



MANSFIELD SHIRE

**TOURISM
NORTH
EAST**



MANSFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL

QUARTERLY REPORT

2019 – 2020

QUARTER 3: January - March

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1. Introduction

Tourism North East (TNE) is the regional tourism board for the High Country, charged with leading strategic supply and demand driven tourism initiatives that deliver strong outcomes to the local visitor economy. It operates across the key areas of regional marketing, industry development, infrastructure and product development, strategic planning, advocacy and research, and works collaboratively with a range of stakeholders to drive visitation, yield and dispersal throughout the High Country.

2. A Regional Approach

The value of the Local Government contribution to regional tourism is that it enables the Local Government Area buy in to campaigns of scale that encompass projects of regional significance, enables marketing reach that is only obtainable through collaborative spend and offers a unified voice to government on issues and opportunities impacting the region.

At the end of each quarter, Tourism North East produces a report that provides an overview of all the regional activities that Mansfield Shire invests in, and key deliverables within that period.

3. Recent Events

The bushfires in January / February had a devastating effect on the High Country's tourism industry during its peak trade period, resulting in a first quarter loss (conservatively) estimated to be worth approx. \$200 million.

The impact of these losses has been further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, with visitation to the High Country halted due to travel restrictions. As a result, a number of Tourism North East activities that were planned have been paused until restrictions are lifted.

In March we welcomed new CEO Bess Nolan-Cook. Ms Nolan-Cook has a strong background in brand, marketing and communications and a successful history in complex stakeholder engagement.

The following report is for the third quarter of the 2019-20 Financial Year.

4. The Third Quarter snapshot

Recent events have had a profound impact on the tourism industry. Visitation and yield were and still are significantly impacted. Tourism North East has been working across the challenges presented by bushfires and COVID-19, within the guidelines provided by State and Federal governments, to support industry and maintain a viable tourism product. The road to recovery will be long and challenging.

Industry Impacts

- Urban Enterprise Economic Impact Assessment (Jan 2020) indicated a loss of revenue of \$208M, 630,000 less visitors and 2100 jobs (FTE) across the sector due to bushfires alone
- The financial impact of lost visitation to the region will be further felt as a result of COVID-19 restrictions.

- All of approximately 1500 tourism businesses in the region have been impacted by COVID-19
- TNE was leading a number of bushfire recovery programs across the region until COVID-19 restrictions were implemented
- TNE continues to advocate for support for the tourism industry from State and Federal governments

Tourism North East - Bushfire response and recovery

- Advocated with all levels of government for support and financial assistance for bushfire impacted businesses
- Coordinated a number of applications through Regional Events Fund Bushfire Recovery Round (Visit Victoria) and Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery Grants (Austrade) to drive visitation, in total; 14 Bushfire Recovery, 12 Bushfire Recovery Regional Events Fund and 3 standard Regional Events Fund
- Coordinated the 'Get Your Butt Back Up Here' bushfire recovery marketing campaign designed to drive immediate visitation to the region during the holiday / Easter period through a high impact marketing campaign. Note; the campaign was postponed due to COVID-19
- Liaised with Visit Victoria on the 'Short Stay Goes a Long Way' campaign to encourage visitors to return to the fire impacted regions
- Secured high profile exposure in Visit Victoria's \$2 million 'A Short Stay Goes a Long Way' campaign
- Undertook extensive media and PR activities across all mediums to leverage consumer sentiment and maintain market presence following the bushfires
- Secured upwards of 20 conferences through the Bushfire Business Events Pledge
- Provided marketing support for the High Country Comeback event
- Developed the #RollOnBack campaign for Ride High Country, securing additional Free of Charge (FOC) media channel exposure from our partners
- Created the Buy Now Stay Later booking platform on Victoria's High Country website providing a welcome revenue stream for tourism businesses
- Undertook a targeted range of industry mentoring initiatives to support impacted businesses, including facilitating access to grants and grant applications, marketing advice and training and development

Tourism North East - COVID-19 Response

To counter the devastating effect of COVID-19, Tourism North East is delivering a region-wide response through the development of the High Country at Home web portal. The initiative is a takeover of www.victoriashighcountry.com.au showcasing a directory of producers in the High Country who have ecommerce capability. However the true point of difference is a collection of bookable experiences that our audience can join with their own group of friends and enjoy a live virtual signature High Country experience.

High Country at Home - online interactive website

- Delivering awareness of the region, facilitating local innovation and supporting economic return.

- The initiative has required a significant investment of time in industry development, and the development of a strategic marketing campaign to support the program.
- A pilot group of 6 operators are being fast tracked through a development process to be ready for launch delivery - following this, a broader industry engagement will be undertaken.

5. MARKETING

5.1. Trends and Visitation

(Note these results are one quarter behind the report). For the period Jan - Dec 2019 compared to Jan - Dec 2018. Data sourced from National Visitor Survey and the International Visitor Survey.

- As a result of targeted delivery of strategic tourism initiatives visitation to the High Country continues to grow.
- Melbourne remains the largest visitor market.
- Although length of stay has decreased slightly (in line with national trends) overnight spend (and thus yield) is increasing.

It is expected that bushfires and COVID-19 will significantly impact visitation data for the 12 months to March 2020.

Origin of	Regional Vic	Melbourne	Interstate	
All visitors	32.8%	46.2%	21%	Intrastate visitors 7.3% ↑ Nights 2.0% ↑
Overnight visitors	28.3%	48.5%	23.3%	Interstate visitors 8.9% ↑ Nights 9.7% ↓

	Number	Bed nights	Spend	Length of stay
Day visitor	2.1 million 0.6% ↑	-	\$105 / day 8.7% ↓	-
Overnight visitor (domestic)	2.075 million 7.7% ↑	5.7 million 1.0% ↓	\$179 / night 7.2% ↑	2.8 nights 0.2 nights ↓

5.2. Ride High Country Marketing Campaign



Objective

- The Ride High Country 2018/19 – 2021/22 Marketing Strategy has been developed to assist the region meet its cycle tourism category ownership aspirations.
- Designed to drive broad awareness of the regional offering, the marketing campaign has been built as a dynamic multi-platform program to maximise impact and return on investment in the conversion phase.

Partners

Regional investment partners include; Alpine Shire, Benalla Rural City, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Rural City of Wangaratta, Towong Shire and the Resort Management Boards of Mount Buller, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham.

Ride High Country Marketing

Mansfield Shire (and its hero destinations of Great Victorian Rail Trail and Bonnie Doon) have played a lead role in the execution of the Ride High Country campaign, thus far being featured in the following creative placements:

- 5 x OOH paid placements plus an addition 1 x OOH bonus
- 1 x Melbourne Airport video execution
- The recording of 1 x RHC TV Report plus the re-edited TVC and VOD executions
- 2 x content partnerships
- 12 x digital display executions
- 3 x full page print advertisements
- 1 x Herald-Sun tabloid placement during the Jayco Herald Sun Tour
-

Mansfield Shire Council





Notes

- Bushfires and COVID-19 travel restrictions have resulted in significant alterations to the planned schedule.
- Revisions have been made to ensure visitor safety whilst continuing to get value on investment.
- The schedule is structured to enable a rapid reactivation and encourage visitation once the current crisis is resolved.
- BDA research has been commissioned to undertake research to evaluate campaign effectiveness measuring media value, reach, visitation, yield and the shift in brand, destination plus product perceptions and awareness.

5.4. Feast High Country - Marketing Campaigns



The Feast High Country brand represents the region's food and drinks pillar, unifying a strong and diverse industry. The long-term objectives of the Feast High Country brand are to:

- raise awareness of the High Country's breadth of food and drink tourism experiences, and
- position the region as a 'must-visit' destination for associated target segments.

TNE has been planning two campaigns this financial year, with changes outlined as follows:

5.4.1. 'Wine Enthusiast' marketing campaign

Background

TNE secured funding under the Wine Growth Fund (round three) through Regional Development Victoria to contribute to a product development and marketing campaign targeting the 'Wine Enthusiast' segment. This initiative is being overseen by a project steering group consisting of representatives from the relevant LGAs and vignerons' associations throughout the region.

After careful consideration, TNE has decided to continue with the marketing activity targeting the wine enthusiast market, due to the nature and placement of this activity. Timing has been pushed out and will be in market from June to August. The main consideration in continuing this activity was based around the fact that with the current situation around COVID-19, people will be spending more time at home consuming content like magazines and websites, with time to take it in and consider planning a visit when the situation changes. Messaging will be altered where possible and necessary.

The campaign consists of content partnerships through Gourmet Traveller, Halliday Magazine and Broadsheet, with editorial and advertorial content alongside a small amount of brand advertising.

5.4.2. Food-focussed marketing activity

In 2019-20 there is a small spend allocated to activity specifically around the food offering in region, which is outlined below along with current updates:

- Delicious (magazine + digital): A cooperative opportunity through Visit Victoria, consisting of video content and editorial delivered across the magazine and digital channels, featuring Emma Handley of Templar Lodge. Currently on hold due to COVID-19.
- Broadsheet: Set to be live alongside the Delicious activity, a content piece will profile a 'foodie road trip' through the King Valley, Milawa, Beechworth and Rutherglen. Currently on hold due to COVID-19.

To support the marketing campaigns TNE is delivering a number of additional initiatives in the food and drink space.

5.4.3. High Country Brewery Trail

In early December TNE submitted an application to the Small Scale and Craft Program with the view to fund a three-part program for the breweries, in order to elevate their tourism offering, foster further collaboration and boost their contribution to the local economy.

TNE has been successful in securing \$17,500 funding through Agriculture Victoria to contribute to a valuable market research project on top of the delivery of the planned marketing activity.

