

# Unlocking the Potential: The Value of Tourism for the Wheatbelt

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# Overview

- Current Wheatbelt Tourism Snapshot
- Wheatbelt Tourism Vision
- The Wheatbelt Way
- Challenges, Needs and Trends
- Destination Development Opportunities
- Farming and Tourism - Agritourism

# Current State of Tourism in the Wheatbelt is **IMMATURE & EMERGING.**



**Table 2 -** Distribution of visitors, nights and spend across the region, rolling average 2016-19.<sup>1</sup>

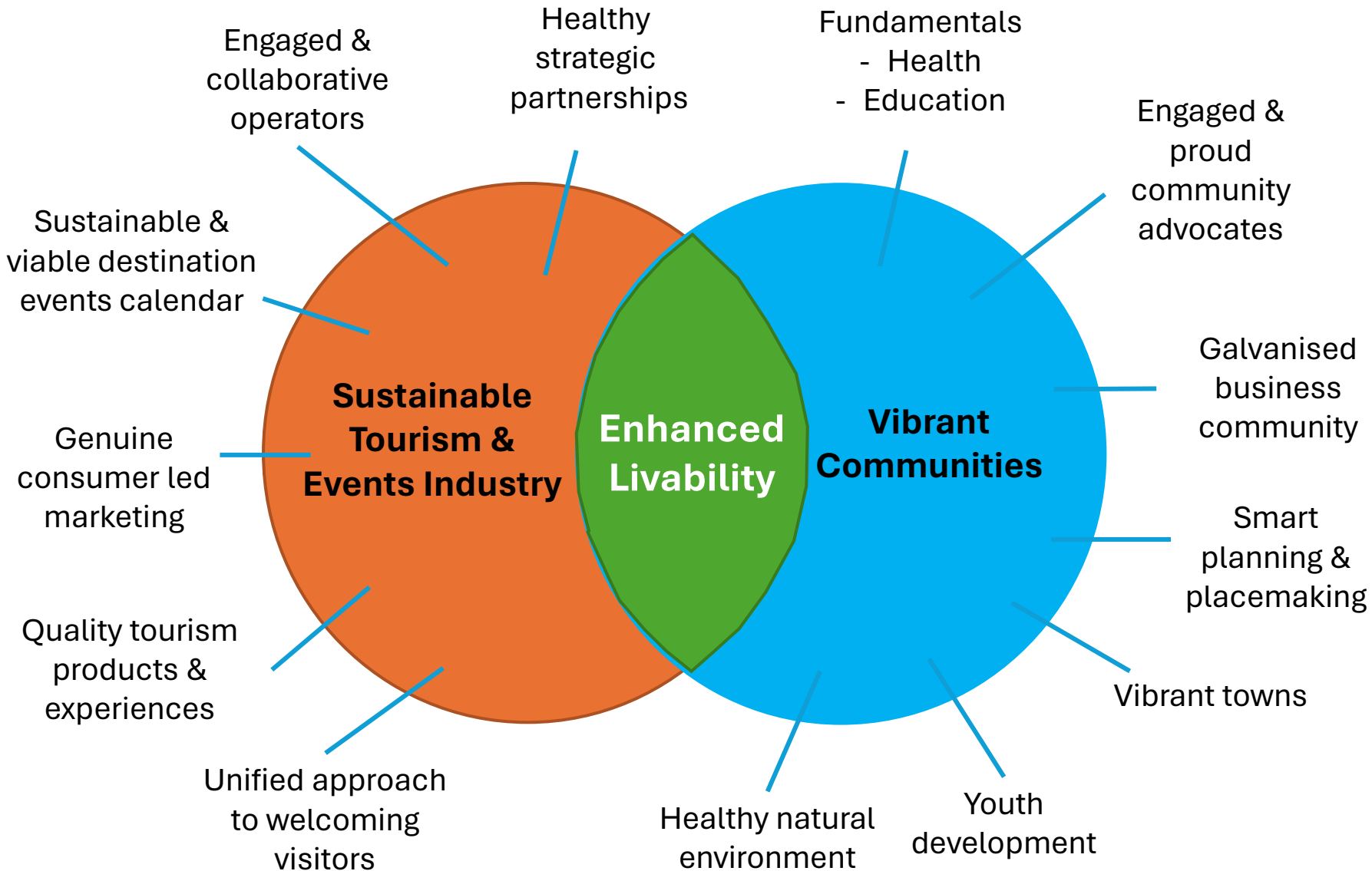
Subregion	Market	Visitors (000)	Nights (000)	Expenditure (\$M)
AGO - Esperance and South Coast	International	30	186	9
	Domestic overnight	292	1,142	161
	<b>Total</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>1,328</b>	<b>169</b>
AGO - Kalgoorlie and Goldfields	International	17	277	15
	Domestic overnight	410	2,159	272
	<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>2,436</b>	<b>287</b>
AGO - The Wheatbelt	International	20	211	10
	Domestic overnight	426	1,173	115
	<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>1,385</b>	<b>125</b>
AGO - Gascoyne Murchison	International	7	54	2
	Domestic overnight	145	844	54
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>898</b>	<b>56</b>

