channels. More than 75 operators were promoted across the region.



Golden Plains

Imagery of Nimons Bridge on the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail continued to be featured in our programmatic digital display and paid social media advertising throughout the quarter.

Visit Ballarat's organic social media showcased:

- Avalon Nursery
- Hidden Gems Open Artist Studios
- In The Sticks Cafe
- Kuruc-a-Ruc Homestead
- Meredith Farm Produce Store & Cafe
- Nimons Bridge
- Ross Creek Gallery
- Smythesdale Country Market
- The Courthouse Hotel

Total in-kind value this quarter equates to approximately \$14,100

Hepburn

The following operators and events were featured in our autumn media release – Clunes Booktown, Fox Superflow Creswick Gravity Enduro Race, La Gerche Forest Walk, and Black Cat Truffles.

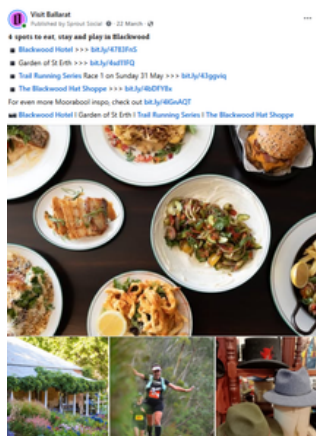
During the summer truffle harvest, Black Cat Truffles continued to feature in our paid digital mix. An accessible-travel reel from We Are Explorers featuring Djuwang Baring was included in social advertising and continues to be well received. Clunes Booktown and CresFest were both included in paid editorial in Geelong + Surfcoast Living magazine.

Visit Ballarat's organic social media showcased:

- Anderson's Mill
- Black Cat Truffles
- Blue Waters
- Cafe Fifty Two
- Captains Creek Organic Wines
- Clunes Booktown
- Clunes Farmers & Makers Market
- CresFest
- Creswick Market
- Creswick Woollen Mills
- Djuwang Baring
- Fox Superflow Creswick Gravity Enduro Race
- La Gerche Forest Walk
- Maze House
- Morningswood Farm
- RACV Goldfields
- Rocklyn Cherry and Blueberry Farm
- Sonder House Clunes
- The American Creswick
- Tuki Trout Farm

Total in-kind value this quarter equates to approximately \$46,750

Regional marketing report



Moorabool

The most popular Visit Ballarat Facebook post in Q3 showcased afternoon tea in the dahlias at Florelie (12,092 engagements and 166,344 views).

Payne's Orchards featured in two content creator itineraries this quarter, while Pick Your Own Sunflowers was a spotlight experience in our Indian media buys and in an Instagram carousel by content creator Sarath Vegasana. Kryal Castle and Werribee Gorge continued to feature in our paid digital ad mix. Kryal also featured on a supersite billboard in Melbourne during the Australian Open.

The following operators and events were featured in our autumn media release – Pick Your Own Sunflowers, Blackwood's Trail Running Series, and the Ballan Autumn Festival.

Visit Ballarat's organic social media showcased:

- Ballan Autumn Festival
- Ballan Farmers Market
- Blackwood Hotel
- Festival of Small Halls
- Florelie flower farm
- Garden of St Erth
- Gold Rush golden retriever gathering
- Kryal Castle
- Naturipe Fruits
- Payne's Orchards
- Pick Your Own Sunflowers
- St Anne's Winery
- The Blackwood Hat Shoppe
- The Paddock Lal Lal
- The Plough
- The Woodlands Lal Lal
- Trail Running Series
- Yendon Gourmet Tomatoes

Total in-kind value this quarter equates to approximately \$49,500



Pyrenees

In March, marketing agency The Digital Picnic filmed lo-fi content for organic and paid socials at Freddy Fernackerpans Funtime Candy, Cyril Callister Vegemite Museum and Summerfield Winery.

The Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally and Pyrenees Unearthed were both featured in our autumn media release. Pyrenees Unearthed featured in paid editorial in the Visit Victoria Official Visitor Guide and in Geelong + Surfcoast Living magazine. Imagery of Mt Cole featured in programmatic display and social media advertising. Wayward Winery was included in an overnight content creator itinerary published to Chinese social platform RED in February.

Visit Ballarat's organic social media showcased:

- Avoca Autumn Races
- Avoca Riverside Market
- Beaufort Lake Caravan Park
- Beaufort Town Market
- Beaufort Walkfest
- Bigibila Wines
- Cave Hill Creek
- Cyril Callister Vegemite Museum
- Dreaming Together – A Big Beaufort Weekend
- Freddy Fernackerpans Funtime Candy
- Kittelty's
- Lake Goldsmith Steam Rally
- Magnolia
- Mooramong
- Mount Cole
- Mrs Baker's Still House
- Pyrenees Cellar Door at The George Hotel
- Pyrenees Unearthed
- Summerfield Winery
- Talbot Farmers Market
- The Edge of Nowhere – Chestnut
- The Flywheel Bar & Cafe
- Wayward Winery

Total in-kind value this quarter equates to approximately \$36,900



Got a question for the
Tourism Midwest Victoria team?

Reach out to
hello@tourismmidwestvic.com.au

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Midwest
Victoria**