



Wheatbelt Way

Bright skies. Big horizons.

Wheatbelt Futures Forum | 2 May 2025

Beyond Caravans & Campsites - *Expanding Wheatbelt Tourism & Events*

Linda Vernon – Tourism Officer, NEWTRAVEL



From Caravans & a Brochure...



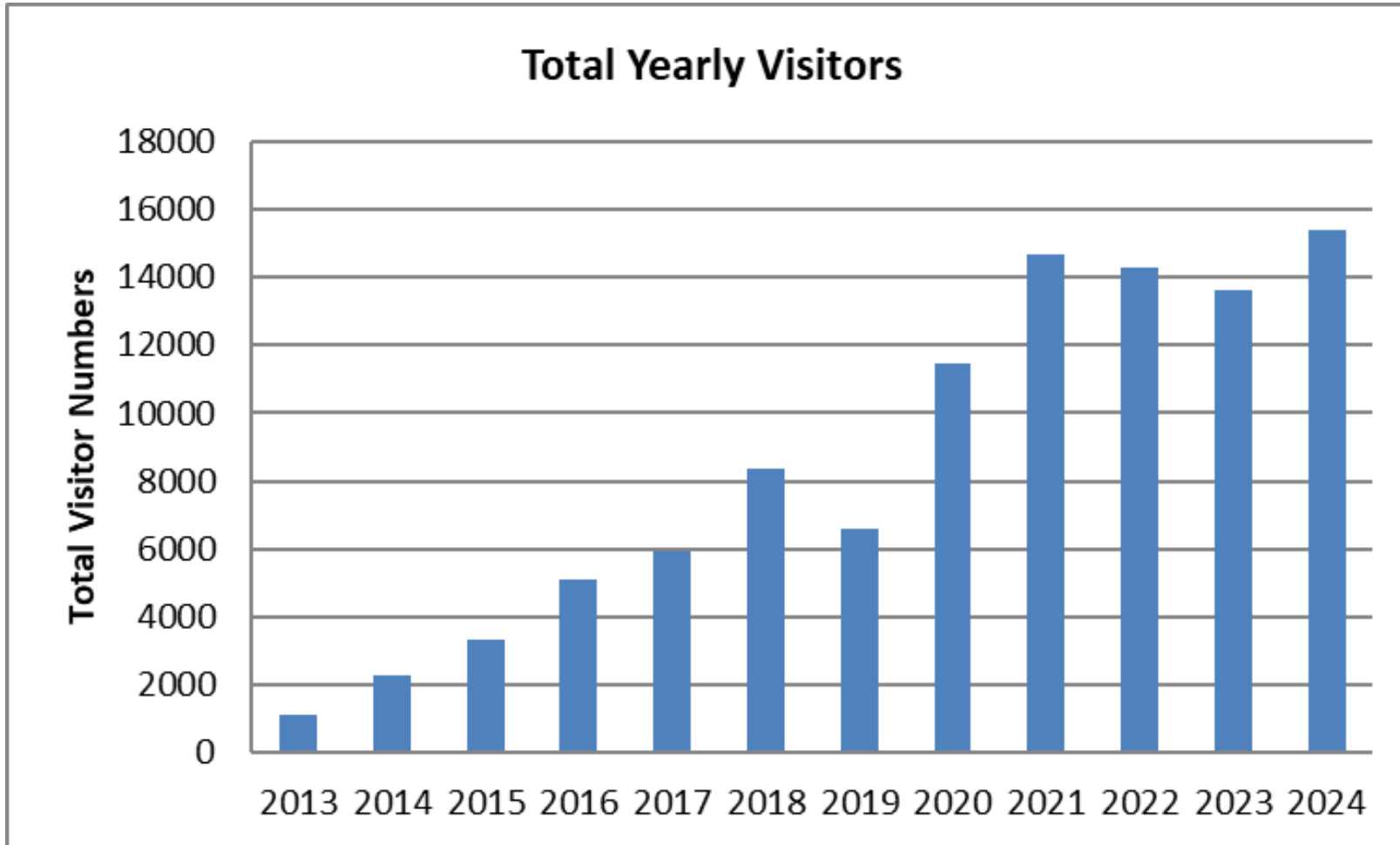
2025 Wessy on the Green

Setting the Scene!

ROAD TRIP *Country*



Where We've Been (and Still Are!)