This program is made up of the following:

- A critical market research project, the findings of which will inform future product development and promotional efforts for the High Country Brewery Trail. No such research currently exists, and is crucial to progressing the breweries both as individual businesses and as a collective tourism offering.
- Delivery of an educational workshop series with High Country craft breweries to develop an action plan based on the outcomes of the research.
- A marketing campaign targeting the segments identified in the research project, addressing key issues relevant to those markets.

The market research project has now commenced, using an online environment to undertake workshops that would be run face-to-face in normal circumstances. The project is set for completion by mid June, with marketing commencing in spring using insights garnered from the research.

5.5. Feast High Country Festival

Background - The Feast High Country Festival is a vehicle used to showcase the High Country Food and Drink product to our target audience, and provide visitation and yield opportunities for operators. The Festival enables TNE to leverage marketing opportunities and extend the reach of the Feast High Country marketing campaign.

2020 update - The High Country Feast Festival will be moved forward to May 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions and in line with Visit Victoria funding requirements.

New Event Strategy - TNE's strategic approach is to raise the profile of Feast High Country to be an innovative leader in the food and drink market. As the Feast High Country Festival has run in the same format for several years now, an expression of interest (EOI) has opened to a select group of suppliers for the development of a new Food & Drink event strategy. The EOI closes in April at which point the responses will be reviewed and the selection of a supplier made. The strategy will be delivered in June 2020 and the new event scheduled for May 2021.

5.6. Walk High Country Marketing



Dates of campaign

16 March - 2 May 2020

Partners

Regional investment partners include; Alpine Shire, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Rural City of Wangaratta, Towong Shire and the Resort Management Boards of Mount Buller, Falls Creek and Mount Hotham.

Aligning with TNE's position of maintaining a positive and inspirational marketing presence for the region's outdoor orientated activities during this crisis, to assist with future recovery, the Walk High Country marketing plan continued as rescheduled (following a pause during and immediately following the bushfires). Key activities, currently in market, include:

- Three editorial features in Broadsheet, promoted via their own social media channels in Melbourne and Sydney key markets.
- Sponsorship of two Broadsheet EDMs, providing brand awareness and inspiration.
- Programmatic digital display and video assets, to reach both core target markets, across a range of titles.
- Supersite billboard at Melbourne Airport, with thanks to our marketing and media partners, likely insitu for a period far extending the campaign window.
- Social media across TNE managed accounts. The focus of this activity has switched to being aspirational rather than conversion focussed (ad spend cancelled).
- Additional production of four additional videos by Caro Ryan (@lotsafreshair) from her recent famil in the High Country.

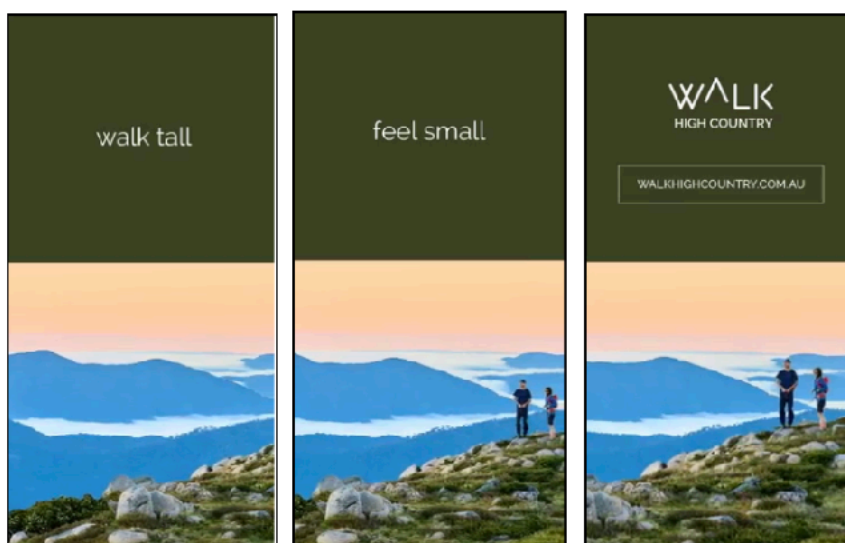
Please note that the two OOH supersites, originally scheduled as part of this campaign, will be rescheduled for a later date to provide Walk High Country with strong visual assets once this crisis is over.

As this campaign is currently in market, full performance metrics will be provided in the Q4 report.

Walk High Country Marketing Mansfield Shire

Mansfield Shire, with an abundance of natural recreation and walking assets, has played an important role in the execution of the regional Walk High Country campaign. In conjunction with Mt Buller, the Shire has been featured in the following executions:

- 2 x editorial features in Broadsheet with associated imagery
- 1 x digital display execution
- Social media
- Supersite billboard



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Produced by Broadsheet in partnership with Walk High Country

High Country Hikes and Walks Worth Planning For

It's a hard time right now being cooped up inside. But when free will returns, this is where we'll be stretching our legs. In partnership with Walk High Country, we highlight six different options worth bookmarking now.



26/26 Rollergirls

Photography: Courtesy of Tourism North East

Iconic corker's hats, deep canyons, craggy peaks and snow gum forests - Victoria's High Country has long been a place of adventure and retreat. The Alpine National Park lies on the Great Dividing Range and offers a huge variety of nature experiences. Victoria's two highest peaks, Mount Bogong (1986 metres) and Mount Featherston (1822 metres) are here, both offering tough climbs but within the reach of anyone with reasonable fitness. After something less strenuous? You'll find gently meandering river walks and Indigenous cultural trails all close to welcoming pockets of

Published on 20 March 2020 by REXY BRENCH

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6. PUBLIC RELATIONS, MEDIA AND FAMILIARISATIONS

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- PR activities during Q3 switched focus from planning, securing and delivering the summer/autumn famils program to bushfire recovery then C-19 corporate, media and industry messaging.
- During the immediate post-bushfire recovery phase, TNE PR worked closely with Visit Victoria to facilitate on-ground roll out of live crosses from around the region, including Mansfield, for 9's Today Show and for 9 News Weather promoting Mansfield as a must-visit destination.
- TNE PR also worked with The Age news journalist, Ben Preiss, on two major post-bushfire stories which drew attention to the impact of the fires on the Mansfield local business economy. In addition, publicity support was given during this time to the High Country Comeback event in Melbourne, which featured businesses from around the region including Mansfield.
- TNE PR fielded many media calls during this busy period, facilitating interviews with RCoW businesses, recommending spokespeople and other requests for updated information. Media releases and subsequent publicity were produced and delivered for the Ride High Country #RollOnBack campaign featuring the Bright community as well as the High Country Comeback which included participating RCoW businesses.
- A Walk High Country media famil itinerary went ahead in February with journalist, Craig Sheather, who walked a variety of Mansfield & surrounds trails with new walking operator, Mansfield Bushwalks. His stories will publish across several publications (currently on hold).



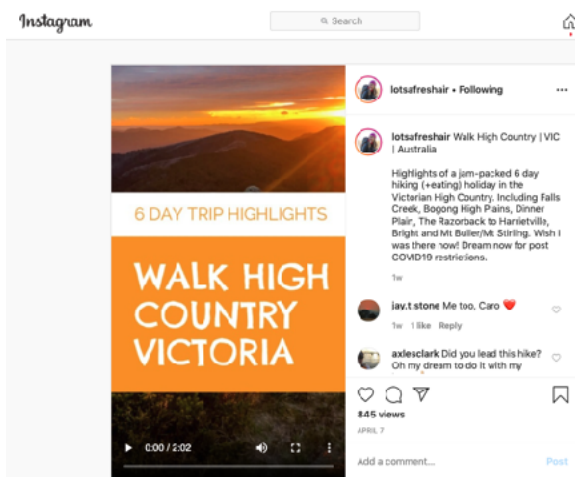
Regional

- PR activities during this period were impacted by both the summer bushfires and COVID-19 with most consumer facing initiatives postponed, replaced by corporate communications to industry and the media providing updated advice via EDMs and media releases about bushfire recovery and later, COVID-19 impacts on tourism.
- TNE PR worked with many media titles during this period nationally and internationally, providing up-to-date information and arranging interviews with key spokespeople, including industry representatives.
- During February, TNE PR worked closely with Visit Victoria to roll out post-bushfire recovery media. This included facilitating live Today Show (9 Network) rolling live crosses from Towong, Mansfield, Bright and Beechworth. In addition, pre-recorded and live 9 News weather crosses to High Country businesses and destinations were arranged from the King Valley, Mansfield, Rutherglen and Beechworth.
- In addition, TNE assisted with media management and publicity for the High Country Comeback event in Melbourne.
- Post-bushfire recovery famil itineraries were prepared during this time for Good Food (publishing just ahead of the March C-19 restrictions), Wine Selector & Traveller.com.au (yet to publish) Gourmet Traveller magazine (publishing this June) and Cyclist magazine. The Cyclist magazine itinerary was postponed due to C-19 restrictions.
- On a positive note, Lotsa Fresh Air influencer, Caro Ryan, rolled out inspirational videos, blogs and social media posts about four High Country destinations she visited late in 2019 as part of a co-sponsored media famil itinerary arranged by TNE PR, providing quality content now available to each of the participating stakeholders.
- Those media familis previously negotiated for Q3 have all been postponed with individual journalists/publications committing



to return when the time is right.

- A full page feature arising from a famil during Q2 published during late January as a call to visitors to return to the region post-bushfires. A second Travel & Indulgence feature focusing on Bright & Mt Beauty also from a Q2 famil, has been held for publication at a later date.



7. INDUSTRY AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Tourism North East supports High Country tourism operators in optimising their businesses and the experiences they offer visitors. This work includes up-skilling industry through mentoring and briefing sessions, identifying and working with businesses to address gaps in the regional tourism offering, managing industry communication efforts, and driving ongoing industry and product innovation. Industry development also involves facilitating relationships and tourism efforts between industry, Government organisations, tourism associations and other public and private entities to drive regional collaboration and growth.

