

CASE
STUDY



Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority



**FOOD TOURISM
MELBOURNE**

**Draft in
Development**

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 MELBOURNE OVERVIEW

Melbourne has long been considered the premium destination for food and wine in Australia and the reasons for this are manifold. The city has a long established restaurant scene with a multitude of dining options at all price points. There are over 2,300 licensed venues in the city centre alone, and it's this mass of cafes, restaurants and bars that make Melbourne the culinary capital of the country.

There is a buzzing cafe scene (courtesy of Italian migrants in the 1950's), so much so that it's no exaggeration to say that coffee is an obsession for Melbournians. There are a vast number of restaurants focused on brunch with avocado on toast (the number one dish). Plus hundreds of mid-priced restaurants offering outstanding dining at affordable prices, and many ways to indulge in fine dining experiences.

City laneways are home to hidden cocktail bars from the tiny 12 seaters to luxurious multi-level venues. Melbourne even has a huge produce market in the heart of the city.

The hospitality scene has flourished also because of numbers and the mere fact that locals support their restaurants. They love to talk about food as much as they talk about the weather. But it has been the visitor economy which has delivered the vast number of people (customers) into Melbourne.

All of this has developed over three decades and been well supported by multiple levels of government. The Victorian State Government provides significant financial support to promote food and hospitality industries through Visit Victoria. This is backed up with investment by the Melbourne City Council (the local council for the central city).

As well as food and hospitality, the city boasts a flourishing theatre scene (Melbourne is home to J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter and the Cursed Child), as well as sporting events such as The Australian Open Tennis, Grand Prix, cricket, football, horse racing, rugby and other events, including fashion festivals, film festivals, and illumination of the city centre on White Night.

With regards to tourism, 30% of visitors are from overseas, and 30% from interstate. The remainder is local tourism of Victorians coming in for day drips and weekends. The visitor economy was at \$20 billion (the equivalent to €12.45 billion euro) in 2013/14 - by 2019/20 it had grown to \$32 billion (€20 billion euro). The industry employs 180,000 people directly in tourism and over 80,000 indirectly.





SECTION TWO

PRE-COVID19

2.1 DESTINATION TOURISM STRATEGY

Melbourne and Victoria are promoted as the major food, wine and event destinations of Australia. In the 2019/20 year, the visitor economy in Victoria generated over \$32 billion. The overarching tourism strategy for Victoria is operated by Visit Victoria which is funded by the Victorian State Government.

Visit Victoria is totally focused on tourism, business and major events. They do more than simply promote tourism, they actively work to grow events for Melbourne. This include sporting events and musicals, fashion, music, film and art, plus international conferences.

Visit Victoria mission statement and objective

Visit Victoria is the primary tourism and events company for the State of Victoria in Australia. We inspire people to visit Melbourne and Victoria through captivating stories and amazing events. Our purpose is to ignite and challenge any imagination.

Visit Victoria's objective is to build Melbourne and Victoria into Australia's number one tourism destination by delivering strong and sustainable growth across priority markets. Our goal is to revitalise the visitor economy, by generating \$36.5 billion in visitor spending by 2025 and support more than 320,700 jobs.

www.visitvictoria.com



2.2 SPECIFIC FOOD TOURISM STRATEGY

The Victoria Food Tourism Strategy run by Visit Victoria is significant and divides the state into regions with their own character, attractions and stories. Included are the regional highlights of Gippsland, High Country, The Mornington Peninsula, The Yarra Valley and The Bellarine Peninsula.

GIPPSLAND

Gippsland is a region in south-eastern Australia which extends from Melbourne's eastern suburbs to the New South Wales border, and encompasses beaches, farmland, mountains and lakes.

Go for a stroll in some of Victoria's most spectacular national parks, be charmed by tiny towns, and indulge in gourmet fresh produce in Gippsland. For the culturally curious, there are plenty of galleries and studios to sample as well as local cellar doors, boutique distilleries and renowned restaurants.

Key food and hospitality experiences:

- Milk and cultured butter from Gippsland Jersey, chocolate truffles from Phillip Island Chocolate Factory and single-estate organic wine at Cannibal Creek, Tynong North. The picturesque cellar door features a popular restaurant, and the winery makes accessible, cool-climate reds and whites.

- Showcasing the diversity of bush food since 2005, this Phillip Island farm produces oils, spices, nuts, jams and teas, including the wattle seed used on the menu at The Wild Food Cafe.

HIGH COUNTRY

The High Country is located in the north-east of Victoria. It is an area that features national parks, Victoria's highest mountains, lakes, snow resorts, vineyards and a rich history including gold discovery, cattlemen and bushrangers.

Hit the slopes at Alpine resorts in winter and return in the warmer months for inspired bushwalking and cycling action, from dizzying mountain bike challenges to meandering rail trails. Visit renowned restaurants and wineries, discover the vibrant craft brewery scene, or fill your basket at provedores and farm gates, all brimming with local delights.

Key food and hospitality experiences:

- Honey from Walkabout Apiaries in Milawa, coffee from Mansfield Coffee Merchant, beer from Sailors Grave Brewing in Orbost, herbal teas from Gather & Harvest in Bright and fabulous pastries from Gumnut Pies in Bright.





Merricks Creek Vineyard, Mornington Peninsula
www.theworldlovesmelbourne.com

- Visit Milawa cheese and be treated to an array of mouth-watering cheese, jams, chutneys and more.
- Have lunch at the Bright Brewery and sit outside on the deck to enjoy the famed Buddha Bowls washed down by some of Australia's best craft beer.

THE MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Located south-east of Melbourne, the Mornington Peninsula is a premier holiday destination, attracting millions of visitors annually. A beachy place where the real drawcard may be the hot springs, wineries, local produce or markets, just an hour from Melbourne.

Key food and hospitality experiences:

- Renowned producers including Main Ridge Dairy, Mock Orchards, Green Olive at Red Hill, 2 Macs Farm and Sunny Ridge Strawberry Farm. Savour top quality berries and just-picked cherries, bio-dynamic apples and organic vegetables, free-range eggs, raw honey, aged meats, and olives.

Complete your menu with Red Hill Bakery wine bread and hand-made cheeses at Red Hill Cheese.

- Celebrate truffle season with truffle hunts, masterclasses and dining events at Red Hill Truffles, and keep an eye out for vendors at local farmers' markets.
- Dine on Farm-fresh foods cooked to perfection at the wineries La Petanque, Montalto, Port Phillip Estate, Ten Minutes by Tractor and The Long Table.
- Source the best of the peninsula's country kitchens at the famous Red Hill Market, the Montalto Farmers' Market and the Balnarring, Sorrento and Mornington markets.

THE YARRA VALLEY

Less than an hour's drive from Melbourne, the Yarra Valley is home to vineyards, fine dining and quaint accommodation, making it one of Melbourne's favourite weekend breaks. This is Victoria's oldest wine region, dating back to 1838, and has garnered a global reputation for its chardonnay and pinot noir.

The Yarra Valley is celebrated for its fresh produce, including freshwater salmon, trout and caviar, as well as handmade cheeses and preserves and fine gourmet dining. The Yarra Valley is also known for its local breweries and artisan cider producers.

Key food and hospitality experiences:

- Visit the cellar doors of stalwarts that continue to innovate like DeBortoli, Fergusson and Yering Station to newer favourites like Punt Road and Mandala Wines. Match the superb estate wines with a meal at a winery restaurant in the region that boasts multiple hatted chefs. Celebrate the region's other great harvests with the lush farmland also yielding freshwater fish, artisan dairy products, organic fruit and vegetables, and pastas and preserves.



- Coldstream Brewery has a restaurant that serves fresh, informal, locally sourced food for lunch and dinner, washed down with Coldstream beers and ciders plus a well-stocked bar that supports other Yarra Valley producers and not forgetting the locally roasted coffee.
- Matilda Bay Brewery was originally founded in 1983 and is most well known for their iconic and award winning craft beers, such as Redback Original (Australia's first wheat beer), Dogbolter Dark Lager, Alpha Pale Ale, Bohemian Pilsner, and the quirky Beez Neez. The brewery features a large bar, beer hall with a children's play area, open wood fire and outdoor dining deck.
- The award winning Four Pillars Gin is located in Healesville and offers tastings, masterclass sessions as well as tours.

