



A U S T R A L I A N
REGIONAL
TOURISM
L T D

2025 - 2028

STRATEGIC PLAN



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2025 marks the first year of delivering on the newly developed Australian Regional Tourism Strategic Plan 2025-2028.

We now have a strategic framework that outlines a roadmap to achieve ART's mission and key pillars of advocacy, collaboration and regional empowerment for the next three years, and with that comes eight aligned projects with recommended actions for implementation.



But while the ART Strategic Plan is a blueprint for how we, as an entity, can collectively deliver on our vision to be the leading authority on regional tourism in Australia, this Annual Action Plan specifically outlines our steps to achieve our core business goals and strategic priorities.

Eight tourism priority issues will be a focus for national level advocacy, and steering a coordinated approach to shape solutions is integral in addressing these issues to make a significant contribution to the growth of regional tourism.

We will look to build and nurture partnerships among stakeholders to foster unity and strengthen the regional tourism industry through initiatives such as our ART Ambassador program, ART Convention, Local Government programs, RTO working group, and agritourism development.

And finally, we will focus on strengthening regional capabilities and support sustainable growth to boost tourism and build industry resilience through projects such as The Tourism Hub, ART Convention, and ongoing support to our local governments and regional tourism organisations.

It's going to be a busy three years ahead, but this strategic plan sets us up to provide the support required to help our members drive regional visitor economy success through supporting and improving their tourism communities.



Joel Chadwick

Chair

Australian Regional Tourism

In 2022, Australian tourism contributed \$143b to our economy. Tourism is one of Australia's largest export industries, employing nearly 670,000 people across 330,000 businesses. In regional Australia, there are 100,000 tourism-related businesses, and around 57 cents in every visitor dollar is spent in regional areas (year ending September 2022). Tourism is vital to many regional communities around Australia, and it is important that we continue to advocate for the success of the industry.

Australian Regional Tourism (ART) is a membership based organisation bringing together State and Federal Government to partner with local councils and industry, and deliver best practice solutions for regional tourism development. ART is a profit-for-purpose organisation with all revenue reinvested to support the regional tourism industry.

ART is the peak body that represents regional tourism practitioners and acts as a hub for collaboration, cooperation, idea generation, knowledge sharing, networking and more. On behalf of its members, ART promotes sustainable regional development through regionally focused research, destination management planning, product development, marketing and the development of skilled human resources.

Our vision

To be the leading authority on regional tourism in Australia.

Our mission

To drive regional visitor economy success through supporting and improving tourism communities.

Our core business

- To be a known and respected leader and authority to both industry and government through influence of positive policy that improves the regional tourism environment.
- To be a facilitator of conversations and a connector of resources, people and organisations through building community.
- To create and share market intelligence that empowers better regional tourism decision-making.





KEY Pillars



1. Advocacy

Elevate the national regional tourism priorities to shape policies that support and develop the visitor economy.

Image: Tourism Australia

2. Collaboration

Build and nurture partnerships among stakeholders to foster unity and strengthen the regional tourism industry.

Image: Tourism Australia

3. Regional Empowerment

Strengthen regional capabilities and support sustainable growth to boost tourism and build industry resilience.

Image: Tourism Australia



NATIONAL REGIONAL TOURISM PRIORITIES

ART is the unified industry voice for regional tourism advocacy and enables a collaborative approach to industry development and shared regional challenges. ART does this in partnership with State and Territory tourism organisations and members, where ART meets regularly with Ministers and leaders to bring regional tourism issues to the centre of government decision making.

The following tourism priority issues will be a focus for national level advocacy, and steering a coordinated approach to seek solutions is integral in addressing these issues to make a significant contribution to the growth of regional tourism and communities.

ART's advocacy strategy is centred around the following **Agreed National Regional Tourism Priorities**:

Strategic Advice

ART plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the voices and needs of regional areas are heard and addressed in national tourism policy.

By advocating for policies that reflect the diverse challenges and opportunities specific to regional tourism, ART can ensure regional tourism destinations are properly represented. This includes providing strategic advice on funding, and ensuring government focus remains inclusive and not city-centric.

Regional Data

Accurate, timely and affordable data is required to provide a clear understanding of visitor demographics and behaviours in regions. The following aspects are crucial to ensure the most relevant data is being collected.

