



Responses to the Bendigo Tourism Board's request to City of Greater Bendigo Council Candidates regarding their position and support for the local tourism industry.

Letter sent to by Bendigo Tourism Chair Bob Downing, Sept 22nd 2016.

Dear <candidate>,

Congratulations on your decision to nominate as a Greater Bendigo City Council candidate in the 2016 election.

As the Chairman of the Bendigo Tourism Board, which is an entity that operates independently of the City of Greater Bendigo, I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with data and statistics relevant to Bendigo's Tourism industry.

- In 2015, according to Tourism Research Australia, the tourism industry contributed \$407 million to the Bendigo Loddon region. This equates to more than **\$1.11 million per day**.
- There are **1,561 tourism businesses** operating in the Greater Bendigo region.
- The Bendigo tourism industry employs **8,000 people** in our region; growing year on year.
- Bendigo Tourism industry membership currently stands at 117 business members and through membership revenue currently contributes \$175,000 annually towards marketing Bendigo as a destination.

As an industry, we work hand-in-hand with the City of Greater Bendigo to continually improve and grow our tourism offering, increasing the economic contribution to the city's health and to grow employment for local people.

We also work in partnership with the City's tourism unit to support the delivery of themed and seasonal marketing campaigns, to train and support tourism business owners with key business skills for success and to attract major events to our city drawing in the many thousands of people who visit Bendigo each year and invest millions of dollars into our economy.

In order to illustrate how actively we work together as an industry, I have attached our Membership Prospectus for your perusal and to provide a snapshot of some of our fantastic activities.

I trust that this information is of interest to you and on behalf of our members I invite you provide to us your views on tourism in Bendigo by Wednesday 28 September so that we can pass it on to our members and other supporters, to help them make informed decisions on election day.

If you have any questions about the Bendigo Tourism Board, the tourism industry or the way in which we work with the City of Greater Bendigo, myself or any of our board members would be delighted to answer them.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Bob Downing

Chairman: Bendigo Tourism Board

Candidate responses received

All responses have been collated as exact copies of the response email received and are in no particular order, other than by ward.

Lockwood Ward:

Jan Pagliaro

Tourism creates income and generates Jobs in Bendigo so it is a very important sector and important for Bendigo. We have some wonderful tourist attractions in Bendigo such as the sheep and wool show the largest event of its type in the world, Groove in the Moo attracting over 18,000 young people to the town and many other wonderful events. Tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world, so Bendigo needs to be always seeking new ideas and ways of reinventing itself so it can compete for the tourist dollar

Jan Pagliaro.
Candidate for Lockwood ward .

Barry Lyons

As a council delegate I Barry Lyons have been a member of the Bendigo Tourism Board for approx. six years. Having been in the Hospitality industry for over 30 years and the City council for now 8 years I can fully understand and appreciate the value of a well run,supported and vibrant Tourism Board. Tourism is the backbone of many of the successful cities around the world and no less Bendigo. I fully support this Board and City Futures in general. The membership is strong and grows yearly and is a great benefit to its members, the City of Greater Bendigo and the economy which overall benefits all the residents that live in this beautiful city.

Regards
Barry Lyons

Matt Emond

Dear Bob,
Thank you for your previous emails. Please find below my thoughts about Tourism in Bendigo.
Yours sincerely,

Matt

"I will be working to support the growth of business and tourism in Bendigo and to improve opportunities for community groups and the wellbeing of all Bendigo residents. I will be doing all I can to ensure that this happens after the next council election. I believe we need to consult effectively with our community and key stakeholder groups and listen to their needs and then respond appropriately.

During my professional career I have built key sector and government stakeholder relationships and gained an extensive knowledge of the cultural economy and its impact on tourism across Australia and international best practice models. I currently sit on the Golden Dragon Museum Board and look forward to continuing to contribute to the City of Greater Bendigo."

Vaughan Williams

Dear Mr Downing,
Sorry for the late reply. As you can imagine there have been many requests for comment, views and statements. I would have loved to have added more with my reply.

Tourism is of a major importance for any vibrant & growing city and with that the arts is an extension of the prosperity & image of that city's culture, people and life style. Tourism businesses and business in general are a major focus for me and high on my agenda as a candidate for the Lockwood Ward, as small business in regional cities are the life blood that makes a city and its residence tick. This is evident with your stated 1,561 tourism business employing 8000 people in this industry. I support the central need of growth in the tourism sector and hope to be working closely with the Bendigo Tourism Board if elected to council.