THE BELLARINE PENINSULA

The Bellarine Peninsula is located south-west of Melbourne, surrounded by Port Phillip, Corio Bay and Bass Strait. Explore the burgeoning foodie scene, complete with craft breweries, local wineries, farm gates and provedores. Surf, paddle and swim at bay and ocean beaches, and get close to local wildlife in Port Phillip Bay.

Stop in at one of 40-odd regional cellar doors that are open for tastings, and sample from a diverse range of wines. Many wineries also have top-notch cafes and restaurants where you can unwind and take in the scenery over a sumptuous meal with perfectly matched wine.

Key food and hospitality experiences:

- Jack Rabbit Winery welcomes visitors to experience the delectable food and take a guided tasting of the diverse stable of sophisticated cool climate wines. This contemporary a la carte restaurant offers a stunning menu to indulge even the most discerning culinary palates.
- Anther Distillery offers gin discovery tastings, cocktail tastings boards, distillery experiences, events, bottled cocktails, special release gin, all things barware, cocktail books, local produce and much more.
- White Rabbit Brewery is a space created for flavour exploration. White Rabbit's food philosophy is quality local produce, humbly presented and matched with beer.
- Flying Brick Cider House is a retro-inspired landmark venue. Think innovative space, a tasting paddle of ciders, amazing food without the 'fancy', the best Bellarine wines around, a solid selection of beer and Friday night live music which traces the roots of rock, soul, rhythm and blues. Ciders are made from 100% fresh fruit, traditionally crafted and unlike the majority of mainstream ciders on the Australian market which are nothing more than synthetic carbonated water, contain no sugars, colours, flavourings or concentrates.

INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOOD TOURISM EXPERIENCE

Along with grant aid towards food tourism product and business development especially in regional areas, it has predominantly been a case of success breeding success in Victoria in an industry-led mushrooming of world class food and wine production and experiences amidst the backdrop of some stunning locations.

Embodied by quality ingredients, fresh produce, innovative cuisine and it's undoubted reputation as a premium wine-producing country, the enjoyment of food and wine is integral to the Australian tourism experience. The following are some of the best examples of inspirational private infrastructural investment and development in the region.

JACKALOPE WINERY RESTAURANT

Mornington Peninsula is a wine region within a one hour drive from the heart of Melbourne. This \$40 million venture opened in 2017 and combines luxury accommodation, spa, winery, cocktail bar, restaurant and significant modern art, sculptures and immersive experiences such as The Rain Room. Jackalope has won major awards and has become a must-visit destination on the Mornington Peninsula. [Jackalope Winery Restaurant](#)

BRAE

Brae opened in December 2013 and is set on a hillside in Birregurra, Victoria. It is a restaurant, with guest suites and working organic farm – a place where visitors can be immersed in nature and eat from the land. An ever-changing set menu incorporates produce from Brae Farm, the surrounding land and local, ethical, sustainable producers to showcase a unique Australian cuisine built on an immense respect for nature and seasonality. Brae is regularly rated as one of Australia's best and regularly appears in the World's Top 50 Restaurants list.

Organic principles are employed at Brae Farm to produce seasonal vegetables, stone fruits, citrus, nuts, berries, olives, honey and wheat grain.

The property is managed using regenerative farming techniques to restore the land and is designed for guests to explore, with dedicated walking paths and interpretative signage reconnecting visitors to their food and the place it comes from.

[Brae Restaurant](#)

POINT LEO ESTATE

Point Leo Estate is on the Mornington Peninsula, with rolling vineyards and ocean views commanding the horizon as far as the eye can see. From the moment guests arrive, they are taken by the sweeping views that emerge in front of them encapsulating glimpses of Phillip Island. There is a 50-acre vineyard, grazing cattle and an expansive 19-acre Sculpture Park, a Cellar Door & Wine Terrace at one end and 'Laura', a fine dining restaurant at the other, with the Pt. Leo Restaurant experience in the middle of this world-class venue. [Point Leo Estate](#)

MORNINGTON PENINSULA HOT SPRINGS

This venture on the Mornington Peninsula, just outside Melbourne, had its origins in 1997 and has been developed over numerous stages to become a must-visit attraction in Melbourne. It includes spa treatments; wellness experiences such as body-clay rituals, yoga classes and guided meditations; and an on-site restaurant and cafe. A new \$13 million expansion will see the introduction of ten new, ultra-luxe glamping tents dotted around the property. Prepare to soak under the stars as for the first time, there will be 24/7 bathing before visitors can retreat to a tent with thermally heated polished-concrete floors, a private deck, and a luxurious king-sized bed. [Mornington Peninsula Hot Springs](#)

THE PRINCE HOTEL

This is a significant hotel in St Kilda (Melbourne's nearest bay beach suburb) and has been developed over many years on a multi-million dollar budget. The Prince is home to some excellent restaurant food, bars and cocktails. The final part to be completed was The Prince Rooftop Beer Garden which takes up the top floor of the hotels and offers city skyline views. [The Prince Hotel](#)

THE ESPLANADE HOTEL

The Esplanade Hotel (known as The Espy) is an iconic Melbourne hotel in the beachside suburb of St. Kilda. Originally opened in the 1870's, it has remained a significant part of Melbourne's fabric ever since. A \$15 million reimagining has been completed and this has created a significant new version of The Espy complete with multiple dining rooms, music rooms and bars. [The Espy](#)

QT MELBOURNE

What was once a cinema complex site was demolished to make way for QT Melbourne, a new 12 floor hotel with a ground level cafe and spa. The building incorporates a restaurant, two bars and a number of meeting rooms. The QT Hotel Rooftop is hugely popular and has added to the city's love of rooftop bars. There is also a private garden for small functions for those who want to eat and drink amongst fresh herbs and edible plants. [QT Melbourne](#)

BRAND PROPOSITION - KEY MESSAGEING

Key messaging from Melbourne and the major Victorian regions in relation to food and wine tends to be focused on getting away from the city, away from home and work, and into the clean, green great outdoors and enjoying food and wine which is fresh, local and crafted by hospitality business owners who are passionate about what they do.

MELBOURNE

Experience Melbourne's mix of cultures in its myriad of restaurants, cafes, bistros and bars evokes a vibrant something for everyone ambience. Whether you're after modern, traditional, exotic or homespun flavours - Melbourne's eclectic dining scene offers a startling array of the world's great cuisines, from popular favourites to the truly ground-breaking.



*Rooftop at the QT Hotel
(www.delicious.com)*

Share a drink while snacking on high end tapas in a laneway eatery, take on a Szechuan chilli dish in Chinatown, or break out of the CBD and discover the city's specialist eating destinations – Richmond for Vietnamese, Carlton's 'Little Italy', Fitzroy for Spanish and Brunswick for Lebanese. [Melbourne is online here.](#)

HIGH COUNTRY

Submit to the riches of the High Country, where internationally lauded wines flow freely and innovative chefs change their menus with the seasons. Enjoy warm welcomes at alpine villages, wander through cool climate vineyards and sample fresh produce such as handmade cheese, butter and chocolate.

Experience the warmest of welcomes in High Country villages, where the food and wine flow, the scenery is stunning and the opportunities to get active in fresh alpine air are plentiful. Indulge in delectable cool-climate wines and innovative cuisine prepared by passionate local chefs in the gourmet villages of Beechworth and Milawa. Follow the Muscat Trail to Rutherglen's wineries and pedal around smaller Bright and King Valley villages and fill your basket with just-picked local produce. [High Country is online here.](#)

YARRA VALLEY AND DANDENONG RANGES

Discover the region where exceptional food and wine are the norm rather than the exception, where international 'slow food' festivals are celebrated alongside sleek architecturally designed winery restaurants, and where wholesome country hospitality is the ideal seasoning to modern dining.

Match the Yarra Valley's abundant fresh produce to fine wines as you linger over long lunches in winery eateries and 'hatted' restaurants with views of the rolling hills and boundless vineyards. Tuck in amid the towering trees and misty ranges of the Dandenong's and indulge in the fresh cream and just-baked scones of the famous Devonshire teas.