- *Data availability* ensures that there is enough reliable and timely data available for all regions, not just major cities and tourist hotspots.
- *Data quality* is crucial for understanding granular visitor demographics, behaviours, and preferences. For example, expanding the dataset to include accommodation properties with less than 10 rooms to be more reflective of the regional tourism market.
- *Access to affordable data* ensures stakeholders such as regional tourism boards, local businesses, and policymakers can facilitate informed decision-making.
- *Integrating data* from various sources (e.g., NVS/IVS and private data services) to create a more comprehensive picture of regional tourism trends.

Sustainability & Accessibility

Sustainability has been identified as a top priority for the regions. The process for destinations to become certified is expensive and time consuming. As several organisations are actively engaged in promoting sustainability within this space, ART aims to support efforts to streamline the process by aligning with established programs where possible.

Accessibility in tourism remains a critical focus for ART, spanning across key aspects such as accessible infrastructure, inclusive services and policy and standards, achieved through collaboration between government and key stakeholders.

Insurance

Factors such as remote locations, exposure to environmental risks, and seasonal fluctuations exacerbate the difficulty in securing affordable policies that effectively mitigate region-specific tourism risks. ART will aim to assist in connecting stakeholders, advocating for necessary policy change and educating industry on how they can be part of the solution



Regional Dispersal of Key International Markets

The regional dispersal of key international markets in Australia remains a critical issue. Factors contributing to this challenge include limited regional awareness among international tourists, inadequate accessibility and infrastructure in regional areas, seasonal variations affecting travel, and varying levels of readiness among regional operators to cater to international visitors. Additionally, regional aviation services and the cost of airfares to regional destinations remains a challenge.

Currently, Australia lacks a cohesive strategy aimed at guiding visitors from key growth markets towards regional destinations, impacting the potential economic benefits to Australia's appeal as a tourism destination.

Skills & Workforce Shortages

The regional tourism industry faces several challenges related to skills and workforce issues, including the following:

- **Skill gaps:** Misalignment between the skills required by businesses and the local workforce.
- **Seasonal demand:** Seasonal fluctuations in visitor numbers, leading to seasonal demand for workers and challenges to maintain a stable workforce throughout the year.
- **Retention issues:** Difficulty in retaining skilled employees due to limited career progression opportunities, remote location challenges, and competitive wages.
- **Training and development:** Limited access to relevant training and professional development opportunities for employees in regional areas.
- **Perception of career opportunities:** Perceptions among regional residents that careers in tourism lack stability or are less desirable compared to other industries.
- **Ageing workforce:** In some regions, insufficient younger workers are entering the industry.
- **Infrastructure and connectivity:** Limited transport infrastructure, internet connectivity, and access to affordable housing can impact the attractiveness of regional areas.
- **Migration:** The international migration system needs to cater for unique workforce requirements.

Addressing these challenges requires collaboration to develop strategies that support skills development, improve workforce retention, and promote tourism careers as viable and rewarding options in regional Australia.



REGIONAL PRIORITIES



Product & Experience Development

Regional Australia needs to build unique and high-quality visitor products and experiences that will influence visitors to travel regionally. To enable this, especially in sectors like agritourism, a focused approach is required to ensure the up-skilling of regional operators through targeted online programs and workshops.

Furthermore, policy is required to streamline approval processes and enable tourism experiences in National Parks and protected areas that will attract international visitation to regional areas. Government grant programs must acknowledge the unique challenges of operating in regional and remote areas, providing incentives for operators to improve their offerings and infrastructure.

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Enabling Infrastructure

In Australia, regional tourism infrastructure faces significant challenges due to inadequate funding and investment. Key issues include:

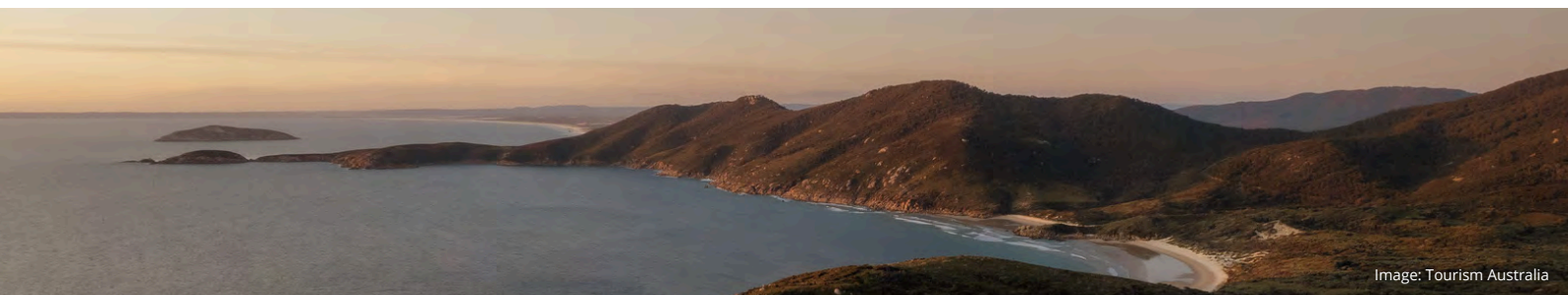
- Transportation networks (roads and public transport)
- Accommodation availability
- Visitor facilities (including visitor centres and amenities)
- Digital connectivity (internet and mobile coverage)
- Regional airports (and maintenance)
- Regional ports (and maintenance)

Poor infrastructure impacts visitor experiences and accessibility, limiting the potential reach of tourism activities in regional areas. Additionally, impost on local government to fund tourism destination marketing and infrastructure projects is difficult, as many regional areas have a low rate base.



Resilience & Wellbeing

Being crisis ready and resilient is vital to the wellbeing of local communities and destinations to ensure a thriving tourism industry. ART will continue to ensure preparedness within our industry is a priority so we can manage and work through crisis' situations in our regions.





ACTION PLAN

The following action plan outlines specific project initiatives and actions aligned with each strategic pillar of our strategy. It designates responsible leads for each project to ensure accountability and effective execution. By clearly defining roles and actions, this plan aims to facilitate structured progress and achieve our strategic priorities.



ART plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the voices and needs of regional areas are heard and addressed in national tourism policy. By advocating for policies that reflect the diverse challenges and opportunities specific to regional tourism, ART can ensure regional tourism destinations are properly represented. This includes providing strategic advice on funding, and ensuring government focus remains inclusive and not city-centric.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1 & 2	Maintain an engaged STO Advisory Group	Developed terms of reference for the STO Advisory Group Meet twice per year (once in-person at convention) Identify areas for collaboration	CHAIR CEO	Year 1
1 & 2	Provide advocacy on the top national regional tourism priorities	Refine and sense-check priorities with STO's at convention Survey members to refine priorities	CHAIR CEO	Annually
1 & 2	Advocate for regional tourism priorities	Attendance at relevant industry roundtables Meet directly with Austrade Develop an effective relationship with Federal Tourism Minister	CHAIR CEO	Ongoing

ACTION PLAN LEAD KEY:

WG	WORKING GROUP
CHAIR	CHAIR
BOARD	BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CEO	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CC	COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR



The Tourism Hub has been established to provide a unified platform for regional tourism professionals, offering access to information, resources, and opportunities for professional development. It aims to facilitate connections among individuals in isolated regions, fostering ongoing dialogue beyond annual conventions. Additionally, the hub endeavours to serve as a seamless marketing tool, promoting ART membership, programs, and events.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
3	Rebuild the hub and ART website to create a single site.	Improve design of the hub and ART website. Combine the website and hub to provide a single consumer facing site.	WG CEO	Year 1
3	Ensure the platform is responsive and intuitive.	Upgrade the hub backend to be more intuitive. Monitor hosting and server accounts and scale response to accommodate high traffic periods (such as lead up to convention and when hub eDM is sent). Increased user engagement.	WG CEO	Ongoing
3	Relevant and engaging content customised to target user groups.	Regular eDM distributed with new and relevant content. Monitor analytics and eDM open and click rates.	CEO CC	Ongoing
3	Increase ease of access.	Develop an app to support the hub (android and apple).	WG CEO	Year 1