The Industry and Product Development team report on:

- Training, support, mentoring and information sessions delivered to individuals or groups
- Business development
- Industry communications
- Projects and product innovation

7.1. Industry Development - Q3 Activity Snapshot

The challenges of this quarter have led to a reimagining of the way Industry Development is delivered to operators; changes have included:

- Crisis period phone calls and support

- Delivery of highly extended 1 on 1 mentoring to businesses in fire affected areas followed up by ongoing telephone support
- Reformatting sessions and moving to Zoom delivery for group and 1 on 1 sessions
- Increased operator communications included business support opportunities, grants and loans
- Local Government Area support and coordination of a region-wide events strategy for key funding streams and grant writing support as required

7.2. Bushfire response and recovery efforts

Following the December - January 2020 fires TNE identified the need for a targeted support and mentoring program for impacted businesses through activities such as;

The following actions were undertaken:

- Phone interviews were conducted to gauge the impact of the fires in the Alpine, Indigo, Mansfield, Wangaratta, Benalla, Falls Creek, Mt Hotham, Mt Buller, Towong regions. The findings of these interviews were fed back to the Victorian Government.
- A more detailed survey was conducted in the Towong Shire with 44 businesses interviewed.
- Following an initial SWOT analysis conducted across the region in relation to recovery initiatives the following activities were undertaken:
 - Grants identified and opportunities conveyed to operators
 - Assistance provided for grant application assistance for groups and individual businesses
 - Appointments made with relevant bodies in recovery centers
 - Recovery activities identified and planned with relevant groups and organisations, including event planning and grant applications
 - Marketing opportunities conveyed to operators
 - TNE workshop initiatives explained and encouraged including but not limited to, the Digital Upskilling Project

7.3. Industry Communications

Regular EDMs were sent to industry throughout the bushfire crisis period in January providing latest advice for visitors and businesses around the region. From late January, TNE provided updates about funding support available to tourism businesses during the post-bushfire recovery period as well as information about TNE's support via the digital upskilling program. Regular EDMs were also provided to industry during March with practical information about C-19 advice and financial support for businesses.

7.4. Digital Upskilling Program

TNE has appointed a Digital Skills Development Manager, Fiona Morris, to provide industry partners with personalised training supported by sustained digital assistance to ensure that they have the skills required to optimise online opportunities for both their business and the broader region.

This quarter, the Digital Skills program delivered;

- 193 business engagements, including workshops and 1:1 digital mentoring
- Satisfaction rating of 9.7/10

- The feedback received from Industry has been incredibly positive, with many stating this is meeting an immediate need

7.5. Industry Development - Training and information sessions

While significant efforts are dedicated to driving demand for the High Country offering, it is essential that a commensurate effort is committed to diversifying and enhancing the supply side of the tourism equation. TNE delivers on this need through the provision of a broad range of industry and product development services that are focused on providing a high-quality tourism experience.

TNE supports existing High Country tourism operators in optimising their businesses and the experiences they offer visitors. This work includes up-skilling industry through mentoring and briefing sessions, identifying and working with businesses to fill gaps in the regional tourism offering, managing industry communication efforts, and driving ongoing industry and product innovation. It also involves facilitating relationships and tourism efforts between industry, Government organisations, tourism associations and other public and private entities to drive regional collaboration and growth.

In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and social distancing measures, TNE has provided an online learning platform to conduct sessions via Zoom. Throughout the third quarter of 2019-20, TNE has delivered a range of initiatives in this space for Mansfield Shire including:

- The delivery of 15 individual business development sessions to address the trends, issues and opportunities of most relevance to Mansfield Shire businesses.
- The delivery of a range of both Mansfield-specific and broader regional group briefing sessions, which engaged 33 Mansfield Shire tourism businesses including:
 - *Attract attention and sustain interest in your business* - Tourism workshop covering ATDW and other tourism platforms; looking at ways to promote your business in the digital sphere and leverage from regional marketing campaigns.
 - *Peer review platforms* - Workshop covering the fundamentals of peer review platforms such as Tripadvisor and how to effectively manage your listing.
 - *Getting started with social media* - Introductory session explaining the difference in social media platforms, and how to best utilize them for your business.
 - *COVID-19* - An open panel discussion to determine the range and affect the pandemic has had on the region's tourism trade.
- Facilitating or being involved in a range of meetings and sessions focused on developing tourism experiences and opportunities for Mansfield Shire, including:
 - Meeting with GTR events during the Jayco Herald Sun Tour, ensuring final logistics and RHC marketing were all activated.
 - Meeting with Wayfound consultants to finalise the Ride High Country Signage Strategy.
 - Meeting with Mansfield Business Association to discuss the role of TNE including marketing and business development opportunities.

- Liaising with Friends of the Great Victorian Rail Trail about cycle tourism opportunities.
- Growing the Ride High Country Preferred Business offering, with over 150 accredited businesses in the region
- Attending or being involved in a range of meetings/sessions relevant to Mansfield Shire and its strategic tourism direction including:
 - Attending Lake Eildon Master Plan PSG meeting.
 - Representing Ride High Country for a live television cross for the Today Show on Channel 9.
 - Representing Ride High Country for a live radio cross during the JHST for radio 2AY.
 - Representing Ride High Country for a cycle tourism piece covered by WIN News.
 - Attending the Melbourne Tourism Leadership Program,
 - Facilitating and presenting at quarterly Visitor Information Centre meetings.
- Strategic engagement with other associations and organisations to progress Mansfield Shire tourism priorities including Regional Development Australia, Regional Development Victoria, Ovens Murray Regional Partnership, Visit Victoria and Parks Victoria.

7.6. Industry and Product Development - Projects

7.6.1. Ride High Country Signage Strategy

TNE has secured a \$50,000 grant from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund towards the development of a \$100,000 regional cycle tourism signage strategy. Funding has supported the engagement of Wayfound, a tourism signage and wayfinding consultancy, to deliver a strategy for consistent cycle tourism signage throughout the region and across each of the High Country's key cycle tourism disciplines.

Wayfound, who was appointed to deliver the project, presented the draft recommendations and style guide to the Project Steering Group via Zoom. Feedback was collated and the document has been finalised including both recommendations and style guide and distributed to the steering group. The project has been delivered on budget and ahead of time due to the timely input of the PSG and the quality of the consultant's work.

8. STRATEGIC PROJECTS

8.1. Lake Eildon Masterplan

The Lake Eildon Masterplan project is nearing completion. The project aims to develop a masterplan that establishes a shared vision for the activation of Lake Eildon, identifying priority tourism and recreation developments that optimise economic outcomes for the destination.

Phase 1 of the project saw the delivery of an Economic Impact Assessment to quantify the value Lake Eildon tourism adds to the region. The total economic impact of tourism and recreation within the Lake Eildon region was estimated at \$486 million in output and 2,548 jobs to the Hume region.

In Quarter 2 a process of community and stakeholder consultation was undertaken to understand the challenges and opportunities facing the project and to determine the priority projects to work to full business cases.

In Quarter 3 architectural consultants Cumulus Inc visited the region to progress the conceptual work behind the plan and develop the blue-sky thinking required as part of the brief. Of the ten projects the project steering group (PSG) was originally presented, four were chosen to be worked to full business case.

The Draft Final Masterplan including four Businesses Cases was presented to the PSG and is currently open for community consultation. The Final Masterplan is due on 29 May 2020.

The identified Businesses Cases are:

- Premier Nature-Based Precincts at Mt Pinniger (Eildon) and Fry Bay (Goughs Bay)
- Skyline Road Tourist Precinct
- Large-scale Accommodation Investment in Goughs Bay and Eildon
- Sewerage System Investment

8.2. Great Victorian Rail Trail Strategic Development Plan

The Great Victorian Rail Trail is one of the longest trails of its kind in the country, and has the potential to become a signature cycle product for the region. However, strategic guidance is required to develop, activate and promote the offering in a way that establishes it as an engaging tourism experience.

To this effect, TNE has developed the Great Victorian Rail Trail Strategic Development Plan that looks to address the trail's weaknesses, leverages its strengths and provides a clear framework for strategic and sustained growth. This work was completed in the second quarter, with TNE presenting the final document and key recommendations to Mansfield, Murrindindi and Mitchell Shire councillors, which was well received.

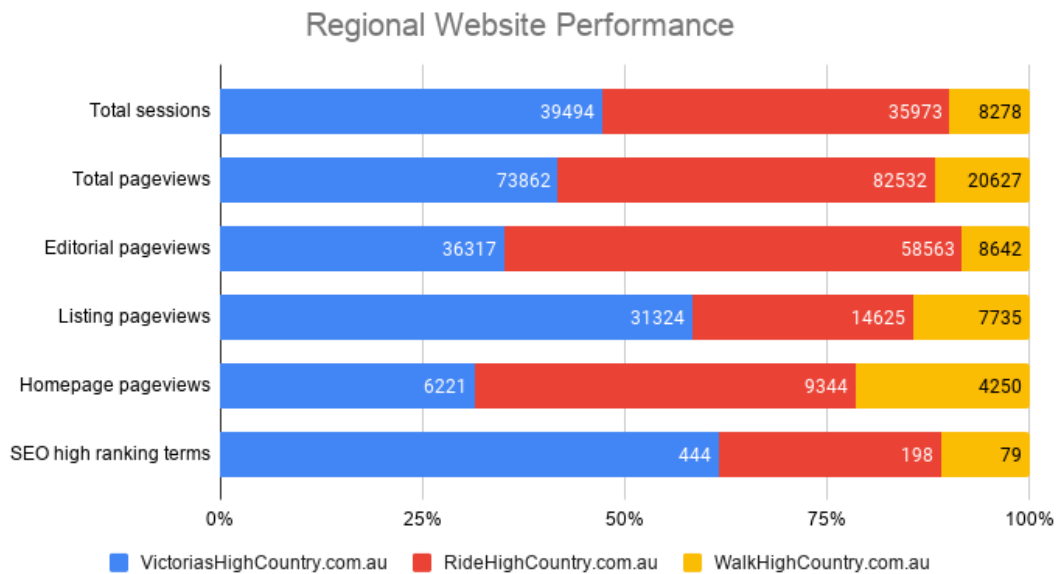
TNE is now supporting these Councils and has begun developing an industry toolkit, to be delivered in the fourth quarter, to assist with effective trail promotion. Work will also commence on developing templates to form the basis of a new trail MoU, and identifying current funding opportunities for implementation of the proposed trail enhancements.