# Wheatbelt Tourism Destination Development Vision

That the Wheatbelt has a vibrant visitor economy delivering **outstanding visitor experiences** that **attract overnight visitor spend**, increase yield for the tourism industry across the year, and **enhance the livability** of the region for work and play.



# What is good for Tourism is Good for Our Community



## Enhanced livability leads to:

- Increase appeal
- Deepened community pride
- Population growth (think Shire of Westonia example).
- Reduced skills gaps/increased workforce
- Happy and healthy residents

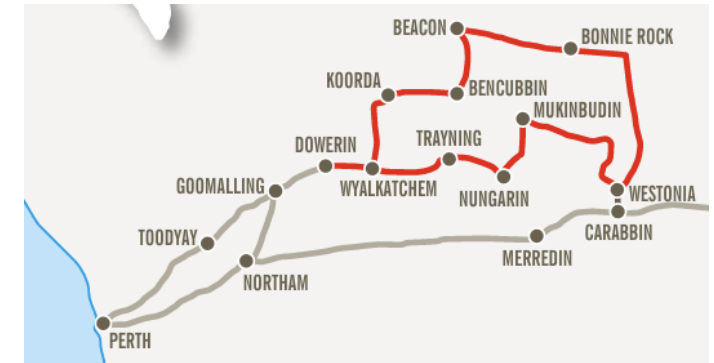
# The Wheatbelt Way

- Self Drive Trail, starting 2hrs from Perth.
- 9 regional communities of Dowerin, Wyalkatchem, Koorda, Bencubbin, Beacon, Westonia, Mukinbudin, Nungarin & Trayning.
- 24 unique interpreted sites from natural attractions to sites of historical importance.



**Wheatbelt Way**

Bright skies. Big horizons.