Celebrate the region's other great harvests with the lush farmland also yielding freshwater fish, artisan dairy products, organic fruit and vegetables, and pastas and preserves. [Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges are online here](#)

GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE PENINSULA

Discover the makers and growers, chefs, brewers and vigneron who are behind Geelong and the Bellarine's growing reputation as a foodie destination. Dine on fresh seasonal produce, sample artisanal delights, and enjoy creative cuisine at wineries, cafes and restaurants - from the Moorabool Valley in the north-west and the city's vibrant waterfront and urban precincts to the rolling hills and sandy beaches of the peninsula. [Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula are online here.](#)

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

Breathe in the fresh sea air, sample innovative local cuisine, and soak up the relaxed alfresco lifestyle of the Mornington Peninsula, just an hour from Melbourne. Explore the galleries, spas and cafes in breezy seaside villages, cool off with a day on the beach, or escape to the hinterland for gourmet delights at boutique wineries. Be rewarded for a healthy appetite in the Mornington Peninsula by ambling along the rugged coastlines, past bay beaches and rolling hills. Stop into olive groves and renowned vineyards, break for lunch in hidden eateries and lively local markets, and load up the boot with local organic produce from roadside stalls. [Mornington Peninsula is online here.](#)

GIPPSLAND

Gippsland is one of Australia's longest established and best known food tourism destinations. Producing an array of excellent cheeses, fine free-range meats, wonderful locally caught seafood and organic fruits and vegetables, the region is renowned for fine produce. Gippsland's wineries also have a growing reputation for producing premium, cool climate wines, with full fruit flavours to partner the region's fresh food. There are more

than 30 cellar doors open to the public in Gippsland, so well worth turning off the beaten track to sample them? [Gippsland is online here.](#)

PHILLIP ISLAND

Bring an appetite and discover the bountiful offerings of Phillip Island, from freshly caught seafood to al fresco dining and locally grown produce. Settle into the island lifestyle and select from a rich catalogue of renowned restaurants, family-run wineries and quaint beachside cafes. Start the day with a brew from BeanD or fresh pastries from San Remo Bakehouse, then source seafood straight from the boat at the San Remo Fisherman's Co-op, or from Bass Strait Direct in Newhaven. [Phillip Island is online here.](#)

DAYLESFORD AND THE MACEDON RANGES

Journey to Daylesford, where the enduring presence of the Lake House has ensured a long legacy as the gourmet heart of the region. The nearby townships of Kyneton, Trentham, Hepburn Springs, and Woodend are snapping at its heels, with Source Dining, Midnight Starling, Du Fermier and The Cosmopolitan all worth a reservation. [Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges are online here.](#)

GOLDFIELDS

Discover the legacy of Victoria's gold rush, visible everywhere, from the tree-lined boulevards and botanic gardens to the architecture, artistic communities and charming towns. With Bendigo's recent designation as a City of Gastronomy, the city and surrounding region is bursting with top-class food and beverage experiences. Fresh regional produce and creative cuisine, hatted restaurants and some of the finest wine in the state combine to create a contemporary food and wine scene that's become a favourite with locals and out-of-towners alike. [Goldfields are online here.](#)

GRAMPIANS

Dine out on a truly memorable meal at the acclaimed Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld, featuring as its centrepiece the region's fine local produce and famed sparkling and cool-climate wines. Digest those indulgences when seeking out the region's excellent local produce, from locally-grown olives, to tender spring lamb and sheep products, and super fresh nuts and herbs. Sample spicy reds and crisp, bright white wines amidst a tour of the visually spectacular southern extremity of the Great Dividing Range. Taste the history of the Grampians wine region at cellar doors in Great Western, where gnarled old vines and vibrant young wines are found in equal measures. [Grampians online here.](#)



THE MURRAY

Culinary delights, sparkling waters and endless summer sun – life in abundance is life on The Murray. Explore the winding waterways of Australia's longest river while wandering through red gum forests, splash around on sandy river beaches, and bask in the famous food, wine and fresh produce. Savour a dinner to remember at Stefano's, the renowned restaurant that put Mildura's Feast Street on the map. While away, a sunny afternoon with an opulent lunch at one of the many riverside eateries, grab lunch aboard a paddle steamer, or start the evening early at rustic local vineyards and country pubs. [The Murray is online here.](#)

GREAT OCEAN ROAD

Dig into freshly caught seafood straight out of the Southern Ocean and time the visit to coincide with the annual Apollo Bay Seafood Festival. Sample gourmet delights along the Otway Harvest Trail and the 12 Apostles Gourmet Trail. Pop into craft breweries and cool climate wineries or check out the new artisanal distillery near the 12 Apostles. [Great Ocean Road is online here.](#)

FOOD CLUSTERS

Food clusters help make Melbourne (and Victoria) such an attractive destination. Melbourne is a central business district but is also an entertainment city with restaurants, bars, theatres, shopping, sports, events and concerts notably prominent in the central business district.

It's a vibrant place with lots going on and plenty to do, especially in food and wine. Melbourne City Council has over 2,300 licensed venues on its books. This covers everything from coffee to fine dining.

The city is home to restaurants offering a huge number of cuisines from Chinese (plus many Chinese regions) to the food of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, Thailand, India, Italy, Greece and Lebanon.

This is a huge drawcard for Melbourne and definitely adds to its favouritism as a food destination and Australia's best culinary city. [The Melbourne Tourism food and wine overview is online here.](#)

MELBOURNE (CENTRAL) CLUSTERS

Melbourne (Central) - food clusters - Chinatown

Start at the red gates of Melbourne's Chinatown and get set to explore. A world of Asian flavours are here with dozens of restaurants (plus some hidden high end cocktail bars) ready to explore. Food options range from roast duck and dumplings to spicy Szechwan cooking and yum cha.

Melbourne (Central) - food clusters - Flinders Lane

Melbourne's most famous Eat Street, Flinders Lane is a mecca for award-winning fine diners and boutique bars alongside high end galleries and fashion labels. It is home to famous names of the Melbourne food scene such as Cumulus Inc, Supernormal, Coda, Chin Chin, Ceconis and Kisume. All restaurants that have contributed hugely to putting the city on the map as a food city.

Melbourne (Central) - food clusters - Laneways

The tiny laneways that criss-cross Melbourne have become home to huge murals and street art, hole in the wall artisan coffee outlets, plus food of course. Top restaurants such as Movida, Pastuso, Lee Ho Fook and Tonka are all in laneways. So too are outstanding bars including Bar Americano, Union Electric Section 8, Gin Palace and the Croft Institute.

MELBOURNE (FOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS) CLUSTERS

The second key attraction for Melbourne is the distinct neighbourhoods clustered around the city centre, each with their own character or cuisine – Richmond for Vietnamese, Carlton's 'Little Italy', Fitzroy for Spanish and Brunswick for Lebanese.

Carlton

Carlton is the Italian heart of Melbourne and situated just to the north of the city centre. There's beautiful architecture, wide streets and green parks in which to enjoy great coffee, pizza, pasta, sweet treats and gelato. Highly awarded restaurants are here too including The Carlton Wine room, Epocha and D.O.C.

Collingwood

This neighbourhood has an industrial past which means old warehouses and factories have been converted into apartments complete with cafes and artisan coffee roasters. It is true hipster style with an impressive number of bars, breweries and restaurants from easy brunch spots and bakeries to rooftop bars and dégustation restaurants like IDES.

Fitzroy

Fitzroy has a great creative edge and that carries over into its food too. Great artisan coffee, bakeries, bars and restaurants at all price points. Home to Lune Bakery, said to be home of the world's best croissant.

Windsor

Food lovers are well catered for in Windsor with glamorous (and not so glamorous pubs), modern Asian cuisine from famous places such as Hawker Hall, Tokyo Tina, and Mr Miyagi. With so much to choose from, it's a popular place to walk the main streets to try and grab a table.

Without a doubt clusters create choice and options for visitors. All visitors to a destination have to eat, not just the foodies. So heading to a destination which offers all levels of dining, coffee, brew pubs, brunch spots and everything in-between is a great bonus.

Central Melbourne and its neighbourhoods offer so much diversity too. Stepping from Carlton to Fitzroy brings with it a real change of pace and character as well. One is clean, neat and tinged with Italian style. The other grungy with heaps of street art, an industrial vibe and vintage clothing stores.

There are so many options for eating and drinking in each neighbourhood that you really will never go hungry. This means visitors can experience different styles of dining and culture and still be in Melbourne, or within a few kilometres of the centre of town.

FOOD COLLABORATION

There does not appear to be a large amount of direct collaboration in the regions outside of Melbourne. This could be because businesses are spread widely across geographical areas and not cheek by jowl like in the city.