I have also kept my reply short and to the point, considering the number of candidate running in this election.
Kind regards,
Vote 1 Vaughan Williams – Lockwood Ward Bendigo

Rod Fyffe

Dear Bob,

Thanks for the opportunity to make a comment or two on Tourism to Bendigo. Tourism is a very important part of our economy as your figures show. It is a driver of jobs for a wide range of citizens who want to work full time or part time, and it often suits people who want/need to work at weekends etc. Tourism allows us to showcase ourselves and that is also important. In addition tourism have been prepared to help themselves and to be on the front foot when it comes to self help.

I have supported tourism in the past for these reasons and wish to congratulate all who are involved in it.

Regards,
Rod.

Damien Irving

Hi Bob,

I'm very aware of how important tourism is to Bendigo. I work for a Bendigo-based company called REMPLAN - we're a team of economists, planners, demographers and software developers. I'm often looking at the tourism data for Bendigo.

It's fantastic to see that while other industries are providing less jobs, the tourism industry in Bendigo is providing more jobs. The tourism industry is all about people serving people - so while other industries find efficiencies resulting in job losses, I think we can always look to tourism as a source of job growth.

I was surprised to see just 117 members. It would be great to see more involvement from businesses in the industry, especially businesses in the accommodation and food services industries, as they see the majority of the tourist dollar.

I'm excited about some of the new ways Bendigo is attracting tourism, such as the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion.

Do partnerships exist with neighbouring councils, such as Mount Alexander Shire, to promote the broader area?

I would love to hear more about how you work with the City of Greater Bendigo to grow the industry.

Kind regards,

Damien Irving

John Drake Cooper

Hi,

I've asked around for ideas, and this is what I've got so far. I'll try and get a few more overnight for you.

Tourism Ideas

Mine: "what's on now" app

Bike tracks on creek banks connecting to a bendigo creek bike track.

Unsure: Sandhurst town

John Mc: Small animal sanctuary

Mine: Flooded mine tours

Unsure: Outdoor live music

Erica Peak: Disneyland

Free exercise equipment within parks/playgrounds.

Man made beach on the edge of KennyRes/Lake Weeroona, or one of the swimming pools, like Brisbane has along side Bris river
Pedal vehicle track, to take the overflow that miss out on Energy Breakthrough in Maryborough every year.

Kids driving & a road safety school, to learn road rules as a pedestrian, bike rider, car driver.

Some type of fauna/reptile park - who doesn't love animals

A huge playground, maze, flying fox like Lake Pertobe in Warrnambool

Bring the drive in back

Rick Jenny Kingsley: A multi purpose motor sports complex

Susan Crawford: A huge kids playground

A revival of Lake eppalock attractions ie Cafe/restaurant, water rides, weekend fetes etc (when there's water)

A bike track along the railway line (with info about certain areas goldfield times, flora info, historic importance etc)

Walk tracks through whipstick, one tree Hill and other forest areas that are upgraded, info displayed even areas that can be publicly helped with revegetation.

The mall back to its original looks 

The market place made into two storeys, more shops all in one place = more jobs, more money, more visits..

The tram line up view Street..

Night ghost/haunted house tours.

More kid attraction at reasonable prices..

A flying fox somewhere, maybe down Rosalind Park or across lake weerona..

More skate/bmx/rollerblading/ scooter areas scattered around..

More comic festivals..

A gaming shop/gaming competitions..

Night festival..

An exotic planetarium..

Yes some of these are my kids ideas and yes some are probably mainly for just the citizens of this town..yet a happy, outgoing, enjoyable town is a place I'd like to visit 😊

Retro Rhonda: Rosalind Park soundshell.

Fiona Hamilton: High ropes adventure park

Robert John: Tough mudder course

Paul Egan: pop up drive in

To be honest we have plenty of events happening each week and weekend in the region.

" The problem you have is many dont know they are happening".

Countless times i have seen lots of editorial and local news post event on patronage numbers ect. Thats too late to build or add to the event.

All events need to be top of mind. Driven in advance through local media. But more so through shared social media.

A group page such as this specifically for Bendigo and the region could be set up in a snap on Facebook.