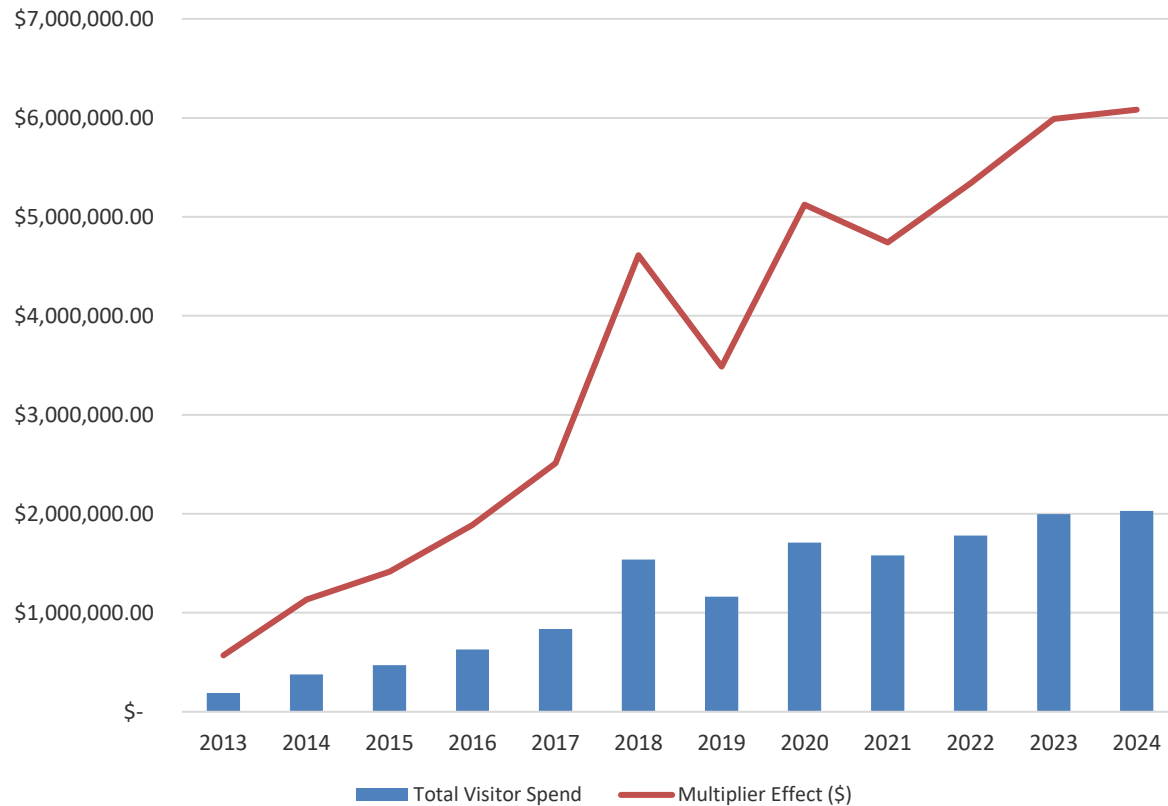
Output!