In Melbourne itself, hospitality businesses have spoken as a group through industry organisations, and do support each other. One really interesting collaboration is city restaurants teaming up with regional wineries and venues to bring their food to where customers will be over the summer.

There are a number of regional businesses working to support their region with gift hampers that showcase regional foods.

Darriwill Farm Hampers

Darriwill Farm hampers include the very best in artisan produce, wines and homewares. They are particularly proud to include exceptional products sourced from around Geelong and the Bellarine wherever possible.

Bright Brewery - Hampers

This is a brewery in the North of Victoria that collaborates with local businesses to create seasonal gift boxes for customers far and wide. Typically these include beer, freshly roasted coffee beans, local jams and drinks, olives, Christmas pudding and olive oil. Bright brewery's Christmas box

Montalto Winery - Hampers

Montalto Winery has a range of unique gift ideas, from wine gift boxes featuring award-winning wines, or a delicious hamper of artisan produce from the Estate.

Rochford Hampers

Rochford Hampers bring the best wine, gin and produce together to create memorable experiences which allow customers to select from a range of 'at home' hamper experiences and enjoy a taste of the Yarra Valley which are then delivered straight to their door.

2.3 ROLE OF FOOD IN THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Food is the additional experience all visitors get to enjoy. If visitors are in Melbourne for sport, art, theatre, events or shopping - food will also feature as a pleasurable part of their visit.

Food in Melbourne also enlivens the city centre which would usually be quiet once workers go home. In Melbourne, hospitality adds a level of activity, foot traffic and people being ready to eat and spend beyond the Monday to Friday and 9-5 that office workers deliver.

Its impact can be seen in the following segments:

Queen Victoria Market

The popularity of Queen Victoria Market in Victoria's international tourism sector has been highlighted following the release of Tourism Research Australia's annual National and International Visitor Surveys. Queen Victoria Market welcomed 8.99 million visitors over one year to June 30th, 2018.

The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival

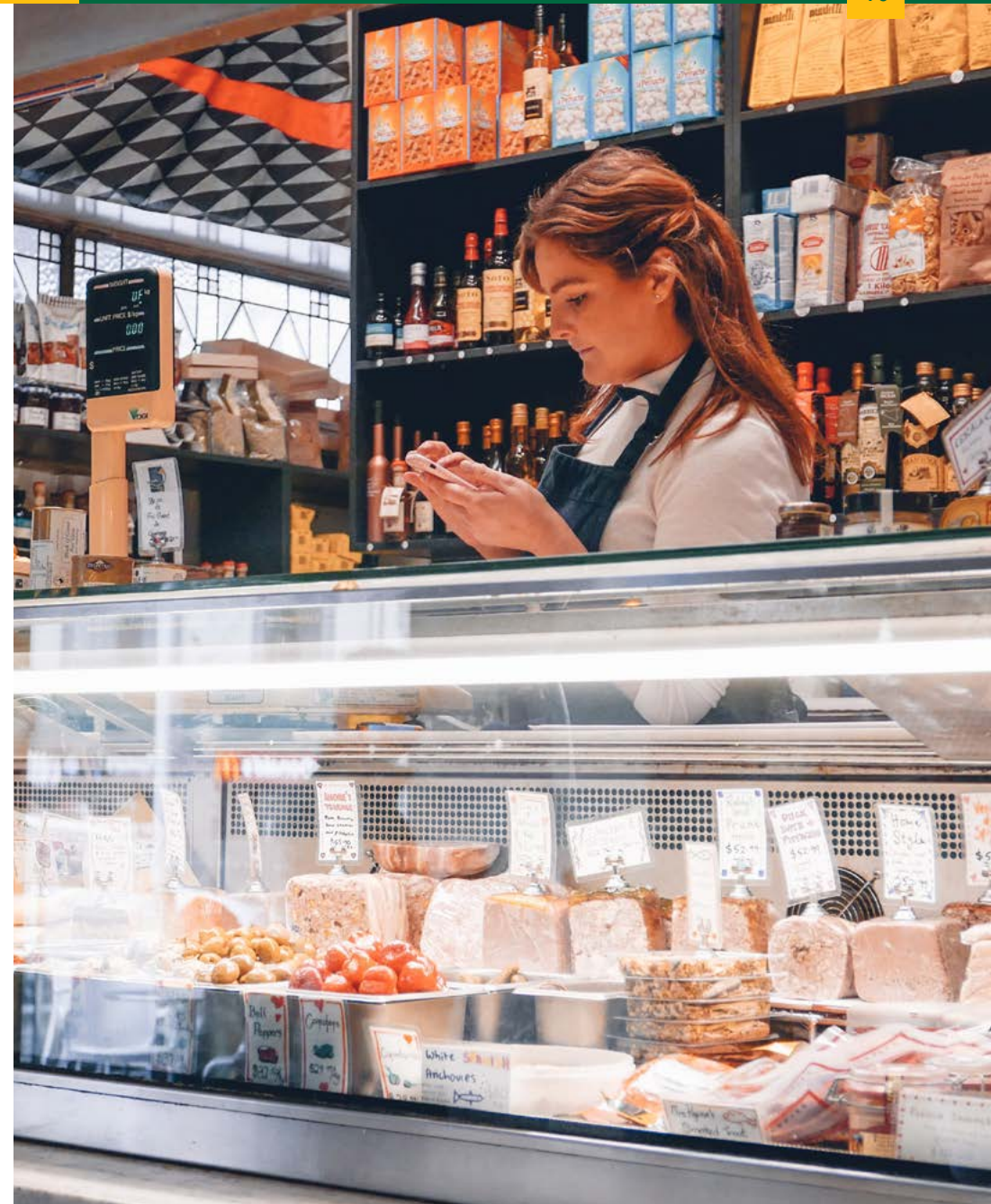
This festival contributes in excess of \$24 million to the state economy, with \$6 million of this generated in regional Victoria in 2017.

The Yarra Valley (Regional Victoria)

In 2013-14, the tourism industry contributed an estimated \$1.1 billion to the Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges economy (13.4% of gross regional product) and employed approximately 10,500 people (11.7% of regional employment).

Regional Victorian Tourism

Total tourism expenditure to regional Victoria was \$11.9 billion. Contributing to regional tourism expenditure was 18.7 million domestic and international overnight visitors and 40.2 million domestic daytrip visitors.²



2.4 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL PRESENCE

There is a significant range of activities across social media, digital channels, television commercials and promotions.

Recent and current video campaigns include These include [Holiday Here This Year](#), [Click for Vic, Your Happy Space](#) and [Melbourne Awaits](#).

The most innovative communications appears to be on Instagram due to a number of factors including the speed and relatively low cost at which content can be created and equally the reach it has.

Instagram, Instagram Stories and Instagram Live are where major innovation in digital marketing is occurring.

The ability to connect with consumers, showcase food and wine, showcase hospitality venues, interview experts and get clear, fresh messages out is unprecedented.

Links can be added to book tickets, restaurants and purchase products. The opportunity to using Link Tree adds even more linking opportunities. Instagram is also excellent for engagement, with the use of hashtags for specific promotions. Instagram is where people now go for the educational and travel information they used to discover on TV travel shows.

Instagram is a key communication channel for Visit Victoria, and is also used extensively by individual hospitality businesses.

INSTAGRAM – VISIT VICTORIA

Three Insta stories branded under [Visit Melbourne](#) were created by Visit Victoria.

Melbourne Go Further

Encouraging visitors to go into the regions of Victoria with the Go Further campaign. Includes opportunities for engagement to see where people are actually travelling to. [Melbourne Go Further Instagram](#)

Balgownie Estate

Balgownie is a renowned winery which through the medium of an Instagram campaign provides a tour with the winemaker and insights into the winery and vineyards along with tips on tasting and enjoying wine. [Balgownie Estate Instagram](#)

10 Melbourne Coffees you didn't know existed.

LA fun and engaging insight into ten vastly different coffees (broccoli latte anyone) on International Coffee day. [10 Melbourne Coffees](#)

INSTAGRAM – LOCAL EXPERTS

Three example feeds from Melbourne hospitality businesses show how Instagram can be used successfully for connecting and brand building.

