And then there was water! Why water is important to regional tourism.

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The Case Study – Dimboola
The relationship between freshwater and tourism

• Water is a scarce & critical element of tourism (UNWTO, 2003)

• Long term water security issues for many areas (Jackson Report, 2009)

• Water is often one of the major attractions to a region (Hadwen et al, 2006)

• High water use in tourism activities
Natural features & recreation
Water in marketing messages

After a mineral spa...
Jane was rendered speechless. Seeing as Jane works in Public Relations, that’s quite a feat indeed.

Daylesford.
Live happily ever after.

A massage and an afternoon on the lake.
Sally hadn’t seen the relaxed scene in her office’s midst.

Daylesford.
Live happily ever after.
Water features in tourism accommodation

- Swimming pools
- Spas or spa baths
- Gardens
- Natural features
- Water based
- Activities that need water – Golf, winery tourism, spa treatments
Research Method

• 2 sources of historical information have been used for this research – community and business development plans from 1995 through to 2009 and local and regional media coverage since 1995.

• This information has been collected together at this stage to ensure that a basis for future research is established.
Tourism Planning in Dimboola


• Establishment of Horseshoe Bend Tourism Group and Heritage River Country promotion and signage.

• A 1998 Urban Development and Marketing Plan, commissioned by the Vision Dimboola
• New accommodation enterprises plus other attractions such as an eco-tour operator, a rejuvenated olive oil plantation, major native plant nursery, emu farm, gift and antique shops and a small winery operation had all added to tourism mix.

• New events including a German Fest to celebrate the German Lutheran pioneer heritage of the town and regular showings of the famous Jack Hibberd play, *Dimboola*, were included in the town calendar.
Tourism planning in Dimboola cont./-

November 2006, a Community Opportunity Workshop was held to identify opportunities for the town. The lack of water was seen as a significant deterrent to any further tourism development.

A Business Vitality Initiative program in May 2008 identified water as the critical issues for Dimboola and the major factor holding back the town from further development (Hindmarsh Shire Council, 2008).
Dimboola in June 2007
Dimboola in June 2009
when it rains...

• Two accommodation enterprises have closed, the olive oil plantation is rarely open to the public, the winery has now closed to the public, the gift and antique shops have closed, the emu farm is closed and the larger of the two hotels in the town, the Dimboola Hotel, burnt down in October 2003 and remains a charred ruin on the main street.

• Local events were also been hard. The Dimboola Regatta, a feature on the Victorian rowing calendar for 122 years was unable to run between 2006 and 2009 because of the lack of water in the river. The German Fest, held for the last 13 years on the last weekend in April, has also ceased since 2008.
Table 1 – Visitor Numbers to the Grampians 2000 - 2008
Source: Tourism Victoria, year ending June

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visitor Origin (000s)</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Day trip</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>1053</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>-53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrastate</td>
<td>641</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>605</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>-31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Visitors to the Grampians, 2000-2008. (Source: Tourism Victoria).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Newspaper, date</th>
<th>Story focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fight to maintain recreational lakes</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, November 2000</td>
<td>Impact of drought conditions on the ability to maintain recreational lakes for tourism in the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum eyes water needs</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, October 2002</td>
<td>Outlining the need to develop water infrastructure in the Wimmera to assist with regional development including tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drought dries up region’s tourism</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, February 2003</td>
<td>Highlighting the impact that the loss of water has had on the tourism sector in the Wimmera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism support for Grampians</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, December 2003</td>
<td>Victorian Government drought assistance for tourism sector announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fyans water level impacts on tourism</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, October 2005</td>
<td>Low water levels impacting on tourism visitor numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomonal tourism receives a boost</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, September 2007</td>
<td>Federal Government funding granted to develop the region’s first spa and wellbeing tourism operation despite ongoing drought conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fyans ebbing</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, September 2007</td>
<td>Discussing the impact that the loss of water in Lake Fyans is having on tourism businesses in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netting new tourist dollars</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, March 2009</td>
<td>Highlighting the ongoing absence of the Horsham Fishing Competition since 2006 and the need to look for different attractions that are not water-based to bring in new visitors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism fall proves costly for Wimmera</td>
<td>Wimmera Mail Times, June 2009</td>
<td>Outlining the fall in tourism activity and the impact of the loss of water in the Wimmera River.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Representations in the media

In the content analysis *The Dimboola Banner* from 2000.

• 1996-2003 - 88% positive
• 2003-September 2009 – 75% negative

The media coverage that has occurred since the return of water to the Wimmera River in Dimboola in late September where more than 20 newspaper articles and radio interviews all highlighted the boom for tourism as a result of the river flow.
Thank you

No water, no future.

Nelson Mandela