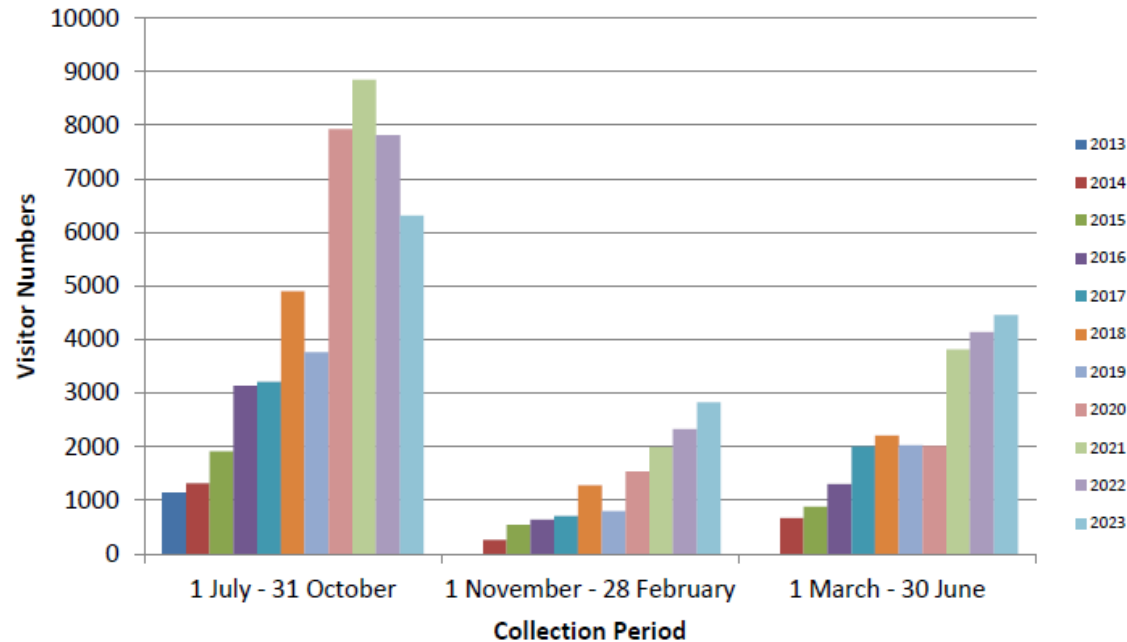


**ROAD TRIP**  
*Country*

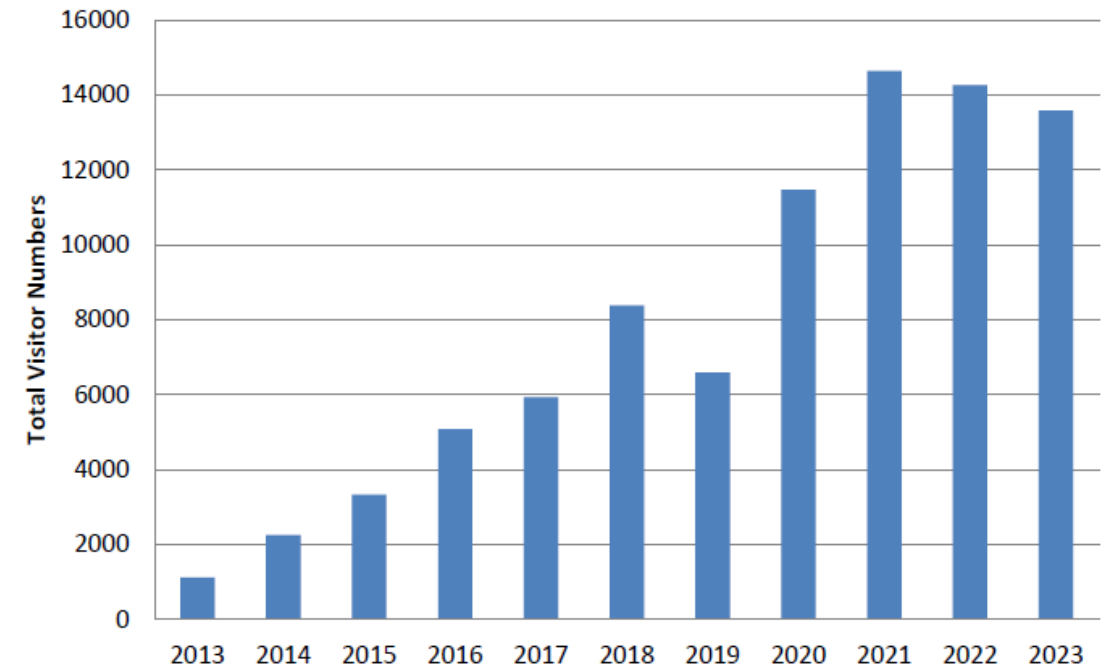
# Visitors = 1000% growth over 10 years.



Visitors Numbers to the Wheatbelt Way Local Government Caravan  
Parks & Accommodation  
2013-2023