Phillippa's

This bakery brand are very active on Instagram and showcase behind-the-scenes making and baking, specialist products and seasonal foods such as Christmas and Easter. [Phillippa's Instagram](#)

Cumulus Inc

Chef Andrew McConnell operates this all-day eating house and bar in the heart of Melbourne. Instagram offered ways to engage with customers and showcase what they were doing during lockdown. This included home delivery of premium food hampers, dining at home and signature dishes and products such as chocolate and sea salt cookies. [Cumulus Inc Instagram](#)

Cumulus Inc also shared the fact that chef Andrew McConnell was a part of the Click for Vic campaign by posting the video on their [Instagram - here](#).

Chef Hugh Allen

Hugh Allen is executive chef of fine dining restaurant Vue De Monde and during lockdown, used Instagram to showcase new ingredients and new dishes he was working on for the restaurant's reopening. [Hugh Allen Instagram](#)

2.5 DELIVERING POINTS OF DIFFERENCE THROUGH FOOD

A number of key ingredients make Melbourne a highly desirable food destination. These feature heavily in the marketing campaigns mentioned in this report.

Examples include:

- The myriad of cafes and restaurants on offer, there are over 2,300 in central Melbourne alone.
- A Coffee culture which began with Italian migrants.
- Multiculturalism in the food and restaurant scene.
- The Neighbourhood scene - from Lygon Street's Italian to Richmond's little Vietnam.
- Cheap eats - Melbourne has a reputation as a city where you can spend little and still enjoy outstanding food. From street eats' and markets to dining affordably in cafes, fast casual right through to high end dining.
- Access to three winery regions within 90 minutes' drive of central Melbourne - perfect for day trips for visitors.
- Access to incredible restaurants in regional areas in addition to the city, along with breweries and distilleries for tastings.
- Melbourne has a number of restaurants that have featured in the World's top 50 restaurants list, namely Attica and Brae. This has been hugely important in attracting high-end food visitors to Melbourne. It really is a dining destination.





SECTION THREE

CURRENT SITUATION
DURING COVID-19

3.1 CURRENT SITUATION

Timeline of 2020 Covid-19 restrictions:

March 31st

Hospitality businesses permitted to operate takeout services only - this led to some online food offerings from businesses.

June 1st

Hospitality businesses allowed to reopen with restrictions on numbers, social distancing and contact tracing. Strict numbers meant many businesses did not try to reopen, instead taking a wait-and-see approach.

July 8th

Hospitality businesses revert back to takeout only - this led to many new innovations to sell online.

October 27th

Hospitality businesses allowed to reopen with strict restrictions on numbers, social distancing, contact tracing and masks. Emphasis on outdoor dining as this avoids air-conditioned venues where Covid-19 can more easily be spread.



3.2 DESTINATION AND INDUSTRY RESPONSE

Hospitality businesses have been under strict regulations from March 2020, with restrictions on opening and take home/click and collect models only, in place at various times during the pandemic. This has led to lots of innovation/pivoting by restaurant and hospitality business owners and managers.

CLICK FOR VIC - GET THE BEST OF VICTORIA DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR

This has been a significant campaign to support regional Victorian farmers and producers, plus the restaurants, cafes and wineries that they sell to. Click for Vic is essentially an online marketplace supported by the Victorian Government which works in partnership with providers who have the capability to take digital orders and have them delivered.

This digital ordering and delivery capability is not always available with small regional producers, so this has been a hugely important programme for Victorian farmers, and growers in particular.

The best suppliers within the Click for Vic programme include:

Co Lab Pantry

This is a platform which through partnerships with many areas of hospitality, created a community of restaurants, bars, chefs, local makers and producers to offer their products and food online. A wide variety of options include meals, pantry supplies, cheeses, bread, cakes, drinks, regional gift packs and picnic foods. [Co Lab Pantry](#)

Vic Country Market

An excellent website which brings an extensive selection of fresh produce and artisan products to customers from Victorian farmers and producers. The site's impressive capability offers customers options to shop from a particular region or by category of drinks, fruit and vegetables, grocery, meat, fish or small goods. [Vic Country Market](#).

Click and Collect at Queen Victoria Market

Click and collect has become the buzz word for consumers to order online and then simply driving to the business to have the order loaded into their car. The Queen Victoria Market is Melbourne's central city market which have launched a new online market click and collect shop.

Offering items from across the Market's many traders with a single point of payment, this cooperative approach provides a shopping experience that includes a great range of fresh produce and food including meat, fish, poultry, fruit and vegetables, bread, eggs, deli goods, nuts, organics, coffee, tea and wine. It's a great way to keep the traders selling to customers, especially if they don't have an online store established. [Queen Victoria Market - Click and Collect](#)

Click and Collect at Prahran Market

The Click and Collect model has also been implemented by other markets across Melbourne such as The Prahran Market. This virtual one-stop-shop initiative supports traders who don't have the digital set up of online ordering with a centralised model. These systems are essential for fresh food markets to get through Covid-19 but will likely remain in place into the future. [Prahran Market Click and Collect](#).

DINING AT HOME

Lockdown has seen a huge spike in dining-at-home at all levels from local eateries to high end dining. It definitely takes some effort to set up the logistics, but once established, it becomes a beneficial tool for future sustainability. Restaurants have found that dining at home will remain as a part of their offer to customers, a pivot that even post Covid-19 will sit alongside in-house dining.

Providoor

As Covid-19 took hold in Melbourne, restaurants had to close in line with government restrictions from March 23rd, 2020. This led to customers switching to take home food via Uber Eats, Deliveroo and other delivery platforms. The commission charged by these companies is typically 35%. This makes it very difficult for restaurants to make a profit and it became a substantial media story.

Uber Eats did later reduce their commissions to 30% under this pressure. However, this also led to a new business Providoor being established by a top local chef Shane Delia which brings together top Melbourne restaurants and chefs for a new delivery service that charges just a 15% commission.

[Providoor](#)

Atlas Dining

Atlas chef Charlie Carrington very quickly came up with the idea of hosting online masterclass sessions with guests every Friday evening with a different cuisine featured each week. They have proven huge successful due to his engaging personality and in-depth knowledge of different cuisines. Countries such as India, Germany, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Japan, Italy and Morocco featured. Also his success came from the fact he got this concept up and running very quickly. This created a social outlet for people to look forward to, joining Charlie in step-by-step tutorial videos. [This is a link to Charlie cooking an Indian menu on Facebook.](#)



Fresh Off The Boat

This business made a huge pivot when their wedding catering business (primarily for the local Vietnamese community) was put on hold due to the pandemic. They instead set up a home delivery of Vietnamese food called Fresh Off The Boat. They have an excellent website with clear reheating instructions, photography and ordering system. A great example of a successful pivot to keep business afloat. [Fresh Off The Boat](#)

The San Telmo Restaurant Group - Food

This is a successful restaurant business with numerous outlets across central Melbourne. San Telmo, Pastuso, Palermo and Asado. They focus on traditional charcoal and fire cooking methods combined with the best quality Australian ingredients while still providing new and exciting approaches to an ancient and time proven food culture.

They very quickly responded to the pandemic lockdown by establishing an online home delivery service and also a click and collect model. The success of this service means it remains available even when restaurants reopen and is ideally placed to deal with any future lockdowns as the ordering systems are available instantly. [The San Telmo Restaurant Group](#)

The San Telmo Restaurant Group - Wine

This restaurant group have a long established wine importation business with a focus on the wines of Argentina, Peru, Spain and Chile. These wines are a perfect match with the food they serve at their venues and have become a significant part of their online business. [The San Telmo Restaurant Group - Wine](#)

Grossi Restaurant - Grossi A Casa

The Grossi family has been delivering hospitality experiences to guests for three generations at their premium restaurants. Take-away was never an option prior to Covid-19, but that changed when diners were unable to dine in their restaurants.