You'd need some good administrators. But for example the group home page could high light the key events for that week. A calender format covering the months events etc.

Additionally you would create an event and invite every member.

This is a very simple and effective way to drive and promote what you already have currently taking place with the region

I might set it up myself yet. Too easy and extremely effective.

A large piece of Quartz painted Gold. With a plaque highlighting the actual amount of Gold discovered in the region.

Create a pop up fresh produce market in the Mall.

Permanent exercise stations around a lake. Say Kennington.

Upgrade the rowing club facility at Lake Weeroona to include an outdoor cafe.

Relocate the discovery centre and convert the current facilities to a market.

Annual street go-cart Grand Prix through the Streets of Bendigo. Similar but at a small scale to the Adelaide 500, Melbourne GP or Gold Coast Indy.

Bendigo may not be big enough. But a week long " Best of the Best or Best of the Rest competition".

Eg:

Day 1 An AFL Game utilising the Best of Rest that didnt make finals @ the QEO (or women AFL)

Day 2 The two best selected basketball teams male and female. Play off at the Bendigo Stadium.

Day 3. The two best selected soccer teams play off at the Tom Flood

Day 4. The best of the rest NRL rugby game at the Huntly sporting complex.

Day 5. Australia's best athletes compete at the Athletic centre

Day 6. Cycling Maddison type event at Tom Flood. A street race

Day 7. An Ironman or triathlon

Simltaneously amateur events of the same or come and try events of every sport or club within the region

Cohen McCormick

Speedway track

Titty bar

I hope this has been helpful for you

Regards,

John Cooper

Jennifer Alden

Tourism in Bendigo - Dr Jennifer Alden Candidate for Lockwood ward

Since coming to Bendigo 34 years ago there has been a significant growth and increased professionalism in the local tourism industry. The celebrated successes over that time have been enabled by broader Council investment in a range of institutions and organisations that add so much to our cultural fabric.

We must be cognisant of the fact that in any analysis of tourism benefits that there are dimensions separate to a sole focus on economic benefits for our community. Social benefits are often incalculable. Given the reputational loss that has occurred to some extent in recent times, due to racism, there are many other areas that require attention in combination with standard tourism approaches to better engage those who may have been influenced by negative publicity for the city.

In addition we need to be aware of the danger of relying on data as it can be self-reinforcing. For example if we know that a significant number of visitors coming to Bendigo are interested in fashion does that mean that we continue ad infinitum with major exhibitions of fashion related themes? Do we know what else may strike a chord?

The success of the Marilyn exhibition statue in Rosalind Park suggests that a permanent and rotating large sculpture in that location would be of interest to not only tourists, but locals as well.

The ability to view the Archibald prize winners and entrants was a milestone for Bendigo, one that hopefully can be attracted back to Bendigo in future.

Having attended the White Night in Melbourne I am keen for Bendigo to follow on from Ballarat to be the next regional location for it in the coming years.

Having owned a food and music venue in Melbourne in the past I am keen to support music tourism in Bendigo for people of all ages.

Travel in Europe, US and Canada has shown me how successful bike share schemes are in towns and cities of equivalent size to Bendigo. We should have a Bendigo Bike Share scheme. This can be directly linked to trails for tourism such as a food tourism trail. In addition special interest walking trails could be expanded.

Food tourism is great but can be expanded significantly, similarly to overseas. I have established Incredible Edible Bendigo <https://www.facebook.com/IncredibleEdibleBendigo/>

In the town of Todmorden UK they have 'vegetable tourism' with 'green trail' maps provided detailing points of interest relating to food growing, gardens, orchards, hubs, egg production and their popular pollination festival. This can dovetail with a broader agritourism strategy, so popular in the US in particular. Although this has started to a small degree with a high end Farm to Plate experience currently, which is great, it is not necessarily financially accessible for many regular tourists.

There is also the potential for better support for groups such as the Bendigo Community Farmers Market and the Bendigo Writers festival, both financially and by add on events and activities of potential interest to visitors. This may better ensure their future viability so as to continue to provide tourism benefits.