8.3. Workforce Attraction/Retention

The 2019 Workforce attraction and retention project identified 9 key causes of staff shortages, labour shortages and high turnover. These have been pulled together into an action plan which will be used as a basis to seek funding and support from within TNE and associated agencies.

9. DIGITAL ASSETS AND PROGRAMS

9.1. Tourism North East pillar websites

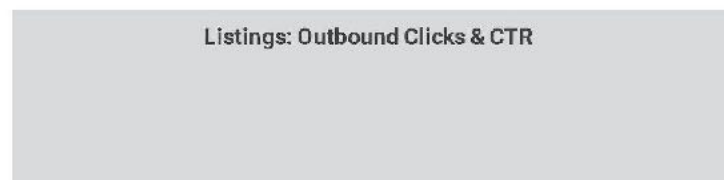
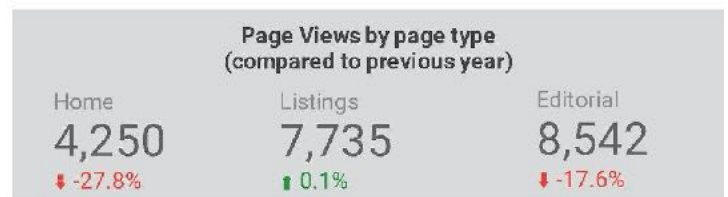
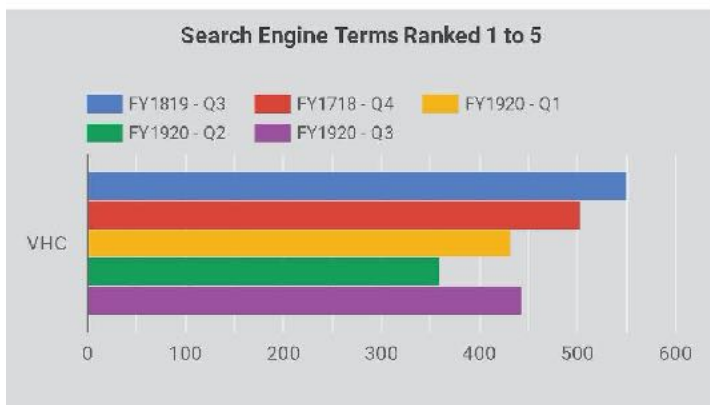
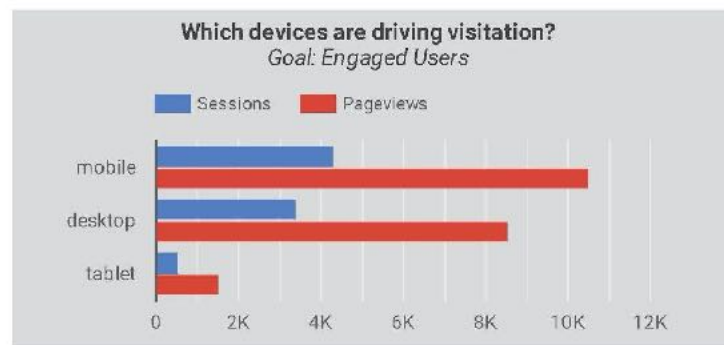
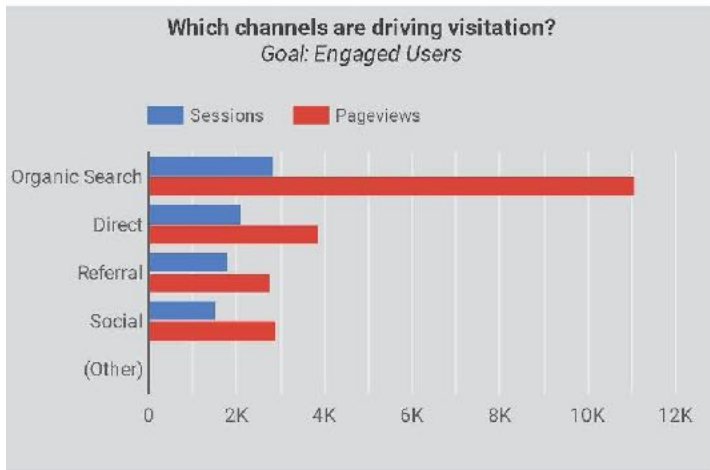
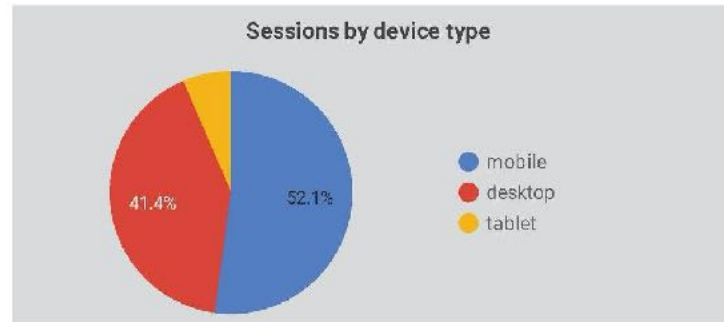


This quarter is the first where the Feast High Country content has been hosted on VictoriasHighCountry.com.au. Therefore summary information will show a combined set of results as per the chart above. This change has resulted in a total update of content under the Food & Beverage sections of the site and a 'lite' refresh of the overall VictoriasHighCountry.com.au look & feel.

As a result of quarterly conditions, the visitor profiles to all websites is inconsistent with the long term profile, as people browsed websites seeking bushfire related content. As a result lower levels of onsite engagement was observed across destination and pillar website

Digital Dashboard - Q3 2019-20

victoriashighcountry.com.au



Top 10 pages

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Walks around Mansfield + Mt Buller Walk Hig...	1,468
2. High Country Walks Walk High Country, Vict...	958
3. Browse All Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	754
4. Wildemess Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	717
5. Walks around Dinner Plain & Mt Hotham Wal...	510
6. Walks around Beechworth Walk High Countr...	440
7. Walks around Falls Creek Walk High Country,...	430
8. Nature Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	407
9. Walks around Mt Beauty Walk High Country, ...	378
10. Walks around Bright Walk High Country, Vict...	355

Top 10 listings

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Australian Alps Walking Track - Mt Hotham to...	276
2. Beechworth Gorge Walk - Walk High Country	242
3. Delatite River Trail - Walk High Country	215
4. Craig's Hut Walk - Walk High Country	184
5. Falls to Hotham Alpine Crossing - Walk High ...	177
6. Bindaree Falls - Walk High Country	153
7. Howqua River Walk - Walk High Country	150
8. Staircase Spur - Mt Bogong - Walk High Country	124
9. Mt Stirling Summit Interpretive Loop - Walk Hi...	124
10. Eskdale Spur - Walk High Country	119

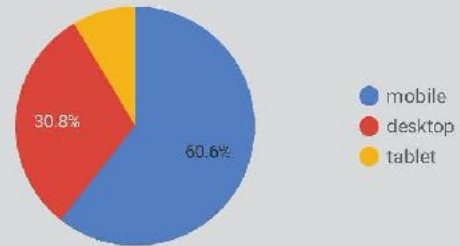
Digital Dashboard - Q3 2019-2020

ridehighcountry.com.au

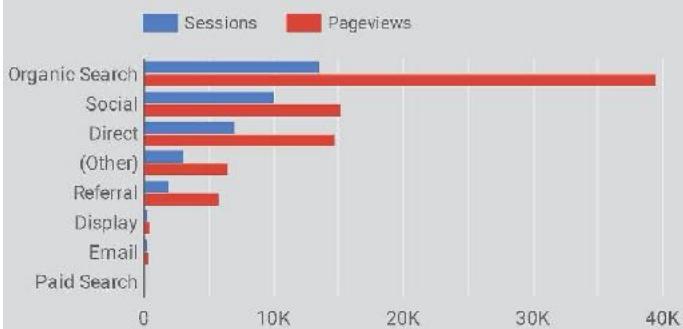
Audience and Engagement (compared to previous year)

Sessions **36.0K** ↓ -49.0%
 Pageviews **82.5K** ↓ -56.2%
 Pages / Session **2.3** ↓ -14.2%

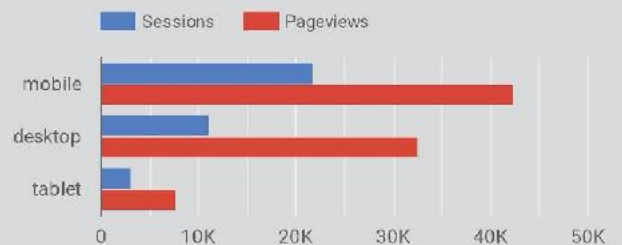
Sessions by device type



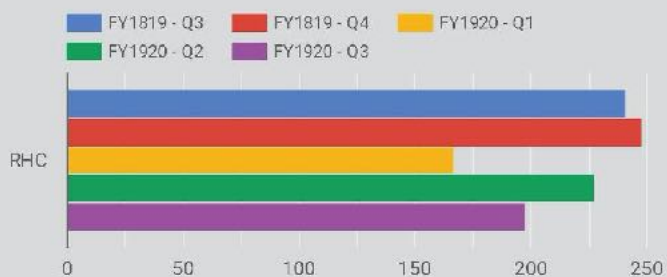
Which channels are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