“Our dishes are all hand made using high quality ingredients, designed for you to easily heat and serve in a few minutes, with minimal kitchen skills required. We want you and your family to enjoy genuine Italian spirit and food in the comfort of your home.” Grossi offer classic Italian dishes plus pantry staples delivered to your door. [Grossi Restaurant - Grossi A Casa](#)

Tonka Restaurant - Home delivery plus food outlets

Chef Adam D’Sylva is renowned for drawing on his paternal Indian heritage to create amazing food at his city restaurant Tonka. They have two tandoor ovens and a team of tandoor experts who are renowned for the food they serve up at this modern restaurant. They have created a substantial [take home service](#) (as have many restaurants). Tonka have also created links with quality supermarkets and wine stores where their dishes can also be purchased. This will remain as an additional income stream post pandemic. [Tonka Restaurant - Home delivery plus food outlets](#)

Marion - transforms into Morning Market

The restaurant empire of chef Andrew McConnell included Marion wine bar, which was closed during the pandemic. So, to remain viable, it transformed into a food store and grocery which was allowed to open. The business was so successful it has become a new business called Morning Market, a permanent grocery store for Fitzroy locals with beautiful bread, groceries, cakes, drinks and picnic packs. [Morning Market](#)

HAMPERS FOR HOME COOKS

Pure South Food Co - Artisan Produce Hampers

Since 2003 amazing Tasmanian produce has been flown to Melbourne for the menus at the Pure South Restaurants. Now Pure South Food Co is delivering the same stunning produce, ready-to-eat dishes, flavours and beverages to their customers’ door. [Pure South Food Co - Artisan Produce Hampers](#)

DRINKS AT HOME

Melbourne has dozens of outstanding cocktail bars across the city centre and inner suburbs. Locals and visitors alike love the opportunity to get onto a city rooftop for a cocktail, or into a glamorous cocktail bar hidden in a city laneway.

There has been a huge growth in ready to serve and ready to mix cocktails for home cocktail lovers. Pre bottled cocktails that are ready to serve have become very popular. Many restaurants have cocktails as an additional sale when providing Dining at Home or Hampers for Home Cooks.

Grossi A Casa - Cocktails at Home

Enjoy signature cocktails, mixed and ready to serve from the bottle. Including Negroni, Martini, Voluttà and Felice. [Grossi A Casa - Cocktails at Home](#)

Anther Spirits - Cocktails at Home

Anther Christmas Cocktail pack includes the Anther Classic Negroni, Anther Classic Martini and Anther Corpse Reviver No. Blue, a trio of delicious cocktails, created using local ingredients and producers. [Anther Spirits - Cocktails at Home](#)

Moon Dog Brewery - Beer at Home

This is a great innovative way to create the pub and beer experience in customers' homes. This pack comes with a beer mat (of course), two glasses, beer nuts to snack on and lots of beer, including special releases. The product is known as A Pub in a Box. [Moon Dog Brewery - Beer at Home](#)





3.3 BUSINESS SUPPORTS AVAILABLE

There has been significant financial support provided by the Australian and Victorian State Governments to businesses due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some, however, had so many restrictions that they were difficult to navigate. The following three have been the most effective for businesses:

JOBKEEPER

The Australian Government created the JobKeeper programme to provide a basic wage to employees. There were stipulations for businesses in order to receive the payments such as evidence that turnover had to be reduced and employees had to be Australian residents. This provided \$750 per week for employees to keep them employed within the business, even if the business was unable to trade due to Covid-19.

This payment incrementally reduced, with the final phase rate in the current plan which runs from December 2020 to March 2021 is \$600 per week.

There is no doubt that businesses who receive this support have been saved from closing down and losing key staff. A key benefit of this scheme is that

individuals directly receive this income (and it is then in the economy) while also supporting staff retention within businesses.

CASH FLOW BONUS

The Australian Government provided tax credit refunds to businesses under the Cash Flow Bonus scheme. This provided up to \$100,000 to eligible small and medium sized businesses and not-for-profits (including charities) that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000. These payments have helped with cash flow within businesses.

BUSINESS SUPPORT FUND

The Victorian Government has a Business Support Fund to assist businesses impacted by coronavirus and ensure they are supported through restricted trading. Eligible businesses receive grants of \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000, depending on the business' annual payroll. This programme has had three rounds and was excellent as it was cash directly into businesses bank accounts.

3.4 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY GROUPS

TOURISM AUSTRALIA

Tourism Australia are usually focused on enticing visitors from overseas to Australia, however this has changed with no overseas international flights available during the pandemic.

A new programme entitled 'Holiday Here this Year' has been launched and while not specifically food related, they do promote some [Foodie Road Trips](#) through wine and food regions across the country. [Holiday Here This Year](#)

A previous programme 'Restaurant Australia' was operating in 2017 and had a strong food and wine focus based on research which found that great food, wine, and local cuisine was a major factor influencing holiday decision making. A number of videos were made for this promotion. [Restaurant Australia](#)

The 'Stay Close, Go Further' campaign promoted Victoria's different regions across television, print, radio, digital and social media as the state eased travel restrictions. Victorians were encouraged to take a break in their home state as part of a multi-million-dollar campaign to back their local tourism industry - and the thousands of jobs it supports. [Stay Close, Go Further website](#)

INDUSTRY GROUPS

Restaurant and Caterers Association R&CA CEO Wes Lambert and some of Australia's best hospitality operators lobbied government to gain a fair deal for the industry. The association provide up-to-date resources for hospitality operators including information on topics such as 'Creating a Covid-19 Safe Workplace', 'Covid-19 Training and Grants', plus links to relevant government health alerts, up-to-date coronavirus news, fact sheets, workplace relations assistance and support from government.

MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL - MELBOURNE OUTDOOR DINING PLAN

Covid-19 has had a negative impact on so many areas of business, including the restaurants and cocktail bars of central Melbourne. A strategy has been devised which will see inner city laneways handed over to outdoor dining. The strategy for Melbourne will see a mix of footpath dining and repurposing of street car parking through to complete takeovers of city laneways and dining in parks.



3.5 NEW INCENTIVES DEVELOPED LOCALLY

EMPTY ESKY

The Empty Esky programme was designed to get people out of Melbourne and on the road through the regions to spend money on food and drinks. An esky is a chiller box carried in a car to keep everything cool in warm weather.

The programme began after the bushfires Australia suffered over summer 2019. It has continued as Melbourne came out of its initial Covid-19 lockdown. It uses food and wine as the drawcard into the regions and the website offers maps of regions to visit, itineraries and maps of fire-affected areas.

Empty Esky is a programme that could be replicated in any country as part of a Covid-19 recovery program for food and wine producers. [Empty Esky website](#)

Across Melbourne city and the wider destination, there are a number of examples of collaboration and joint marketing initiatives between businesses and sectors:

PROVIDOOR

Necessity proved the mother of invention when top local chef Shane Delia set up an alternative delivery service 'Providoor' during the lockdown in reaction to the sizeable 35% commission charged by existing delivery platforms.

With the government imposing Covid-19 restrictions from March onwards, the closure of restaurants forced the industry to turn to deliveries but they initially found it very difficult to turn a profit due to the high commission rates.

Bringing together top Melbourne restaurants and chefs for this new delivery service with only a 15% commission charge, Providoor has proven to be a success for the businesses involved as it makes more money for the restaurants and delivers further than most services into outer suburbs. [Providoor](#)

COLLABORATIONS - CITY

Hospitality collaborations have never been more important as they allow owners and operators to share ideas, help others and stay connected in ways that benefit everyone. There is also great potential with the customers of two businesses brought under one promotion.

Piccolina Gelateria and Lune Croissants - city to regional Victoria

The creation of an ice-cream sandwich of hazelnut gelato in croissant/brioche combo pastry with a drizzle of chocolate sauce. [Piccolina Gelateria + Lune Croissants](#)

Longrain restaurant and Piccolina Gelateria

Enjoy a feast from Longrain of Thai food and finishing with three Thai inspired Piccolina gelato flavours. The banquet includes signature dishes of egg net with prawns and pomelo, massaman beef curry and caramelised pork hock. Gelato flavours include caramelised banana with roasted peanut, lemon sorbet infused with lemongrass, ginger and Thai basil. Plus caramelised palm sugar gelato with palm sugar caramel and honeycomb. [Longrain restaurant + Piccolina Gelateria](#)

COLLABORATIONS - DRINKS

Anther Spirits and Reed & Co

Two family run spirits companies combined their distilling styles to create a collaborative spirit called Family Road Trip Gin. With the recommendation of drinking it at home while planning a real road trip, it was a great way to market one product to both brands' customers. [Anther Spirits and Reed & Co](#)

Anther Spirits and Ministry of Chocolate

Anther Spirits are an innovative company. Each year they source the most outstanding sour cherries to make a sour cherry gin. This year they worked with Ministry of Chocolate to have the gin-soaked cherries transformed into a beautiful cherry chocolate. [Anther Spirits and Ministry of Chocolate](#)

COLLABORATIONS - CITY TO REGIONAL VICTORIA

There is a huge pent up demand from Melbournians for travel, however until Covid-19 is fully suppressed, there are very few domestic flights and no opportunity to travel overseas. In the meantime, Melbournians are booking trips to regional areas in big numbers.

