TOURISM UPDATE

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MARGARET RIVER BUSSELTON TOURISM ASSOCIATION

VISITOR NUMBERS
Year Ending December 2019

- Growth in visitor numbers from all markets.
- Strong growth from interstate +20% and international +10% markets

Overnight Visitors	YE Dec 2017	YE Dec 2018	YE Dec 2019	% Change	3 year AAGR^
International	116,100	136,800	141,200	+3.2%	+10.3%
Interstate	125,000	171,000	184,000	+7.6%	+21.3%
Intrastate	1,204,000	1,218,000	1,234,000	+1.3%	+1.2%
Total	1,445,100	1,525,800	1,559,200	+2.2%	+3.9%

IMPACT OF COVID

- Within the space of a week, the region was all but shut down.
- Businesses that could, such as food and beverage, scrambled to reinvent their offering with takeaway and delivery services.
- For some businesses, such as accommodation and tour providers, there was no option but to close their doors.
- As a region so heavily reliant on tourism, the consequences for small businesses and their employees, was nothing short of heartbreaking.
- JobKeeper was a lifeline and without it, many businesses would not have survived; MRBTA included.

VISITOR NUMBERS
Year Ending June 2020

- International border restriction in place 21 March - current.
- Interstate border restriction in place 6 April - current.
- Regional border restrictions in place 1 April - 18 May.

Overnight Visitors	YE Jun 18	YE Jun 19	YE Jun 20	% Change	3 year AAGR^
Interstate	171,000	167,000	146,000	-12.6%	-7.6%
Intrastate	1,186,000	1,283,000	1,007,000	-21.5%	-7.9%
Total	1,357,000	1,450,000	1,153,000	-20.5%	-7.8%

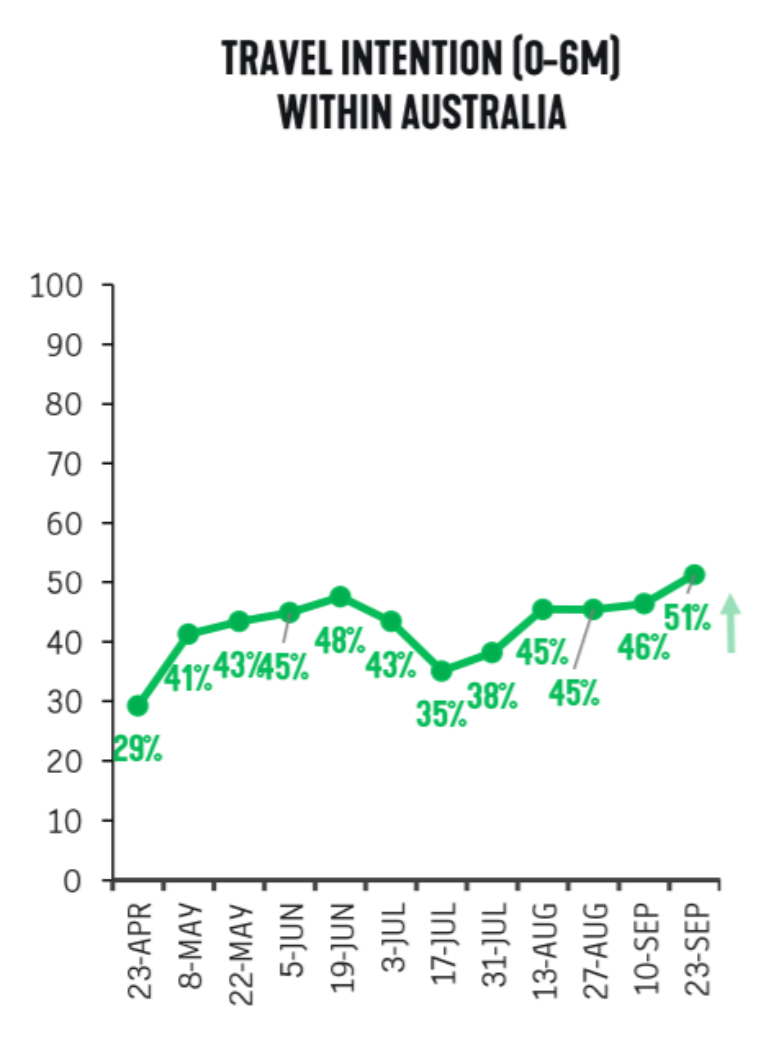
MRBTA RESPONSE

1) Using the power of margaretriver.com & visitor servicing channels
   - Essential Services Listing
   - What's Open
   - Up-to-date travel advice
   - YoY growth of 52,000 website users since May

2) Business Support
   - Member Resource Page
   - Membership Fees waived

3) Representation to Government
   - Ensuring decision makers understood member's hardship

CURRENT SITUATION



- Strong school holiday periods
- Quiet mid-week, busy weekends
- Challenging for tours, attractions & activities
- November and early December soft; summer school holidays busy
- Uncertainty about when borders will open and the impact that will have on visitation into 2021
- Delivery of visitor experiences is being made difficult by staff shortages & further compounded by housing availability

Source: Tourism Australia Fortnightly Travel Sentiment Tracker

ROLE OF MRBTA IN COVID RECOVERY

- Finding a balance between:
  - Supporting members' immediate needs
  - Positioning the region for future success