Total Yearly Visitors

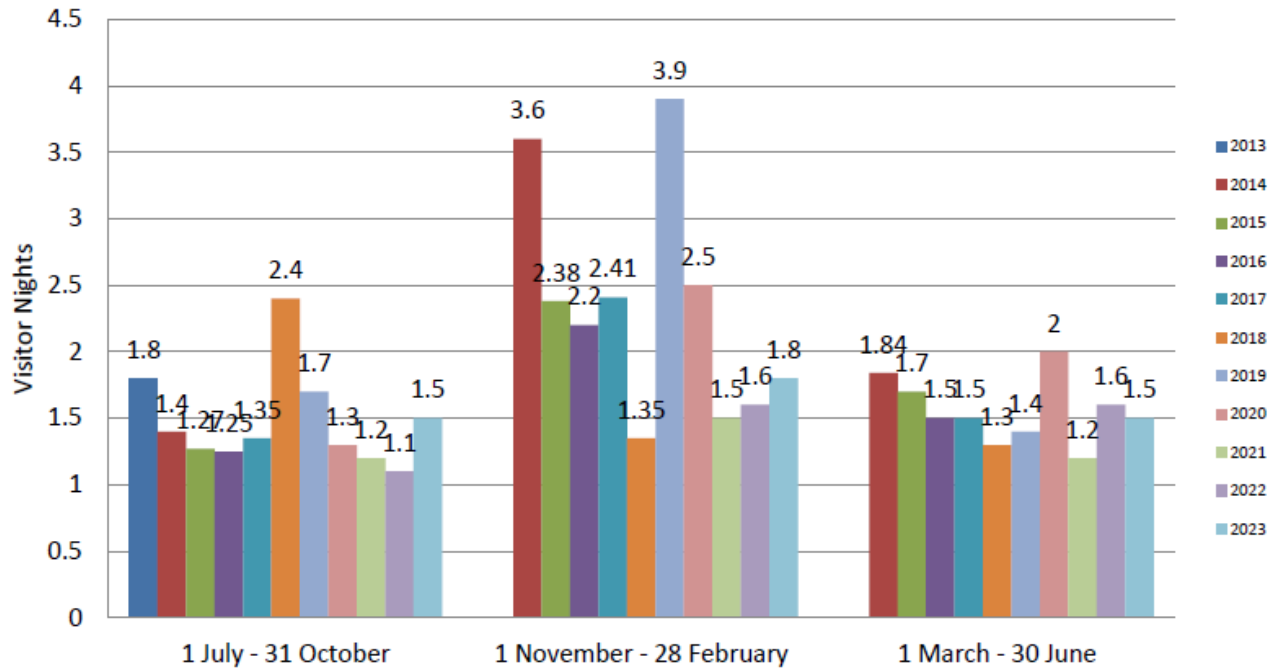


- A total of 13,833 visitors stayed in local government caravan parks in 2022-2023.
- 6,552 visitors came between July and October 2023.

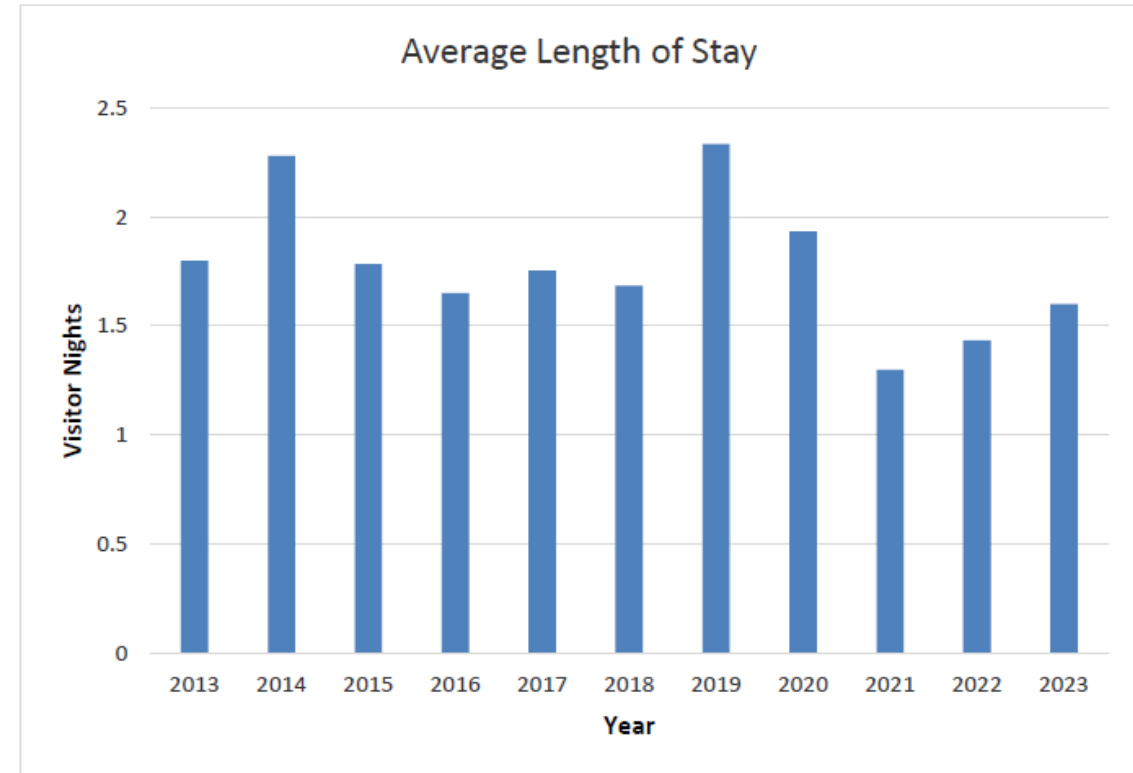
# Length of Stay is not increasing!