One trend that is developing as a result of this is city restaurants creating collaborations with hospitality venues in regional and coastal areas, and temporarily setting up in these new locations. This is a win-win for the town as they get a big name restaurant making them a very desirable location. And the restaurant get a busy few months of trade in a location where the customers will be.

Bia Hoi and Ocean Eight - city to regional Victoria

Bia Hoi is a Vietnamese inspired beer hall with renowned chef Jerry Mai and until the end January 2021, she is collaborating with Ocean Eight winery

on the Mornington Peninsula. Jerry has created a menu that complements winemaker Mike Aylward's wines to perfection. Think prawn banh mi with pinot gris, wagyu bo la lot with rose and duck curry with pinot noir. [Bia Hoi + Ocean Eight](#)

Coda and The Lorne Hotel - city to regional Victoria

Chef Adam De Silva took his modern Asian inspired food on the road to the popular ocean town of Lorne for summer 2020. Teaming up with The Lorne Hotel, DeSilva focused on a seafood menu inspired by a raw bar with freshly shucked oysters, as well as small plates such as steamed scallops with XO sauce and glass noodles. It proved such a success that in December 2020, Coda took up a permanent residency on the top floor of the Lorne Hotel. [Coda + The Lorne Hotel](#)

MoVida and The Lorne Hotel - city to regional Victoria

MoVida is one of Melbourne's iconic laneway restaurants and offers Spanish inspired food from chef Frank Camorra. His tapas are renowned and this collaboration with the Lorne Hotel, which also became a permanent fixture on the ground floor called 'MoVida Lorne' was the inspiration for Coda to follow suit in the seaside town of Lorne. [Movida + The Lorne Hotel](#)

Anchovy Restaurant and Sutton Grange Wines - city to regional Victoria

Chef Thi Le's food is described as Asian. Australian. A little bit in between. Her restaurant 'Anchovy' is a favourite with many Melbourne food-lovers but the government restrictions meant she was only able to have eight guests for in-house dining.

Instead, she collaborated with Sutton Grange Wines for weekend residency on Saturday and Sunday lunches, offering shellfish wok-tossed with Vietnamese-Cajun flavours, plus beautiful regional Victorian wines. [Anchovy Restaurant and Sutton Grange Wines](#)

Attica Restaurant in The Yarra Valley

Attica is one of Australia's most highly decorated restaurants under chef Ben Shewry. They have featured on the World's Top 50 restaurants numerous times and offer high-end innovative modern cooking.

On reopening during summer 2020, they created an outdoor pop-up restaurant in the Yarra Valley called Attica Summer Camp. Running for five months from December,

Located just outside the small town of Seville (once home to Lillydale Estate winery), Shewry has added wines from his friend Mac Forbes, record turntables and a shop with Attica condiments (jams, chutneys, vinegars) and merch, as well as fresh produce and fancy picnic hampers. [Attica Restaurant in The Yarra Valley](#)

PUBLIC SPACE AND PLACEMAKING

As previously mentioned, the Melbourne City Outdoor Dining Plan has provided a welcome opportunity for Melbourne restaurants to expand tables out of their venues and into the transformed streets. This is a significant programme for Melbourne restaurants who are looking to reopen and be able to do so economically by having as much seating as possible as well as doing so in an outdoor setting where customers and staff can dine and work in a safe environment.

Covid-19 has made a huge impact on so many areas of business, including the restaurants and cocktail bars of central Melbourne. A strategy has been devised which will see inner city laneways handed over to outdoor dining. The strategy for Melbourne will see a mix of footpath dining and repurposing of street car parking through to complete takeovers of city laneways and dining in parks. [The Outdoor Dining Plan is online.](#)

Layla - Melbourne Outdoor Dining

Working with the City of Melbourne, Chef Shane Delia cordoned off Bond Street – outside his CBD restaurant – and installed a huge marquee. Taking his Layla

restaurant to the streets, Delia has created an airy, greenery-filled, laid-back Middle Eastern bar and restaurant which will accommodate up to 70 guests under socially distancing restrictions from November 2020 onwards. It is initiatives such as this which will activate central Melbourne again as its hospitality operators look to recover from the forced closures during Covid-19. [Layla outdoor dining](#)

Arbory Afloat - Melbourne Outdoor Dining

Arbory Afloat, Melbourne's largest outdoor floating bar and restaurant has returned to the heart of Melbourne for its fifth consecutive year in time to take up a summer-time mooring on the central riverside. It's unique outdoor infrastructure makes it ideal for dining and drinking during Covid-19 restrictions. [Arbory Afloat](#)

Lakeside at Carousel - Melbourne Outdoor Dining

From the team behind Half Acre and Food & Desire, a new summer pop-up picnic experience was created at Albert Park Lake offering a la carte dining or picnic packs on the 2000-square-metre Pelican Lawn. Bring a rug, hire some furniture and order mezze and charcuterie platters, fish and chips, hot jam doughnuts and booze from the pop-up bottle shop. [Lakeside at Carousel.](#)

The Commons - Melbourne Outdoor Dining

The Commons boasts an all outdoor setting across four new retail offerings at their master venue Ormond Collective. The Conservatory, The Kitchen Garden, The Garden Café and The Beer Garden are Covid-19 safe havens for social distancing and outdoor dining, within a memorable garden event space, right in the heart of Melbourne.

Inspired by the great terraces and outdoor dining spaces of Europe and America – florals, gingham, ticking and stripes, oversized cushions, park benches and French café chairs, baskets bursting with Spring blooms, topiary and wicker sets the scene for a Covid-19 compliant outdoor experience – the garden has been specifically designed to create individual spaces, within a maze of established trees, planting and potting sheds. [The Commons](#)

USE OF FOOD TO CREATE VALUE FOR MONEY PACKAGES / PROMOTION

Packages that are promoted as Value for Money have not been a focus of promotions in the region during the pandemic. Partially this is because locals are so keen to get out and eat that they are more than happy to pay.

Additionally, the pandemic exposed the tiny margins most hospitality businesses are making, resulting in price increases more than reductions. Fixed price options such as the following have materialised:

Mr Brownie - All you can eat BBQ

For a fixed price of \$49, diners receive 90 minutes of tap beers, cocktails, house

wine and barbecue eats at the Rooftop Bottomless BBQ sizzle every Saturday and Sunday from 12-4pm [Mr Brownie - All you can eat BBQ](#)

Layla - Fixed price Middle Eastern brunch

A Middle Eastern inspired feast is what's on offer with Layla, the now outdoor version of acclaimed Maha restaurant. \$45pp delivers great meza style dishes such as Arabic flatbread, creme fraiche & almond hummus, Za'atar & cheese manoushi, Grilled Lebanese sausage and freshly baked Arabic sweet pastries. [Layla - Fixed price Middle Eastern brunch](#)

Attica - In Between

Attica is one of Australia's most highly awarded restaurants under chef Ben Shewry. They have featured on the World's Top 50 restaurants numerous times and offer high-end innovative modern cooking. On reopening they are offering an exclusive use of the dining room for up to ten guests at \$500pp.

This may seem expensive but potential customers have the entire restaurant to themselves in what is a unique experience. In addition, Attica propose a menu of dishes never ever served before and service at an unprecedented level of attention. [Attica is online here.](#)



3.6 CHANGING/EMERGING DOMESTIC CONSUMER HABITS AROUND FOOD

COOKING AT HOME

There is no doubt home cooking returned as a necessity during lockdown. But it has also become a rediscovered skill for many who are taking to this new hobby with great enthusiasm. This leads to many business opportunities for hospitality venues:

Chef led online cooking classes

Create a weekly menu which is delivered to customers. Then set up a cooking demonstration with a chef leading everyone through the preparation of this meal. This provides a great opportunity to stay engaged with customers while they can't come to the venue, and keeps them connected with the brand in a positive way.