Nature tourism has barely been touched on locally and, given our 'City in a Forest' status, could be substantially expanded. Nights walks for fauna detection, seasonal spring orchid and other wildflower walks, children's activities in parks, Indigenous interpretation, bush tucker identification and use are some of many opportunities. Novel partnerships are possible with e.g.. Parks Vic, DELWP, the Djadjawurung Corporation etc

It is a mystery why Bendigo still does not have a Museum. With the redevelopment plans for Rosalind Park my proposal is that the Law Courts be turned over to a General History Museum. Food manufacturing history may be of interest to many - e.g. Bendigo Preserving Company in Garsed st, previous butter factories and other food and wine manufacturing locations, Leggo's tomato products and of course the current interest in the Chicko Roll.

A great opportunity was missed for the tourism industry in Council not purchasing Fortuna Villa.

In August I organised the inaugural Australian Community Food Hubs conference with successful partnerships and sponsorship across many institutions locally. Creative approaches to value adding to conferences can be of great benefit locally.

These are only a few of my ideas.

I look forward to serving the community as a City of Greater Bendigo councillor, representing the Lockwood ward and am happy to discuss any further ideas with you at any time.

Samuel Tshisekedi

Hello Bob,

Thank you for the congratulations of your Board in relation to my candidature for the upcoming City of Greater Bendigo Council elections.

I found the statistical information and in particular the Membership Prospectus to be both interesting and informative regarding the importance and value of tourism to our city.

I may well be unique among candidates having been born, living and working overseas, but *choosing* to come to Bendigo to settle and establish the future with my wife Melissa and our children. Melissa was born and raised in the region on a family farm in the Boort district.

One of the things that always struck me when I first came to Bendigo was the number and mix of classic 19th-century grand buildings and gold rush history on which they and the city were founded and developed. On one hand I imagine what it would be to cluster these notable buildings in one area, but then acknowledge the value of their dispersal throughout the city and environs.

I can see from your prospectus that tourism promotion and development is very much about a partnership between the industry operators (and those benefiting indirectly) and principally Local and State government.

I don't pretend to be any sort of authority on the tourism industry so would not offer gratuitous advice, particularly given what appears to be a soundly established structure and working collective that obviously holds the resources to service, promote and develop the industry.

Before determining to offer myself as a candidate for the Council election I attended the information sessions and briefings about the roles and responsibilities of a councillor under the Local Government Act.

I studied business management in the UK, hold a degree in theology, speak six languages and am completing my BA in International Relations. Seen together with my role as a church pastor, business owner and Communications consultant, I feel confident that I would bring to Council a wealth of knowledge and experience that would enhance the mix sought and hoped for by our community across all aspects of Council responsibility.

I am very open about my Christian values and through my work and life experience including that of a migrant, believe I have developed the knowledge and skills to facilitate strong relationships across the diverse range of community members and stakeholders.

My approach is one of building consensus and working collaboratively to promote local businesses, industry, community groups and education that will provide pathways for employment and career development for our youth and unemployed.

I would hope and trust that your organisation would acknowledge that I have the skills, experience and credentials that would equip me well as an effective Cllr with the City of Greater Bendigo.

Kind Regards

Bendigo Tourism Board Note ** Note – total membership in the database for 2015-16 was 257. 117 the number of renewals for the new financial year at the time of the letter.

Ian Dean – no comment received

Elise Chapman – no comment received

George Egan – no comment received

Eppalock Ward:

Margaret O'Rourke

Hello Bob

Thank you and the Bendigo Tourism Board for sending through your email.

Upfront, I am extremely proud of the work that occurs in Bendigo and our region in and around tourism. I believe it is a critical area of performance and growth for our economy and this community now and into the future. There are so many indicators that show that this will only keep increasing.

I feel there is more to do. I am currently working in this area in the early planning for the Aspire Precinct which will be located at the foot of the Sacred Heart Cathedral. Religious Tourism is the fastest growing sector in the world and Bendigo is so well placed as the only regional city of its size to have so many "faith" assets (which was ascertained through a feasibility study some 3 years ago). An important stakeholder in this work is Bendigo Tourism. I have engaged often with Kathryn McKenzie and her team who have been tremendously helpful; and this is a continuing work in progress!

There are more areas that can grow in and around our liveability for tourism as well; the O'Keefe Trail and a number of our small communities that have not reached their full potential and show great promise.

If elected to council I look forward to working to ensure we can grow our Tourism activities and opportunities to extend the stay of visitors in our region.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to communicate to your audience.

Kind Regards

Marg O'Rourke

Mark Weragoda

Dear Bob.

Just a short note on my thoughts regarding Tourism.