Estimated Length of Stay by Visitors in the Wheatbelt Way



Average Length of Stay



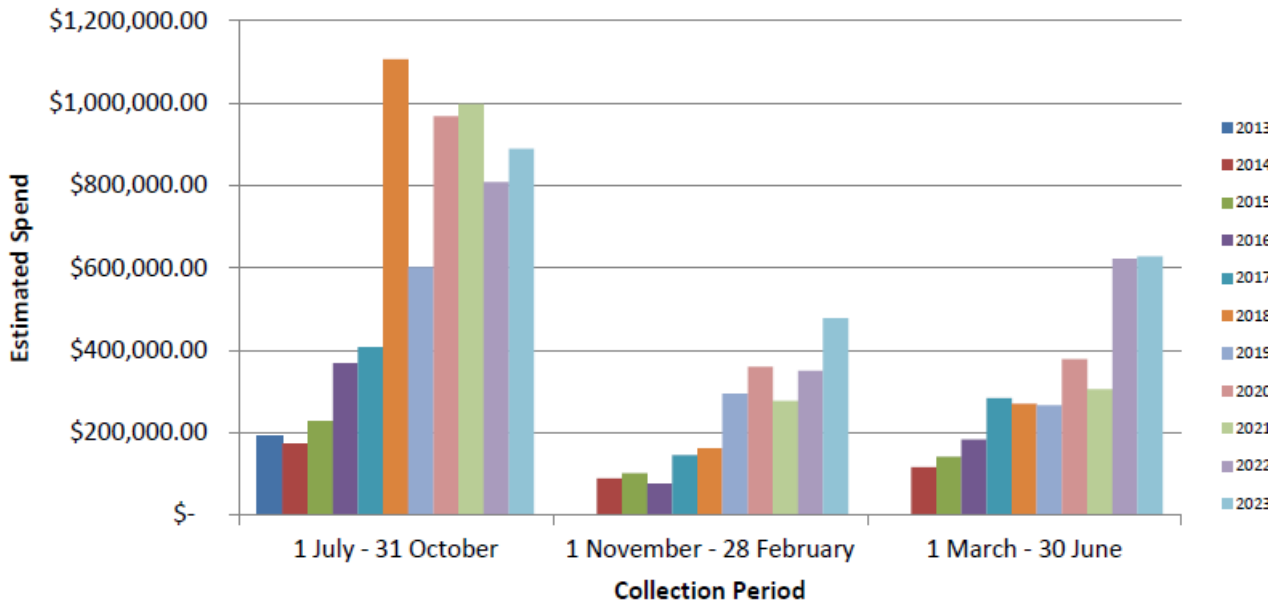
- Visitors stayed an average of 1.5 nights in a Wheatbelt Way community in 2023.