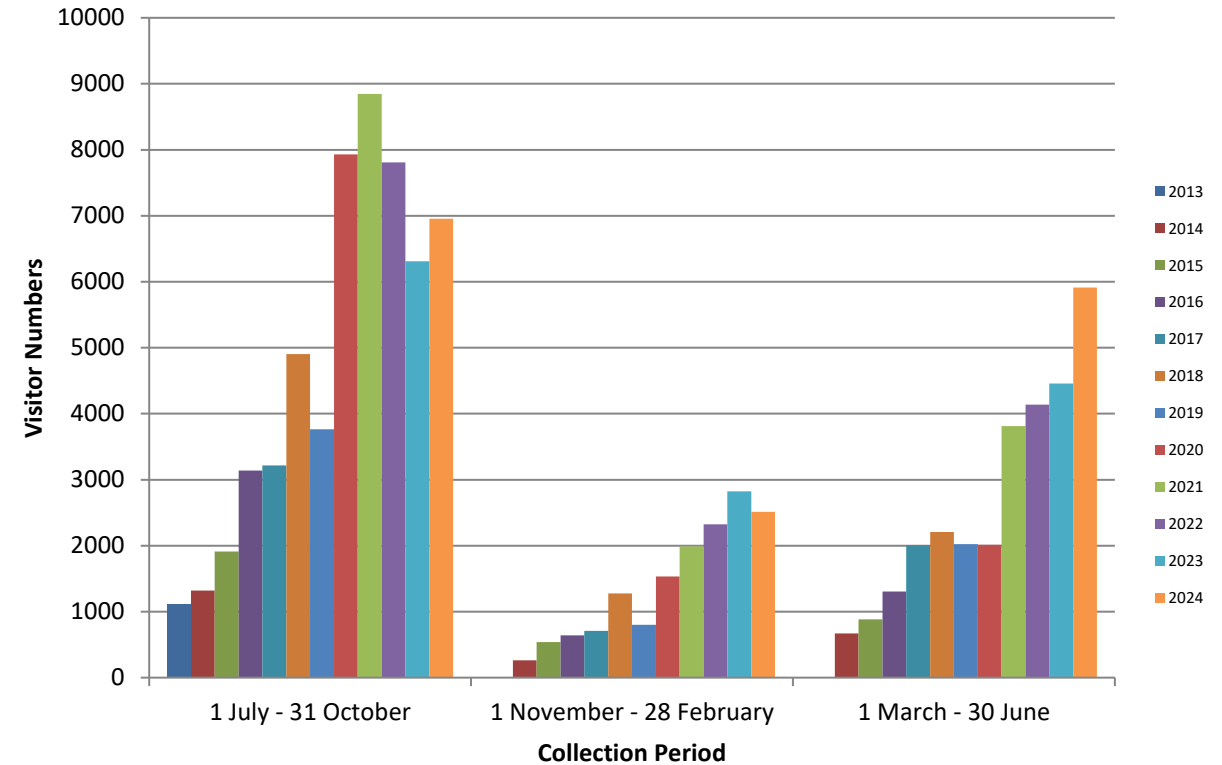
**15,380 visitors
in 2024!**

Visitor Impact Snapshot

Estimated Total Visitor Spend in the Wheatbelt Way



Visitors Numbers to the Wheatbelt Way Local Government Caravan Parks & Accommodation 2013-2024



The Experience Economy Opportunity

New visitor = new drivers:

- Public art & placemaking
- Cultural storytelling
- History & museums
- Bushwalking
- Farm tours, Ag Shows & agritourism activities
- Niche local events
- **Trend:** People are seeking connection over convenience.



Koorda & Districts Agricultural Show

Destination Development = Niche Events

Reputation, Brand & Marketing

- A “hook”.
- Activate the destination.
- Media exposure.
- Change perceptions.
- Local values, attitudes & attributes



Mangowine Concert, Nungarin

Destination Development = Niche Events

Visitation & Economic Injection

- Attract new markets (visitors & residents).
- Give reason to visit (& return/repeat visitation)
- Off peak visitation
- Increase length of stay
- New money into economy – visitor expenditure + grants & sponsorship.
- Job creation
- Fundraising for community groups

Destination Development = Niche Events

Social & community outcomes

- Connect people, place & culture
- Leave lasting legacies
- Create community pride & liveability
- Diversity
- Inclusion



Nungarin Wheatbelt Markets

The Opportunity: Experience-Led Tourism

Tier 1 Events (Premier Event, State Significance)

- Dowerin Machinery Field Days

Tier 2 Events (Annual Events)

- Mt Marshall & Districts Agricultural Show
- Koorda & Districts Agricultural Show
- Wyalkatchem Rodeo
- Trayning Rock Solid Smoke n' Dirt
- Mangowine Concert, Nungarin
- Wessy on the Green, Westonia
- Home Grown Concert, Nungarin
- Nungarin Vintage Rally and Search Light Party
- Wylie Arts Expo
- WAORRA Rally, Bencubbin
- Mainstreet Gallery, Mukinbudin

Tier 3 Events (Monthly Events & Markets)

- Koorda Drive-In
- Nungarin Wheatbelt Markets
- Westonia Xmas Markets

Economic & reputational value: **Dowerin Machinery Field Days**



2024 saw 17,000+ visitors over 2 days!

Social & reputational value: **Wyalkatchem Rodeo**



2024, saw over 4,000 people in Wyalkatchem for 1 day!

Social & Community value: **Koorda Drive In**



Screens monthly for 10 months and has an average of 120 visitors each month!

At Risk: The Fragile Future of Regional Events & Experiences

Changing Volunteer Behaviour

- Ageing volunteer base, burnout, fewer new hands.
- Events and galleries rely on unpaid hours.
- New expectations: "Why should I do this for free?"

Skilled Staff Shortages

- Hard to attract and retain talent in small towns.
- Limited pool for tech, marketing, project delivery.
- Impacts service quality and capacity to innovate.

Rising Costs

- Insurance, compliance, logistics and talent all cost more.
- Harder for small events to stay viable.
- Local clubs and groups stretched thinner than ever.

Running an event in the Wheatbelt? We're here to help



<https://wheatbeltway.com.au/event-management-hub/>

Equipment

Event Evaluation

Insurances

Local Government
Permits

Marketing

Online Resources

Event
Management

Food & Catering

Funding &
Sponsorship

Risk Management

Toilets, Rubbish &
Recycling

Traffic
Management &
Event Layouts

Stallholders

Volunteer/ Staff
Management

Workplace Health
& Safety

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Australian Government
Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry



Future
Drought
Fund



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal



Australian
Rural Leadership
Foundation



What If...

What if the Wheatbelt was known for:

- A regional events calendar that rivals the coast?
- Creative, hands-on, immersive experiences?
- A tourism & events industry that strengthens local jobs?

Explore more: www.wheatbeltway.com.au

Thankyou

See you at the Q&A!



Nungarin Vintage Rally & Searchlight Party