AMBASSADORS



ART has created The Tourism Hub as a place for regional tourism professionals to connect, share information and best practice solutions to common challenges. Ambassadors act as community experts to ensure that The Tourism Hub provides relevant insight and advice for members. Ambassadors can also act as amplifiers for the content.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
2	Well engaged and active Regional Tourism Ambassador group	Meet four times per year with minimum of eight ambassador in attendance. Each ambassador contributes a minimum one blog or webinar per month to the hub. Ambassadors appointed across tourism sub-sectors. Ambassador program incorporated into the convention program. Ambassador participants are reviewed annually.	WG	Ongoing
2 & 3	ART Webinar series	Monthly webinar program scheduled with a minimum of 20 registered attendees. Review subscriber feedback and engagement to monitor topics. Well attended webinar sessions.	WG CC	Monthly





PARTNERSHIPS



Securing partnerships is crucial for advancing advocacy, capacity building and industry development. By establishing strategic alliances with private businesses, government entities, and like-minded associations, we aim to leverage shared resources and expertise. These partnerships will help improve industry practices, and address challenges collaboratively. Working together will be essential for developing a resilient and thriving tourism industry that benefits all stakeholders.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1, 2 & 3	Increase ART membership	All STO's remain T1 ART members Increased ART membership (10% year-on-year)	BOARD CEO	Years 2 & 3
2 & 3	Create new strategic partnerships that increase industry collaboration and/ or generate revenue	Number of strategic partnerships Stakeholder engagement Revenue generated	BOARD CEO	Ongoing
2 & 3	Partner with educational providers and industry experts to increase regional capability	Number of strategic partnerships Stakeholder engagement	BOARD CEO	Year 1





Engage and support local councils to build the visitor economy in regional communities through best practice planning and development.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
3	Develop a destination management planning scope of works template and make available on the Tourism Hub	Stakeholder engagement	WG	Year 1
1, 2 & 3	Develop a councillor training program to increase the understanding of councillors on the importance of the visitor economy to community	Delivery partner secured Councillor uptake STO support and leverage	WG	Year 3
1, 2 & 3	Seek funding to Revise the Destination Management Best Practice (DMP) Guide	Funding secured Current guide updated and refreshed with new best practice standards Stakeholder engagement	WG	Year 3
2 & 3	Tourism Consultant Listing	Number of consultant listings Stakeholder engagement	WG	Year 2
2 & 3	Facilitate knowledge sharing by profiling organisations that have delivered innovative tourism projects (industry case studies).	Stakeholder engagement	WG CC	Year 1



The National Young Tourism Professional Engagement (NYTPN) is aimed at supporting and developing young professionals in the tourism sector.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1, 2 & 3	Establish a leadership structure to support a national approach to develop young tourism professionals	National young person network (NYTPN) consisting of a representative across each state and territory NYTPN form a committee under ART to enable grant funding opportunities and shared resources Secured ongoing resources to support committee secretariat	WG	Year 1
3	Enable access to ART assets	Dedicated portal on the Tourism Hub for NYTPN members Access to ART learnerdash to enable professional development targeted to graduates being “workforce ready”	WG	Year 1
2 & 3	Engage with Universities to increase ART exposure to students	Partnership with universities to provide T1 membership and free membership for students ART provide guest lectures	WG CEO	Year 2
3	Encourage attendance at Convention	NYTP award provided at convention 8 delegate members from the NYTPN	WG	Year 3



The ART Agritourism Project has been designed to raise confidence, build capacity and inspire action through strategic partnerships to support regional growth through agritourism.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1 & 3	Support Sustainable and Inclusive Farm Diversification	National Priority Policy Position on agritourism unilaterally adopted to support growth goals Support planning reforms to achieve consistency across jurisdictions and reduce red tape Identify and nurture indigenous agritourism Create introduction to tourism and agriculture resources Targeted agritourism capacity building programs focussed on the integration of agriculture and tourism including skills, insurance, risk mitigation and biosecurity	WG	Year 1 & 2
3	Support community capacity building with a focus on regional employment	Create employment economic indicators to support the business case for attracting and retaining regional workers Invest in across region mentoring programs to support upskilling and networking Develop a National Agritourism leadership network with a focus on supporting young leaders to stay in regional areas Foster first nations capacity building	WG	Year 2



PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1 & 3	Development high quality, distinctly Australian agritourism experiences	Agritourism farm gate grant program to encourage Australian agritourism Identify and develop storytellers for the sector, create content and share through channels Work with TA and STOs to grow trade distribution Leverage agricultures capability for R&D for new product development based on consumer demand Create agritourism experience development toolkit for farmers looking to diversify into tourism Create resources to demystify the trade and travel distribution	WG	Year 3
2 & 3	Promote the sector responsibly, with an alignment to food and drink	Develop an initial three-year marketing plan, including a pathway to international market development Create high quality marketing assets for existing “halo” agritourism experiences for industry wide use Work with ATDW to measure growth in agritourism listings Dedicated international agritourism campaigns	WG CEO	Year 2



AGRITOURISM



PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
1 & 2	Encourage genuine collaboration and partnerships	Bring together STO's, NFF and state planning departments to achieve consistency across planning regulations		Year 1
2	Provide sector leadership to support inclusive growth	Consider leadership structure to achieve growth, form a working group of key stakeholders Implement Agritourism 2020 Action Plan. Develop an agritourism Australia website powered by ATDW Develop an agritourism portal on the tourism hub Review the TAFE certification III in agritourism content to align with future needs of sector growth		Year 1





RTO WORKING GROUP



The RTO Working Group is dedicated to addressing the evolving opportunities and challenges in regional tourism across Australia. Its primary purpose is to explore, discuss, and develop strategies related to RTO opportunities and challenges, which are then elevated to the ART Board. The group facilitates the exchange of best practices and industry insights on both the supply and demand aspects of regional tourism, informing policy and strategic direction to support and strengthen regional communities involved in the visitor economy.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
2 & 3	Maintain an engaged RTO working group.	Meet four times per year. Terms of reference (link TOR). Identified areas / projects for collaboration.	WG CEO	Ongoing
1, 2 & 3	Future of RTO's Report	Developed white paper in consultation with RTO's to outline different RTO and LTO structures. Secured funding to deliver the project.	WG CEO	Year 1



CONVENTION



The annual ART Convention provides a forum to discuss, debate and investigate solutions to issues, challenges and opportunities facing regional tourism. The Convention is regarded as the most significant annual event for industry, practitioners and government agencies engaged in regional tourism, anywhere in Australia. The Convention is for all sectors of the tourism industry to exchange ideas about ways to grow a sustainable regional destination and to showcase best practice success.

PILLAR	ACTION	MEASUREMENT OUTCOME	LEAD	TIMEFRAME
2 & 3	Engaged host destination	Secured host destination partnership Engaged host destination in program planning sessions Engaged host to support event logistics	CEO	Annual
2 & 3	Increased convention registrations	Inspiring convention program Increase in registrations year-on-year Create opportunities for networking via social events	WG CEO	Year 1





Enquiries

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Image: Tourism Australia



ADVOCACY FOR REGIONAL TOURISM

ART is the unified industry voice for regional tourism advocacy and enables a collaborative approach to industry development and shared regional challenges. ART does this in partnership with State and Territory tourism organisations and members, where ART meets regularly with Ministers and leaders to bring regional tourism issues to the centre of government decision making.

Eight tourism priority issues will be a focus for national level advocacy, and steering a coordinated approach to seek solutions is integral in addressing these issues to make a significant contribution to the growth of regional tourism and communities.

STRATEGIC ADVICE

Provide regional intelligence to inform National tourism policy by providing strategic advice that supports regional needs in relation to grant funding programs.

REGIONAL DATA

Improve the accuracy, relevance and usability of tourism data to better equip regional destinations in planning for future tourism developments.

SUSTAINABILITY

The process for destinations to become certified is expensive and time consuming however is pivotal to the future of tourism development.

INSURANCE

Insurance challenges stem from high costs and limited coverage. By enhancing access to suitable insurance products in regional areas, we can improve the resilience of the sector.

REGIONAL DISPERSAL

Provide better dispersal of growing international markets into regional destinations, and develop research and marketing to convert first time visitors into return overnight regional visitors.

SKILLS & WORKFORCE SHORTAGES

Address the shortage of skills and labour in regional areas that is restricting industry productivity and growth. Undertake a national approach to address the skill gaps.

PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT

Build unique and high-quality visitor products and experiences that will influence visitors to travel regionally. Target sectors such as agritourism, and tourism development in National Parks and protected areas.

ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Ensure better access to regions and supply of digital infrastructure, which is critical to regional areas becoming more accessible, competitive and attractive.