- Continuing to communicate what is happening on the ground to decision makers

- **Leveraging established partnerships** to gain maximum value for members

EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

- Historically MRBTA's marketing and visitor servicing efforts have focused on communicating experiences.
- Experience development outside of MRBTA's own attractions has largely been left to members.
- Landscape has changed significantly in the last few years as a result of social media; the only way to control the stories that are told about our destination, is to manage the experiences on offer.
- MRBTA is evolving its approach from destination "marketing" to destination "development".
  - Targeted support
  - Regional projects

TARGETED BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Whilst ‘generic’ training and mentoring programs have their place, the need was for targeted, bespoke analysis and advice
- Work completed with members to prepare for Jetstar flights and develop wine tourism experience was delivering results
- One to one business support delivered by industry expert in the context of your business operations
- Assisting members to:
  - Evolve and adapt experiences to meet visitors’ expectations
  - Implement a digital strategy to ensure competitiveness in the online environment.
  - Reach new customers and markets

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Unbeaten Tracks

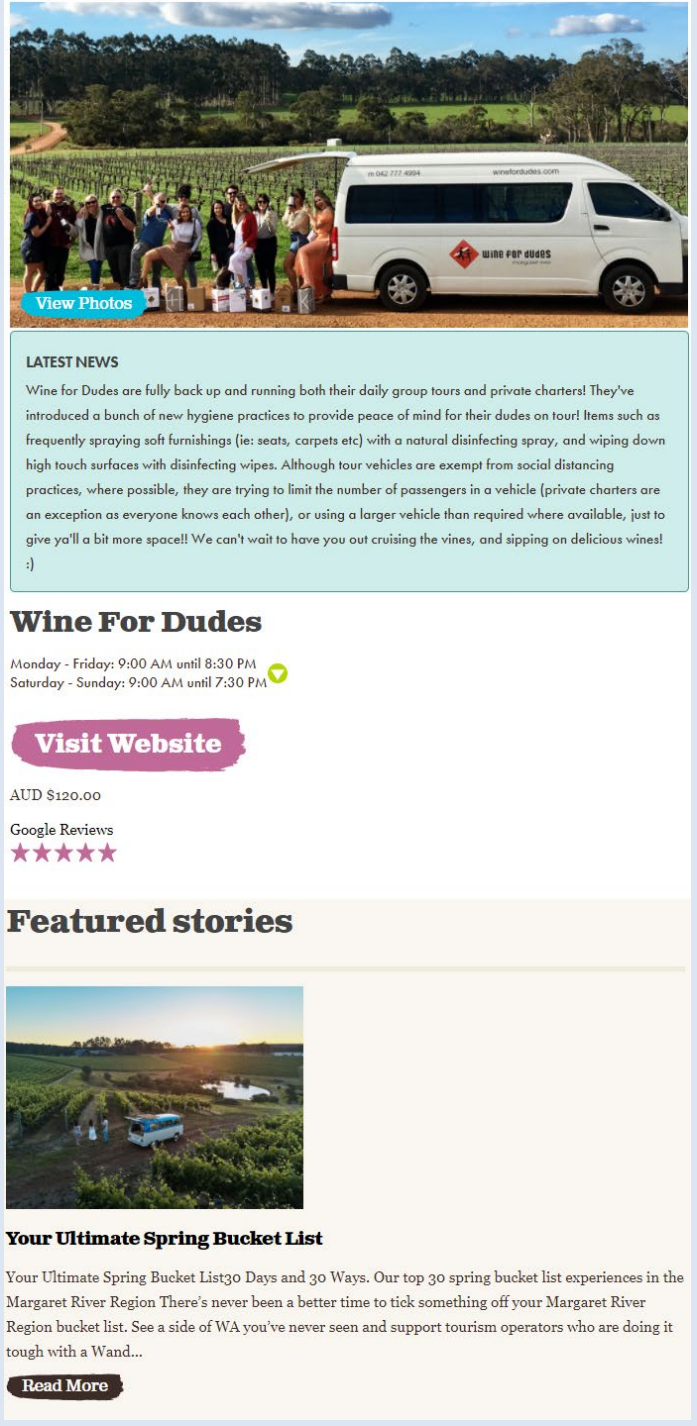
- Long term initiative to complete and maintain a high-quality network of key tracks and trails.
- Developing activity nodes to provide additional visitor experience, dispersal and economic return (i.e. Karri Bowl, Augusta, Busselton Foreshore).
- Support established from 14 regional stakeholders.
- Masterplan to be released in January 2021.

REGIONAL BRAND REDEVELOPMENT

- Soft launch December 2020
- Workshops conducted in March 2020
- Objectives:
  - Point of difference for international and interstate markets
  - Points of difference for city/town-level localities
  - Leverage existing market equity around “Margaret River” name
  - Further region’s premium positioning
  - Align with TWA’s ‘Our Story’ narrative

MARGARETRIVER.COM REDEVELOPMENT

- No 1 authority
  - >1.2 million sessions
  - >820k users
- Direct referrals to members' websites
- Individual member listings more easily found; new member page designs
- Improved user experience



MARKETING APPROACH

- Plotting out marketing campaign activity when you don’t know who, what or when is tricky!
- Digital first approach; adaptable & agile.
- Leverage broader campaign activity.
    - A Million Reasons to Wander out Yonder / #30Days30Ways.
    - Holiday Here This Year.
- Targeted content to leverage markets & sentiment.

MEMBERSHIP

- FOC Membership period ends 31 Dec 2020
- New improved packages:
    - Primary Membership ($599)
        + NEW! One-to-one product development support
        + Website editorial
        + Campaign inclusions
        + Staff famils
        + Priority inclusion in journalist/influencer famils
    - Secondary Membership ($299)
        + Direct web link

Thankyou