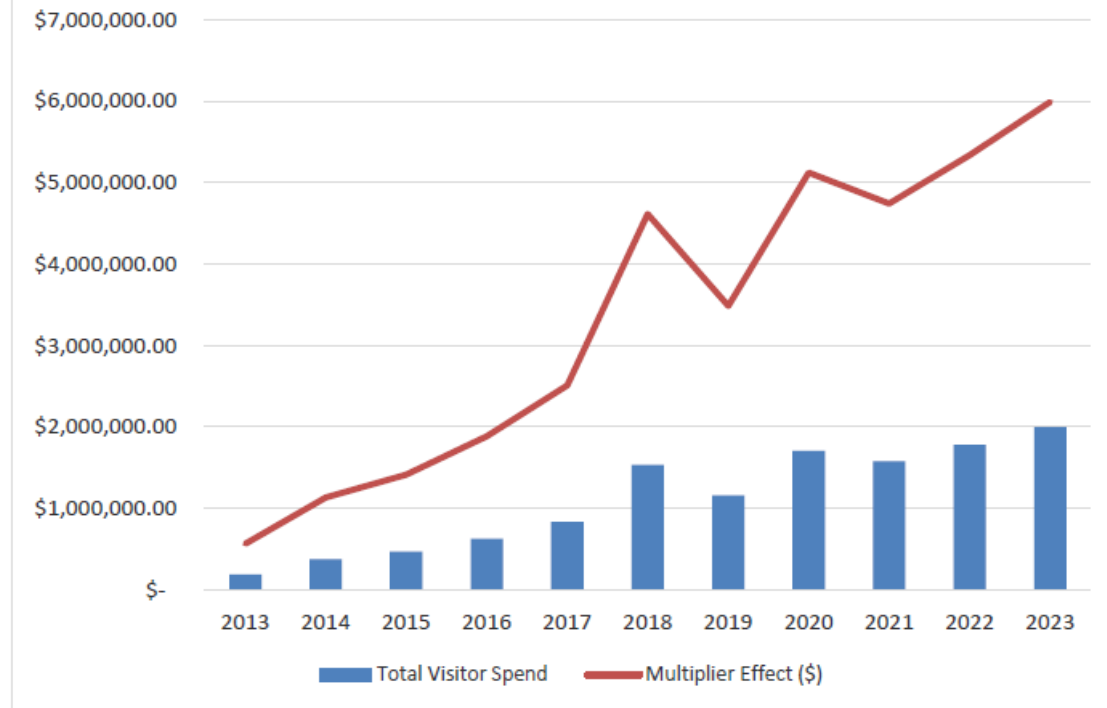
# Tourist Dollar is Valued



**Average Estimated Spend by Visitors in the Wheatbelt Way**

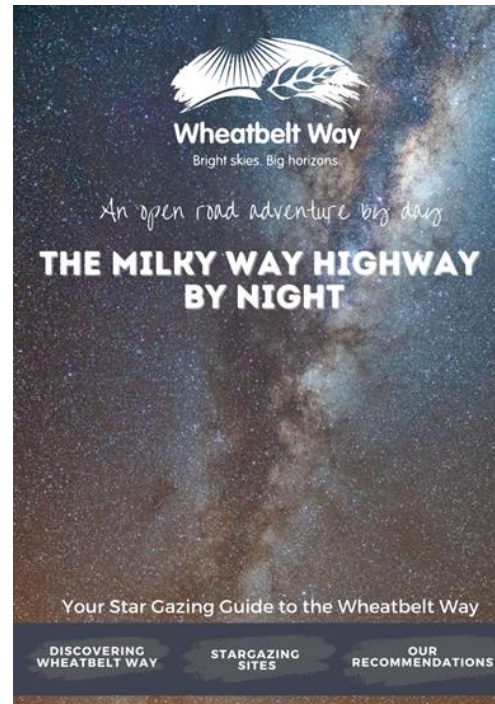


**Estimated Total Visitor Spend in the Wheatbelt Way**



An estimated **\$1,995,996.00** of direct “new” money generated by tourist spending in Wheatbelt Way communities and an indirect multiplier effect of **\$5,987,988.00** in 2023.