Some of the best online cooking classes have been from chefs such as [Andrew McConnell](#) - Charlie Carrington - [Maggie Beer](#) - [Hugh Allen](#)

Weekly produce boxes

Create produce boxes with suppliers (seafood, meats, fruit and vegetables, pantry staples). This will give customers access to ingredients they can't usually get their hands on. It will also support source supplier businesses.

AT HOME DINING

There has been a huge appetite for home delivered meals that are beyond the average take away from Uber Eats. Restaurant quality meals have been a huge success for Melbourne hospitality operators during Covid-19 and provided a financial income stream to get them through this period.

These meals tend to need to be completed at home which gives the diners some interaction by heating, plating and serving the meal. There have been hundreds of operators across Melbourne offering this home delivered 'At home Dining'.

EVENTS AT HOME

As Melbourne begins to come out of lockdown there are significant sporting events on, from The Melbourne Cup horse race to various football grand finals. Some of these operated with empty stadiums.

The pent up demand for people to be socialising together (again) is huge and offers a real opportunity for hospitality businesses and operators to offer food for friends to celebrate at home - or anywhere they like.

PICNICS

Picnics are back in a huge way as locals come out of lockdowns which prevailed intermittently from March to November 2020. An eagerness for people to catch up with friends and family, and to do so in a Covid-19 safe manner has restored the popularity of picnics. Being outdoors and an escape from the confines of people's own homes, this has led to great opportunities for hospitality businesses to provide all the ingredients for a successful picnic.

Lee Ho Fook restaurant - picnic pack

A range of signature hot and cold dishes available for pick-up on weekends. Designed for two guests, the menu includes Sichuan pickled vegetables, silken white cut chicken, smashed garlic cucumbers, charred new seasons corn, five spice duck sausage rolls and fig leaf ice-cream. All picnic packs come with a limited edition rug and glassware.

Grossi Restaurant - picnic pack

This famous Italian restaurant family have created a picnic for customers based around Aperitivo hour (which they are famous for at their restaurants). A great Italian style feast complete with tiramisu and spritz. [Grossi Restaurant - picnic pack](#)

3.7 USE OF GUIDELINES / TOOLKITS DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT THE FOOD INDUSTRY

The Victorian Government has created substantial resources for businesses. This covers ready to print signage and posters for display in-house.

Plus signage and resources for businesses as follows:

- Record sheet: Visitor and patron contact log
- Staff health questionnaire
- Signage and posters for your workplace
- Stickers for display at your business
- Social media tiles
- Signage for sports facilities
- Signage for land managers

PLANNING FOR REOPENING - INNOVATION IN ORDERING SYSTEMS

Ordering systems are notorious for taking huge margins and leaving hospitality businesses with almost nothing to show for the food they are selling.

Hungry Hungry is a local platform bringing together the latest tech in this area and delivering it at an affordable cost to hospitality businesses. Businesses can choose to use the system for Dine-In, Pick-Up, Delivery or Click-And-Collect. It's an all in one ordering service in which customers scan a link or utilise a QR Code for payment.

They also have service for contactless menu ordering in-house, which is an essential aspect of hospitality into the future. No one wants guests crowding a bar or lining up to pay a restaurant bill.

They have over 1,500 venues are using this system, many of them high profile successful businesses.



PLANNING FOR REOPENING - INNOVATION IN CONTACT TRACING

An essential element of reopening in a Covid-19 era is the ability of a venue to track all customers and staff. This contact tracing is easier in a restaurant, not so easy at big venues and festivals where there are potentially thousands of people.

Smart Badge System

The new Smart Badge System is a wearable device such as a wristband, lanyard or a watch which does a number of things using technology.

The Smart Band gives social distance alerts if a user is within 1.5 metres of another user and communicates with software to track location and close contacts. Registers wearers date via QR code in a secure portal. [Smart Badge system](#)

PLANNING FOR REOPENING – VENUE RESET

Melbourne hospitality operators have to deal with reduced numbers of guests as venues reopen. The days of elbow-to-elbow bar service and lots of people mingling, talking and drinking together won't be in situ for some time.

1. Create a Covid-19 safe plan and undertake staff training. Check out a complete Covid-19 safe plan from the [Victorian government online](#).
2. Ensure the venue has ample Covid-19 safe posters and notices for guests.
3. Create a take-away window onto the street for click and collect and deliveries.
4. Add partitions to the dining room to create Covid-19 safe dining areas.
5. Set the dining room plan into new configurations in line with local restrictions. (Melbourne has tables spaced 1.5 meters apart).

6. There are many different strategies being implemented to keep staff and guests safe (See Systems Reset checklist)
7. QR Code on arrival for guests, used to contact guests in the future if a Covid-19 outbreak occurs.
8. Collect customer names, number and email address for contact tracing.
9. Menu to show up on guests mobile phones for hands free ordering direct to the kitchen.
10. Hands free payment by credit card.

PLANNING FOR REOPENING – SYSTEMS RESET

The financial challenges are significant for venues who reopen when guest numbers are reduced. Staff costs, food costs, rent and outgoings are still a reality. These ideas are being implemented in varying ways across hospitality. These are a range of strategies we have seen implemented by some Melbourne hospitality businesses.

1. Implement a deposit scheme on booking, and set no refund policy for guests who do not show up.
2. Bookings limited to 90 minutes up to two hours.
3. The cost of dining out will have to increase to deal with increased operating costs.
4. Dining out will become more of a special occasion, at least in the short term.
5. Fixed price set menus are a great way to ensure customers minimum spend.
6. Have add-on luxury menu items to entice customers to spend that little extra.
7. This ensures food orders are limited to bookings that are in place, reducing food waste.
8. This reduces staff costs as preparation is simpler than a larger a la carte menu.
9. Guests turn up and dinner has already been paid for so it allows them to relax and enjoy.

SECTION FOUR

KEY LEARNINGS



4.1 KEY LEARNINGS

1. SPEED

Adaptability has proven essential to hospitality survival during lockdown and intense business interruptions from Covid-19. There is no doubt that businesses who adjusted quickly to online delivery models received the most publicity (helping them to spread the word) and were welcomed by customers looking for new ways to have great food at home.

2. NEW INCOME STREAMS

Innovation and in some cases experimentation were crucial to quickly coming to terms with the reality that old business ways are gone (perhaps temporarily, perhaps forever) and setting up new income streams. Selling produce packs direct from your farmers and growers, auctioning the wine cellar bottle by bottle. Chef led cooking classes. Whatever it takes.

3. DIGITAL INNOVATION

The common understanding is that businesses (and shoppers) have achieved five to seven years of digital innovation in 2020. Utilising new online sales platforms for home delivery of meals and drinks. Ready to heat restaurant quality meals delivered effortlessly. And so on.

4. COLLABORATION

It's essential to explore every opportunity to collaborate with other businesses, inside and outside of hospitality. Melbourne has many city restaurants joining forces with country wineries and venues to create new income streams. Partnering to create unique at-home dining opportunities (for example Longrain restaurant Thai feast delivered with specially created gelato from Piccolina Gelateria).

5. COVID-19 SAFE REOPENING

It is imperative that safety systems are understood and in place for venue reopening. This includes bringing together the latest tech for Dine-In, Pick-Up, Delivery and Click-And-Collect. Plus QR Codes for payments, contactless menus, safety signage, cleaning systems and contact tracing.





4.2 DESTINATION BEST PRACTICE TOURISM / HOSPITALITY EXAMPLES

Visit Victoria

Having an organisation such as Visit Victoria has been crucial for success in Melbourne. They are dedicated to telling captivating stories to build Melbourne and Victoria into Australia's number one tourism destination. They were very quick off the mark with new strategies such as 'Click for Vic' which delivered a digital ordering platform that every food producer in the state could get onto. It saved businesses who had no previous online ordering system or presence. In addition, there are click and collect models for fresh produce markets which provide a similar result for city markets.

Providoor

The establishment of Providoor in 2020 has proven a game changer as it took on the might of UberEATS and other similar delivery services to create a new business model where restaurants now keep far more of their income.

Melbourne City Council Outdoor Dining Plan

Without a doubt outdoor dining is essential to future hospitality survival until a vaccine becomes freely available. Indoor dining required substantial space per person but for outdoors this is less so.

At Home Dining

Providoor is successful because customers want to eat restaurant quality food at home. At Home dining has been a life saver for so many hospitality operators who can now bring their services directly to the customer and even post-Covid will undoubtedly remain as a permanent new income stream.