Which devices are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



Search Engine Terms Ranked 1 to 5



Page Views by page type (compared to previous year)

Home **9,344** ↓ -45.3%
 Listings **14,740** ↓ -53.2%
 Editorial **57,924** ↓ -58.5%

Listings: Outbound Clicks & CTR

Top 10 pages

Rank	Site Path	Pageviews
1.	/rail-trails/	20,682
2.	/mountain-biking/	9,867
3.	/7-peaks/	8,923
4.	/destinations/	6,621
5.	/road-rides/	3,621
6.	/gravel/	1,353
7.	/road-rides-old/	1,089
8.	/bike-services/	737
9.	/gravel-rides-highlights/	507
10.	/ride-high-country-preferred/	309

Top 10 listings

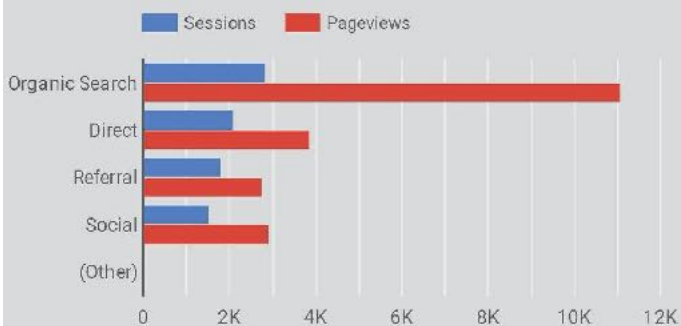
Rank	Page Title	Pageviews
1.	7 Peaks Ride - Dinner Plain - Ride High Country	608
2.	7 Peaks Ride Mount Buffalo Ride High Coun...	607
3.	7 Peaks Ride - Mt Baw Baw - Ride High Country	582
4.	7 Peaks Ride - Lake Mountain - Ride High Cou...	547
5.	Murray to Mountains Beechworth to Everton ...	547
6.	7 Peaks Ride Hotham Ride High Country R...	539
7.	7 Peaks Ride Mt Buller Ride High Country R...	533
8.	7 Peaks Ride Falls Creek Ride High Country ...	502
9.	2020 Mountain Bike Australia National Cham...	496
10.	Murray to Mountains Rutherglen to Wahguny...	439

Digital Dashboard - Q3 2019-20 feasthighcountry.com.au

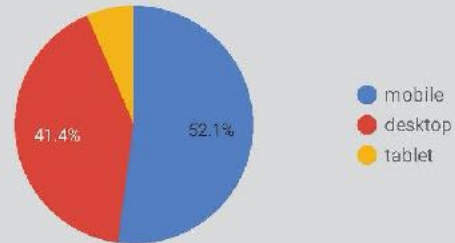
Audience and Engagement (compared to previous year)

Sessions **8.3K** ↑ 3.3%
 Pageviews **20.6K** ↓ -14.1%
 Pages / Session **2.5** ↓ -16.8%

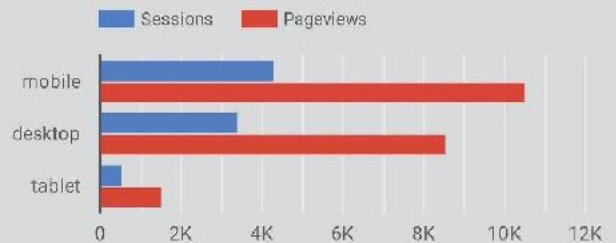
Which channels are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



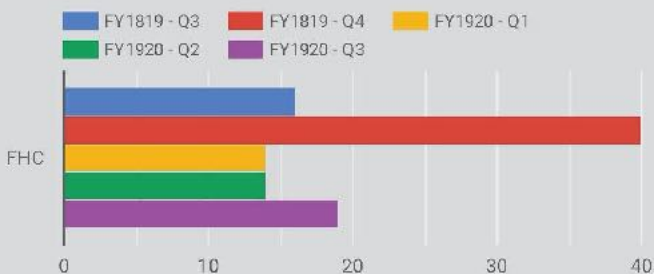
Sessions by device type



Which devices are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



Search Engine Terms Ranked 1 to 5



Page Views by page type (compared to previous year)

Home **4,250** ↓ -27.8%
 Listings **7,735** ↑ 0.1%
 Editorial **8,542** ↓ -17.6%

Listings: Outbound Clicks & CTR

Top 10 pages

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Walks around Mansfield + Mt Buller Walk Hig...	1,468
2. High Country Walks Walk High Country, Vict...	958
3. Browse All Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	754
4. Wildemess Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	717
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8. Staircase Spur - Mt Bogong - Walk High Country	124
9. Mt Stirling Summit Interpretive Loop - Walk Hi...	124
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Digital Dashboard - Q3 2019-20

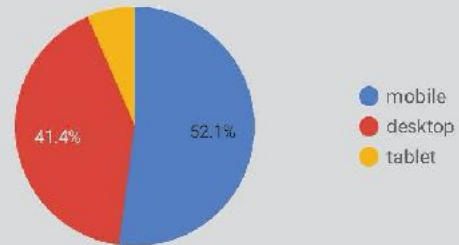
walkhighcountry.com.au



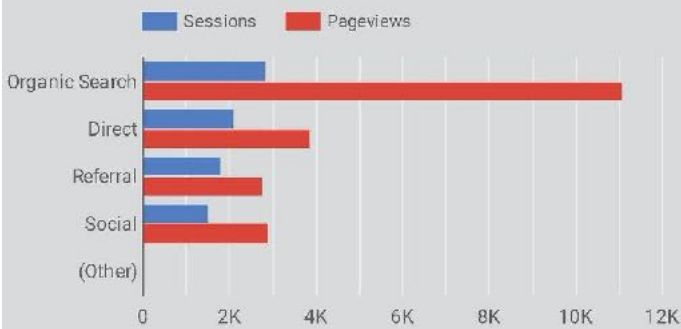
Audience and Engagement (compared to previous year)

Sessions	Pageviews	Pages / Session
8.3K	20.6K	2.5
↑ 3.3%	↓ -14.1%	↓ -16.8%

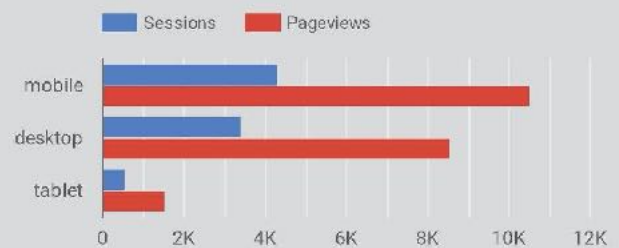
Sessions by device type



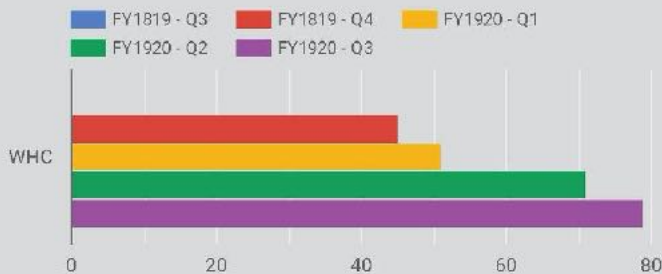
Which channels are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



Which devices are driving visitation? Goal: Engaged Users



Search Engine Terms Ranked 1 to 5



Page Views by page type (compared to previous year)

Home	Listings	Editorial
4,250	7,735	8,542
↓ -27.8%	↑ 0.1%	↓ -17.6%

Listings: Outbound Clicks & CTR

Top 10 pages

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Walks around Mansfield + Mt Buller Walk Hig...	1,468
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3. Browse All Walks Walk High Country, Victoria	754
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9.2. Tourism North East pillar social media channels

During quarter 3, as with all TNE programs, social content and messaging were dealt the double blow of bushfires and COVID 19.

- As a result of the bushfire crisis due to the State of Emergency requirements social media was dormant for period
- During the recovery phase the channels worked overtime delivering on the recovery message (for visitors to return to the region) during February/March,
- When COVID-19 restrictions were announced, all channels reduced messaging to maintain brand awareness.

Summary results

FACEBOOK	Followers	Q3 Growth	Reach	vs Q2	Av Engagement (on Reach)	vs Q2
See High Country	16,268	13.68%	1,129,539	399.77%	10.05%	17.54 %
Ride High Country	20,996	9.76%	3,931,881	62.22%	5.59%	-0.71 %
Feast High Country	2,745	10.51%	133,964	106.25%	12.19%	47.04 %
Walk High Country	4,016	8.54%	144,039	-63.39%	11.69%	74.48 %

Instagram	Followers	Q3 Growth	Reach	vs Q2	Av Engagement (on Reach)	vs Q2
@seehighcountry	26,703	9.08%	815,556	98.27%	7.50%	6.84%
@ridehighcountry	9,783	16.27%	2,686,528	165.04%	4.86%	-2.21 %
@feasthighcountry	1,724	17.04%	46,656	21.26%	7.23%	9.21%
@walkhighcountry	7,086	11.64%	71,835	-63.74%	8.09%	10.52 %

Ride High Country is with Jay Vine in Mansfield, Victoria. ***
 Published by James Davison [?] · February 9 · 🌐

Has watching the Herald Sun Tour ignited your aspirations to ride up mountains?