# Initial Investment + Annual Marketing & Promotion



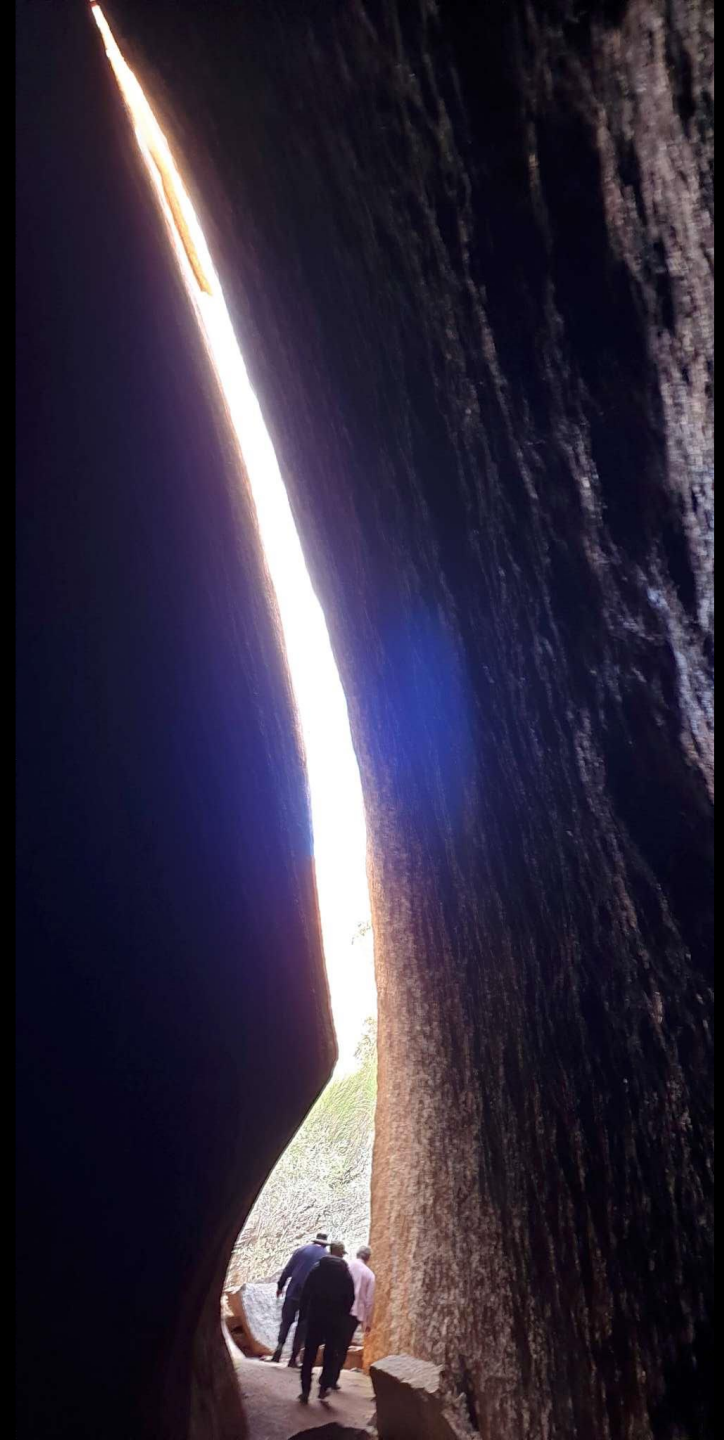
# Challenges:

**Seasonality:** the impact of seasonal fluctuations on tourism in the Wheatbelt and strategies to mitigate its effects.

## **Open and Accessible:**

- the real and perceived challenges related to accessibility and transportation within the region.
- **AND being *open for business!***

**Diversification/Destination Development:** the importance of diversifying tourism offerings to attract a broader range of visitors.



**Wheatbelt Tourism**

**Needs Assessment**



# EMERGING TRENDS

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1. Self, family and wellness comes first.
2. High yield travellers are still keen to travel.
3. All roads lead to nature and wildlife.
4. Sustainability is a key value-driver.
5. There is demand for our indigenous story.
6. Digital Nomads are a new customer segment.
7. Uncertainty prevails – with a last minute mindset.
8. Don't forget the basics!



# Wheatbelt Destination Development Focus Areas

1



Facilitating tourism product and experience development within the Wheatbelt.

E.g.:

- a. Recreational Trails
- b. Events
- c. Agritourism
- d. Heritage Tourism
- e. Astrotourism
- f. Aboriginal Tourism

2



Developing operator business and marketing capability in the Wheatbelt.