You can do it! Challenge yourself on the 7 Peaks of the spectacular High Country, seven beautiful mountain ascents to Victoria's alpine resorts. If you ride all seven before 27 April 2020, you can claim a 7 Peaks Champion's Jersey by MAAP: <https://www.ridehighcountry.com.au/7-peaks/>

Photos by Con Chronis during Stage 4 of the 2020 Jayco Herald Sun Tour, Mansfield to Mt Buller.






17,814 People Reached **1,838** Engagements [Boost Again](#)

Boosted on Feb 9, 2020 By James Davison Completed

People Reached	14.4K	Post Engagement	933
----------------	--------------	-----------------	------------

[View Results](#)

👍❤️👎 335 9 Comments 7 Shares



ridehighcountry · Following Mansfield, Victoria ...

ridehighcountry Too three reasons to bring your road bike to Victoria's High Country: long quiet country roads, big mountain climbs, epic views!
 via @oliverkolo

#ridehighcountry #roadcycling #mansfieldmtbuller #visitvictoria #holidayherethisyear

👍❤️👎 Liked by feasthighcountry and 453 others

MARCH 8 Post

Feast High Country is 😄 feeling excited at Bos Taurus. ***
 Published by Krysten Clifton [?] · February 22 · Mansfield, VIC · 🌐

If you're a carnivore at heart, Bos Taurus in Mansfield is your Graceland 🍖

The brainchild of owner operators Chelton Crow and Jane Denny, Bos Taurus is Mansfield's first authentic steakhouse style bistro, bar and grill AND it showcases the areas only artisan butchery. With everything from steamed bao buns to beef rump curry and, of course, your classic steaks cooked to perfection, you're spoiled for choice! All you need to do now is nab pole position on the rooftop deck...



1,351 People Reached **218** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍❤️👎 38 3 Comments 2 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share Feast ▼



walkhighcountry • Following
Mt Timbertop Summit

walkhighcountry Some of the walks in the High Country are really tough... much steeper than expected, but the reward is always spectacular and worth the climb. The Mt Timbertop summit track in the @visitmansfieldmtbuller region is one of those challenging but gratifying hikes.

Via @kezbear14

#walkhighcountry #mansfieldmtbuller #mttimbertop #hiking #yourhappyspace

18w

kezbear14 Thank you for sharing my post. It is a tough climb but



Liked by feasthighcountry and 509 others

DEC 20, 2019

Add a comment...

Post

Walk High Country is in Mansfield, Victoria.
Published by James Davidson [P] · February 27 ·

The perfect place for an evening stroll in the heart of Visit Mansfield Mt Buller is the Mansfield Botanic Park, which is open at all times and offers barbecue facilities, picnic shelters, a fitness station, a playground and toilets.

Borderd by Ford's Creek, the gardens are a beautiful mix of native and introduced species. Close to the centre of the Mansfield township, it's a popular location for walkers and runners and the park is also a top spot for a game of kick-to-kick with the kids.

Also, dogs are also allowed to run off-leash within the gardens when accompanied by an owner: <https://www.walkhighcountry.com.au/.../mansfield-botanic-par.../>



1,601
People Reached

83
Engagements

Boost Post

41

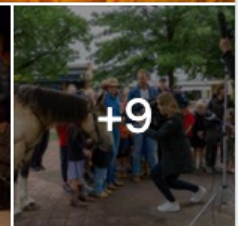
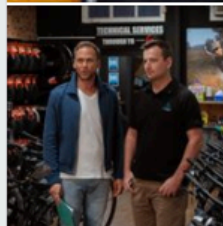
3 Comments 1 Share

See High Country is with Shannon Rademaker and 3 others in Mansfield, Victoria.

Published by James Davidson [P] · February 19 ·

Did you catch the Visit Mansfield Mt Buller community on The TODAY Show this morning?

We'll be doing it all again from bushfire-struck Corryong on Thursday morning from 5:30am to 9:30am! Tune in to TODAY and see why you should visit the Upper Murray as soon as you can...



4,127
People Reached

797
Engagements

Boost Post

62

7 Shares



seehighcountry
Merrijig

seehighcountry A little summer rain in beautiful #merrijig is always welcome ❤️
If you're looking for somewhere new to explore with your #emptyesky this weekend, why not head to the #mansfield area? Only 2.5 hours from Melbourne you'll discover dazzling views of #mtbuller, a fantastic place for a swim at #lakeeildon, delicious coffee at @mansfieldcoffee.merchant, a funky little restaurant called @thefields3722 and much more (including a zoo! @MansfieldZoo!)
📍 @merrijignic
#seehighcountry #visitmelbourne #holidayherethisyear

11w



Liked by **murmelifalls creek** and **910 others**

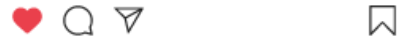
FEBRUARY 7

Add a comment... [Post](#)



feasthighcountry • Following
The Timber Yard

feasthighcountry From the 95 businesses who were a part of the #highcountrycomeback event on Sunday, thank you - from the bottom of our hearts ❤️🙏. You have helped these businesses recover some of what has been lost and given them hope they'll see you again soon. The High Country Comeback 2020 event was a huge success thanks to the 6k generous Melbournians who spend their Sunday feasting and stocking up on craft beverages, #farmtotable foods and even booked everything from tranquil accommodation to adventure packages. We estimate you spent roughly \$500,000 and have contributed over \$10,500 to our North East 🇺🇸 CFA houses and 🐾 wildlife



Liked by **greatvictorianrailtrail** and **88 others**

FEBRUARY 3

Add a comment... [Post](#)

WALK HIGH COUNTRY SOCIAL DASHBOARD Q3 2019-2020

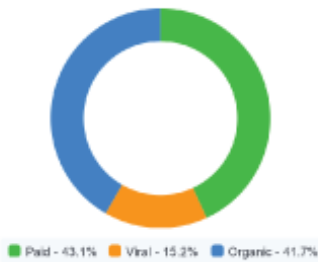


f facebook: Followers = 4,016 (+8.5%) Engagement = 11.7% Reach = 144k

Facebook Page Reach:

<p>165.2k Impressions ↓ -64.23%</p>	<p>144k Reach ↓ -83.77%</p>	
<p>2.4k Average Impressions per post ↓ -32.24%</p>	<p>2.4k Average reach per post ↓ -21.06%</p>	<p>64.82% Average reach rate by post ↓ -55.64%</p>

Reach distribution by source



Facebook Ads and Paid Content:

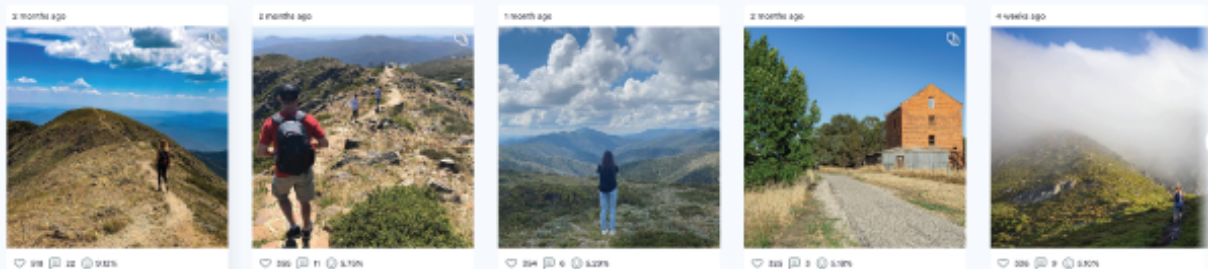
Paid Content Spend	
Spend	\$495.48
Cost per Engagement	\$0.20
Avg Cost per Result	\$0.23
Total Reach	69,599
Total Engagements	2,372
Link Clicks	2,173
CRT (per impressions)	3.17%

i instagram: Followers = 7,086 (+11.6%) Engagement = 8.1% Reach = 71.9k

Instagram Page Reach

<p>93.5k Impressions ↓ -66.30%</p>	<p>71.9k Reach ↓ -43.70%</p>	
<p>4.1k Average Impressions per post ↓ -78.85%</p>	<p>3.6k Average reach per post ↓ -12.81%</p>	<p>52.48% Average reach rate by post ↓ -11.76%</p>

Most engaging media



RIDE HIGH COUNTRY SOCIAL DASHBOARD Q3 2019-2020



f facebook: Followers = 20,660 (+9.8%) Engagement = 5.6% Reach = 3.9mil

Facebook Page Reach:

4.2M
Impressions
↑ 45.38%

3.9M
Reach
↑ 59.35%

15.4k
Average impressions per post
↑ 87.45%

12.2k
Average reach per post
↑ 82.80%

79.36%
Average reach rate by post
↑ 75.82%

Reach distribution by source



Facebook Ads and Paid Content:

Paid Content Spend	
Spend	\$9,615.82
Cost per Engagement	\$0.05
Avg Cost per Result	\$0.46
Total Reach	1,364,738
Total Engagements	211,821
Link Clicks	14,772
CRT (per impressions)	1.07%

i instagram: Followers = 9783 (+16.3%) Engagement = 4.9% Reach = 2.7mil

Instagram Page Reach & Engagement

3.3M
Impressions
↑ 16.29%

2.7M
Reach
↑ 163.86%

21.4k
Average impressions per post
↑ 78.6%

17.6k
Average reach per post
↑ 73.76%

191.81%
Average reach rate by post
↑ 65.53%

Most Engagement on Reach

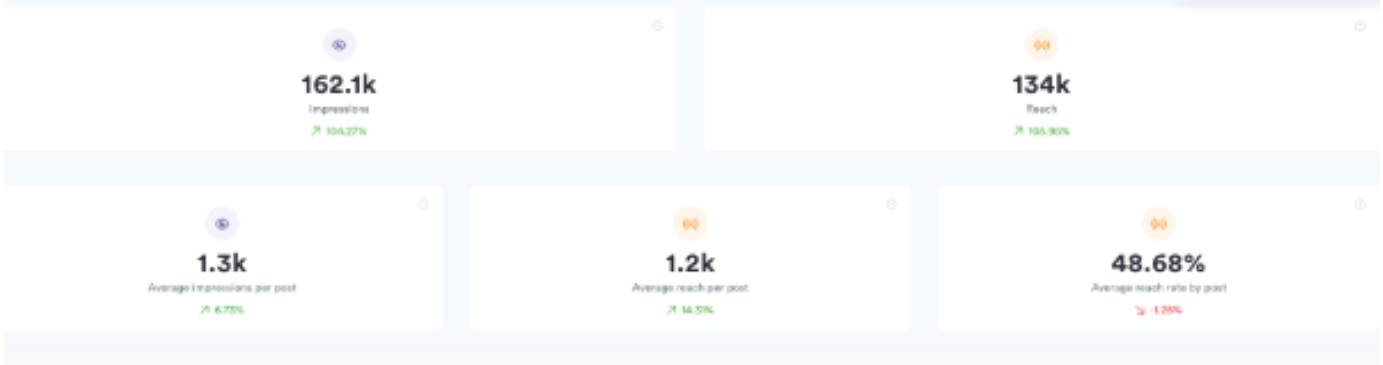
- 2 months ago: Coach House Vintage and Cafe
- 2 months ago: Mountain biking jump
- 2 months ago: #RollOnBack
- 2 months ago: Path through trees
- 1 month ago: Person on a bike in a field

FEAST HIGH COUNTRY SOCIAL DASHBOARD Q3 2019-2020

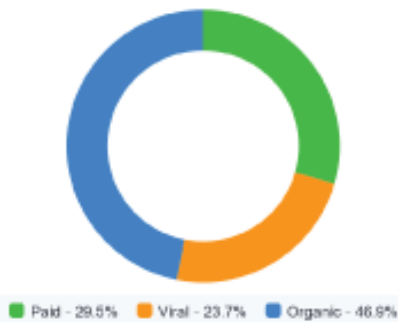


f facebook: Followers = 2,745 (+10.5%) Engagement = 12.2% Reach = 134k

Facebook Page Reach:



Reach distribution by source



Facebook Ads and Paid Content:

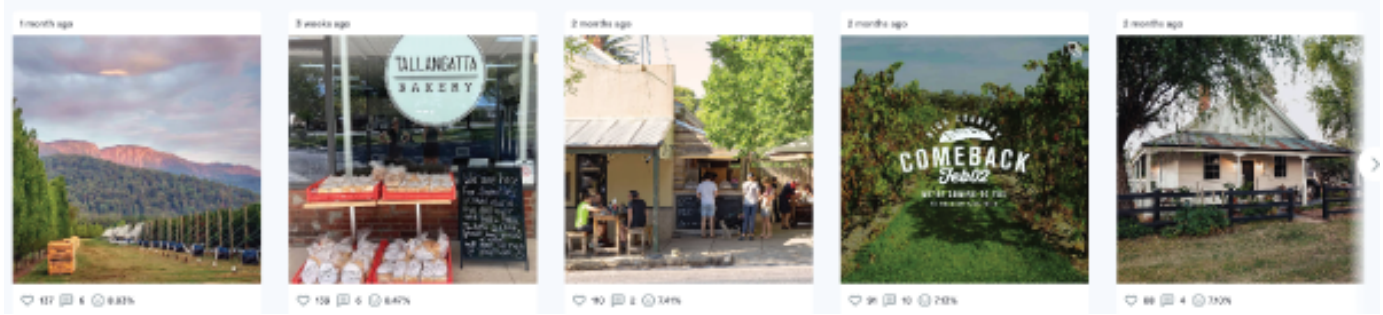
Paid Content Spend	
Spend	\$294.20
Cost per Engagement	\$0.04
Avg Cost per Result	\$0.14
Total Reach	32,848
Total Engagements	6945
Link Clicks	736
CRT (per impressions)	5.79%

i instagram: Followers = 1,724 (+17%) Engagement = 7.2% Reach = 46.7k

Instagram Page Reach



Most engaging media



SEE HIGH COUNTRY SOCIAL DASHBOARD Q3 2019-2020



facebook: Followers = 16,268 (+13.7%) Engagement = 10% Reach = 1.1mil

Facebook Page Reach:

1.3M
Impressions
↑ 435.44%

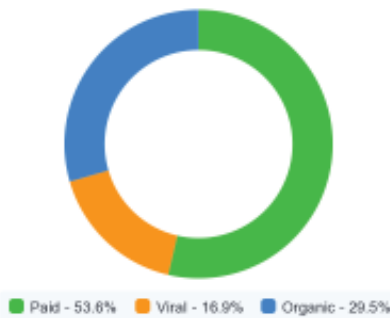
1.2M
Reach
↑ 423.80%

7.5k
Average impressions per post
↑ 0.59%

7k
Average reach per post
↑ 46.77%

50.02%
Average reach rate by post
↑ 40.83%

Reach distribution by source



Facebook Ads and Paid Content:

Paid Content Spend	
Spend	\$804.24
Cost per Engagement	\$0.04
Avg Cost per Result	\$0.38
Total Reach	221,377
Total Engagements	22,957
Link Clicks	3,522
CRT (per impressions)	2.02%



instagram: Followers = 26,703 (+9.1%) Engagement = 7.5% Reach = 816k

Instagram Page Reach

1.2M
Impressions
↑ 124.30%

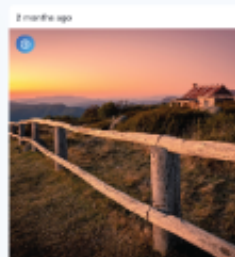
815.6k
Reach
↑ 99.92%

11.8k
Average impressions per post

10.5k
Average reach per post

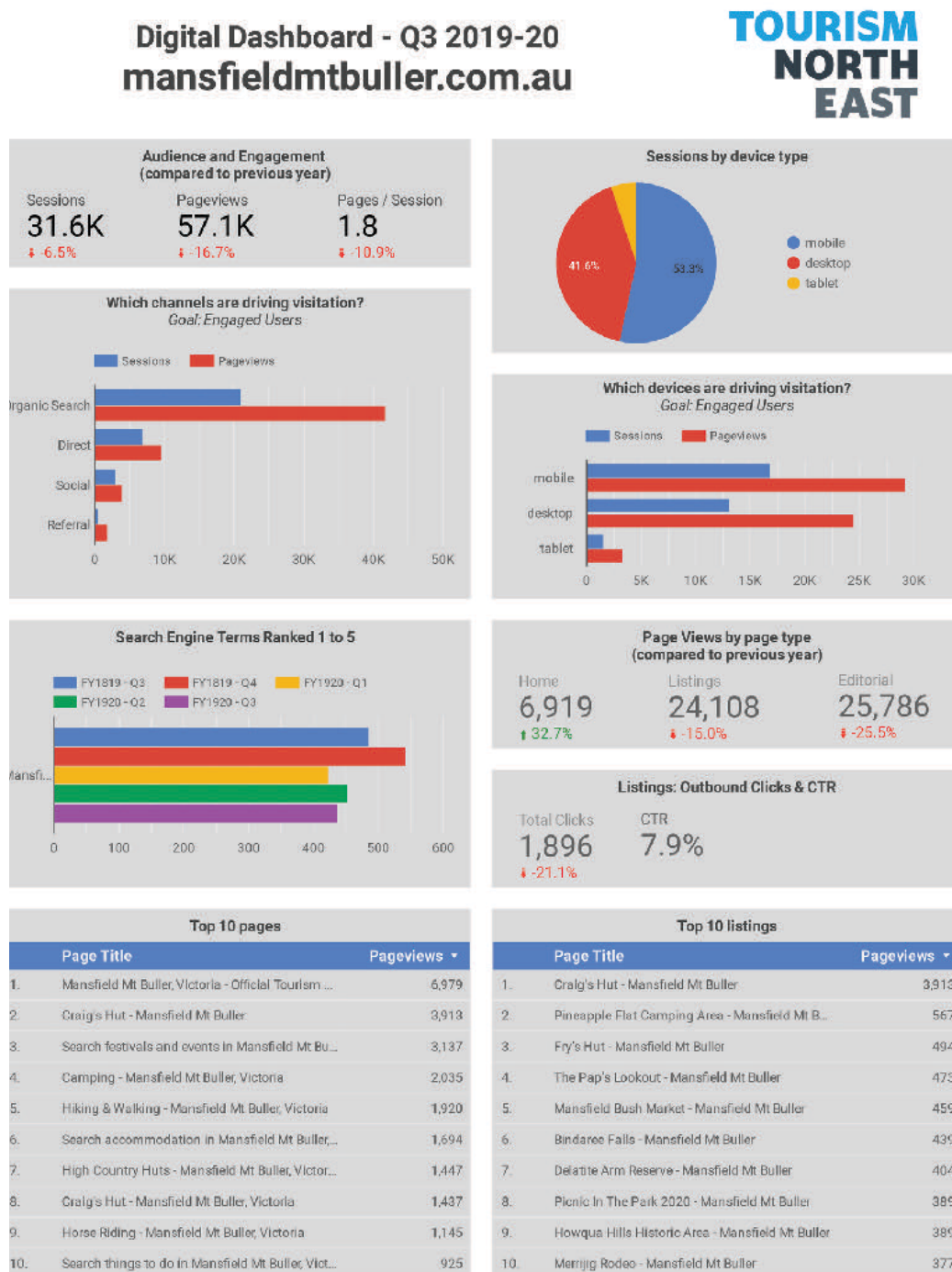
40.79%
Average reach rate by post

Most engaging media



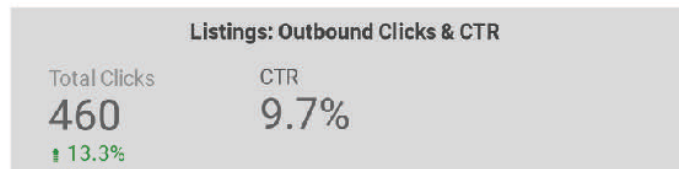
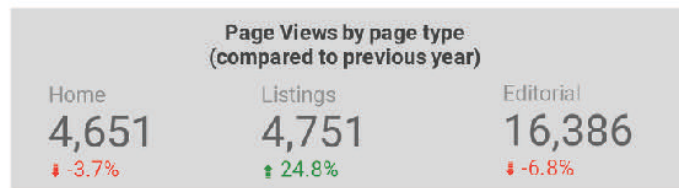
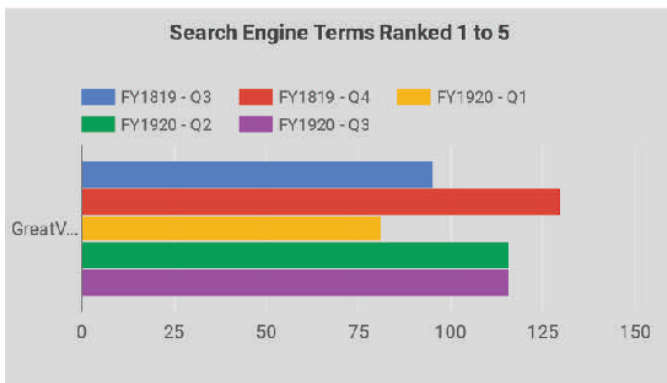
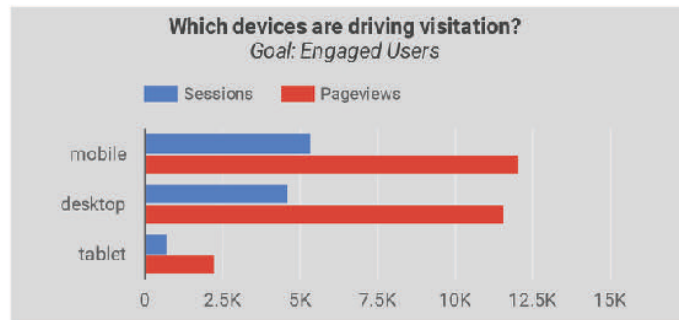
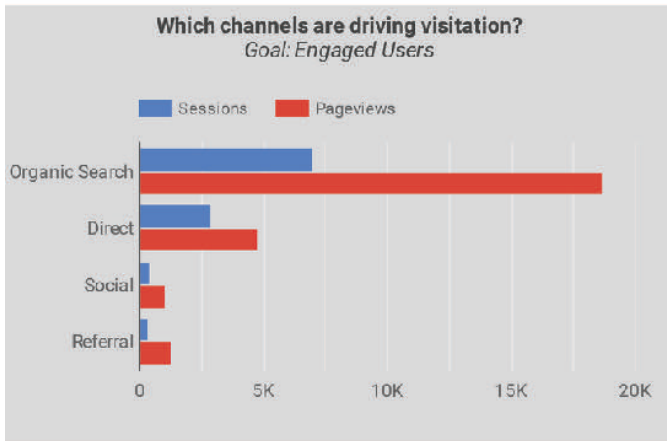
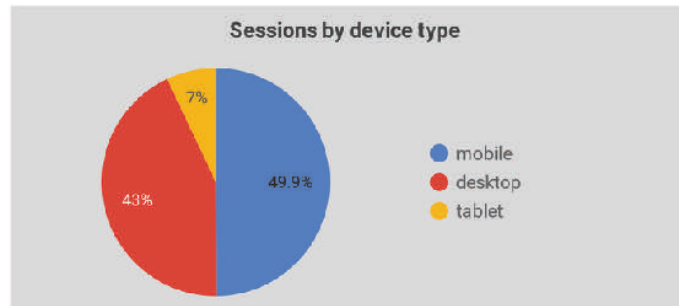
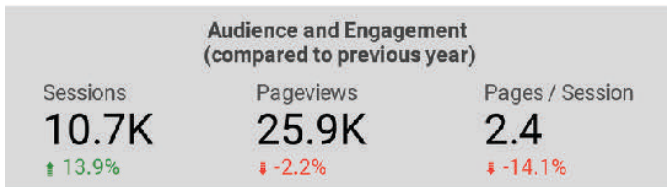
9.3. Destination Websites - individual reports

TNE manages the website site content for the MansfieldMtBuller.com.au and GreatVictorianRailTrail.com.au websites on behalf of the shire. Due to the external conditions over the quarter overall visitation and engagement with tourism based sites was flat compared to prior quarters. During the quarter site messaging was adapted based on regional requirements along with changed to event promotions. Given the reduction in updates of the consumer facing content a series of content maintenance and optimisation activities were undertaken to support future site performance.



Digital Dashboard - Q3 2019-20

greatvictorianrailtrail.com.au



Top 10 pages

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Trail Map, Distance and Gradient - Great Victor...	4,708
2. Home - Great Victorian Rail Trail	4,703
3. Cycling the Trail - Great Victorian Rail Trail	2,606
4. Accommodation Search - Great Victorian Rail ...	1,850
5. Cheviot Tunnel - Great Victorian Rail Trail	1,049
6. Popular Short Rides - Great Victorian Rail Trail	964
7. Walking the Trail - Great Victorian Rail Trail	631
8. Yea - Great Victorian Rail Trail	569
9. Mansfield - Great Victorian Rail Trail	487
10. See & Do Search - Great Victorian Rail Trail	487

Top 10 listings

Page Title	Pageviews
1. Cheviot Tunnel - Great Victorian Rail Trail	1,049
2. Horseshoe Lagoon Flora and Fauna Reserve - ...	322
3. CycleDindi 20 - Great Victorian Rail Trail	268
4. Yea Riverside Caravan Park - Great Victorian R...	124
5. All Terrain Cycles - Great Victorian Rail Trail	120
6. Cheviot Glen Cottages - Great Victorian Rail Tr...	101
7. Yea Station - Great Victorian Rail Trail	100
8. Tallarook Station - Great Victorian Rail Trail	97
9. Yea Peppercom Hotel - Great Victorian Rail Trail	96
10. Yea Railway Market - Great Victorian Rail Trail	96

9.4. Destination social media channels

9.4.1. Visit Mansfield Mt Buller



visitmansfieldmtbuller
Frys Hut

visitmansfieldmtbuller Master Bushman, Fred Fry, built his home in the early 1940s - #fryshut, as well as Jamieson Hut, Ritchie's Hut, Gardiner's Hut and Noonan's. He was a legend, a master bushman, fisherman, stockman and (obviously) hut builder. He loved his beautiful home in the Howqua area - how could you not! Visit Fry's Hut by taking the 1.5 hour

Liked by **dbalpine** and **144 others**

FEBRUARY 16

Add a comment... Post

Visit Mansfield Mt Buller is 😊 feeling relaxed at Wild Fauna. ...
Published by Krysten Clifton [?] · February 11 · Merrig, VIC 🌐

Eco-friendly, luxury accommodation in a pocket of the world so peaceful you're bound to see a healthy array of Australian wildlife, both great and small ❤️

Wild Fauna is located in Merrig - just a six minute drive from the base of Mt Stirling and Mt Buffalo for hiking and mountain biking, a short walk to the Delatite River for fishing or a dip on a hot day, or 40 minutes drive to Lake Eildon for water sports and boating.

For those truly wishing to 'get away from it all,' this is your ticket to paradise.




967 People Reached **257** Engagements [Boost Post](#)

👍❤️👏 55 5 Comments

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🌐

- Most Relevant ▾
-  Comment as Visit Mansfield Mt Buller 😊📷📺📹
 -  **Neve Rodger Rhona Burr** my oh my 🍷👑👑
Love · Reply · Message · 10w 🗨️ 2
 -  **Tessa Messa** Froge Kilgour next trip 🍷👏👏
Like · Reply · Message · 10w
↳ 2 Replies

9.4.2. Great Victorian Rail Trail




Great Victorian Rail Trail Official

Published by James Davidson (3) · March 12 · Mansfield · 🌐

...

Autumn is here, the landscape is looking beautiful and colourful, the air is fresh, the towns are quiet and peaceful... there's no better time to come and ride the Great Victorian Rail Trail!

Plan your rail trail trip now and enjoy all the other brilliant cycling experiences on offer around the Visit Mansfield Mt Buller region: <https://www.mansfieldmtbuller.com.au/>



WWW.GREATVICTORIANRAILTRAIL.COM.AU

Learn More

No Better Time to ride in Mansfield

20,020

People Reached

953

Engagements

Boost Again

Boosted on Mar 12, 2020
By James Davidson

Completed

People Reached **16.4K**

ThruPlays **9.4K**

[View Results](#)


👍 103

💬 24 Comments 12 Shares



 **greatvictorianrailtrail** • Following ...

Great Victorian Rail Trail

 **greatvictorianrailtrail** #RollOnBack for a ride on the Great Victorian Rail Trail this autumn. After a devastating start to the year, the towns and villages along the Rail Trail need your support: by visiting them during the beautiful autumn season. So, gather your family and your bikes to ride this truly great and historic trail through the heart of Victoria.

#greatvictorianrailtrail
#ridehighcountry #visitvictoria
#holidayherethisyear

EW

 **railtrailsaustralia** #ride2recover

❤️ 💬 🚩
🔖

 Liked by feasthighcountry and 289 others

FEBRLARY 28

Add a comment... Post