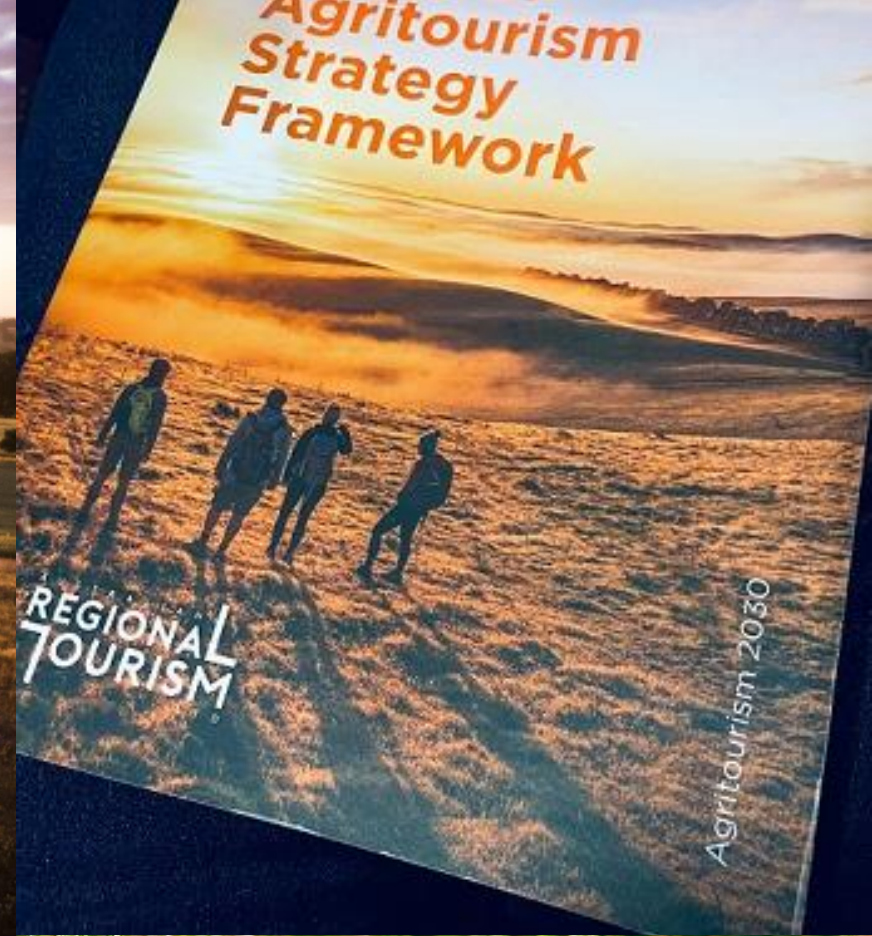
Including:

- Government
- Not-for-profit
- Private enterprise

3



Facilitating the development of improved Wheatbelt accommodation offerings.



# Farming and Tourism: Agritourism



# AGO Agritourism Key Figures



3,500 Farms



14,000 people employed



\$4.1B



38% of Australia's wheat produced in the Wheatbelt



931, Tourism Businesses, 52 Agritourism businesses



336,000 AGO Visitors included a visit to on farm tourism experience from 2018 – 2022.



\$0.85B



6,300 Tourism Business Employees





- Farm tours & demonstrations
- Caravan sites/ glamping/camping
- Farm to Fork cooking classes
- Pick your own produce
- On farm cafes &/or restaurants
- Experiential farm stays & B&B
- Indigenous cultural experiences
- Educational experiences
- On farm retail outlets
- On farm events - weddings/conferences etc.
- Behind the scenes tours
- Business agriculture experiences



# Summary of the regional context



## 6% AGRITOURISM OPERATORS

Of the region's 931 tourism businesses.



## 5.6% OF VISITORS VISIT A FARM

Of the 1.95m visitors per annum to AGO.



## 80% FARM STAYS

Of the visits to a farm 80% include a farm stay.



## FOOD & DRINK NOT A PRIORITY

Across the region, food & drink is not a connected community.



## RED TAPE & RISK

Development & planning red tape & perceived risks make it hard to make a business case for tourism.



## IMMATURE AGRITOURISM ECO-SYSTEM

The culture of paddock to plate, buy/celebrate local & food innovation is in its infancy.



## PRODUCER OF INGREDIENTS AT SCALE

AGO'S core produce is grains & pulses for export by farmers at scale.



## CUSTOMER ALIGNMENT

AGO'S core audiences & TWA Agritourism customer segments align.

# Opportunities for Farmers



Diversification through value-adding



Smooth volatility of cash flow/income



Maintain rural lifestyle



Social: connect with consumers



# Opportunities for the Agricultural Industry



Bridge Rural – Urban Divide



Utilise and preserve rural amenities



Employment for community



Multiplier effect



Activities & Events



# AGO's Plans for 2024/25

- Engage with farmers & industry about the opportunities in Agritourism.
- Facilitate a review of planning reforms.
- Establishment of a State Agritourism Association.
- Facilitate workshops and mentoring programs.
- Promote Agritourism as a key product in the Golden Outback region.



# Future Outlook for Wheatbelt Tourism:

**1. Strategic Partnerships**

**2. Sustainable Destination Development**

**3. Innovation and Technology**

**4. Investment**