Tourism plays a vital part for our city and region. In my view it is a key and fundamental element for our economy and job growth. I have experienced many positive and exciting functions marketed and driven by Tourism. As an example look at the ticket sales to the art gallery with the Forever Marilyn Exhibition. This is just one example of how well Tourism and the City of Greater Bendigo work together. I have also been involved in conferences brought into our city, simply because Tourism's marketing. The Rotary District 9800 conference held at Ulumbarra with nearly nine hundred registrations is just one more example of how well Tourism and your team fulfils their obligations.

If re-elected as a Councillor to the City of Greater Bendigo, I will continue my utmost support for Tourism, the work the Board and our volunteers do for our city and region.

Candidate for the Eppalock Ward

Mark Weragoda Dip LG

Brenton Johnson

Dear Bob Downing and the rest of the Bendigo Tourism Board,

Bendigo Tourism

As a paid up supporter of Bendigo Tourism Inc., I support the future of tourism in Bendigo. Tourism and small business is the life of this city and has a flow on effect throughout the whole city.

I do believe that Councillors could do a better job at supporting small businesses though. Currently there is only one person who looks after over 7000 small businesses in the local area. I would support further support for those businesses to ensure we are making the most out of the excellent work that has been done in Tourism.

I support the Tourism Board and the work they do. It's not for councillors to dictate things they think tourism needs, their job is to listen to you and work with you to set up solutions that solve your business problems.

Please contact me if you have something you would like me to know about. <http://www.brentonjohnson.com/contact/>

Regards,
Brenton

Helen Leach

Dear Bob

I am terribly sorry about this. In the midst of the campaign as well as the usual council work, it slipped my mind.

In general, I think it is important to try to bring back the boating tourism to Lake Eppalock, especially while the Lake is full. I know that GMW and the State and Commonwealth environmental water holders, together with agriculture, have a prior claim on a good percentage of the water in the lake, but I contend that the Tourism Board could try a lot harder to advocate for a fairer distribution of water to the state government Water Minister.

As I was quoted in the Advertiser recently on the Bendigo Business Council story, I attended many meetings advocating for the businesses depending on a reasonable water level. Apart from the Save Lake Eppalock representative, I was the only councillor and never saw anyone from any Tourism body at these meetings. We need to speak louder. A study was done 2 years ago which claimed \$70m for this tourism. It may have gone North temporarily; let's try to get it back.

Apart from that, there is the public holiday and penalty rate problem. Tomorrow is Grand Final eve and the Tourism Board should be leaning heavily on the Premier to stop this nonsense and end this public holiday. I know many tourist businesses that are closing tomorrow for that very reason.

The advertising around the railway stations - especially in Melbourne - is a good idea (for Bendigo)

The City of Greater Bendigo does invest heavily in tourism and I imagine will continue to do so. The Information Centres are a great idea and the volunteers do a good job. The ratepayers cannot fund everything. It looks as though the trams are going to cost a bit in terms of track repair and maintenance but I think this is a good investment. So too are our parks. I've had many good reports from visitors who attend the Scots Day Out in Rosalind Park; officials attending have voted it one of the best venue they have attended anywhere in the world.

The historic buildings are definitely a drawcard; they were for our family. Of course Ulumbarra Theatre is a wonderful place for the performing arts and the Art Gallery. There must be a limit on what we dedicate in terms of funds for all things in Bendigo. There are basic services like roads and footpaths etc for the whole municipality that need funding also.

To conclude: I recognize the importance of Tourism to the Greater City, including Heathcote. For employment and their development, they need tourism probably even more than Bendigo.

Our position in the centre of the state, on a major rail line, only 1.5 to 2 hours from Melbourne and with an airport, gives us an advantage. The many sporting and artistic events that are held also draw many around the state and nation. We need to maintain these assets and the crowds will come.

Cr. Helen Leach.

Eppalock ward.

Geoff Stephens

Hello Bob.

Thank you for the opportunity offered to council candidates to offer their views.

Having run a small business in Bendigo for some time, I understand the need for networking and support expected of local government. My business has been in building related activities, not tourism or tourism related.

Tourism views:

I am acutely aware of the need for tourism, the importance of small business and the wonderful environment that Bendigo offers.

I was not aware of the massive economic injection that tourism contributes to our economy. Now I am.

I support the Boards initiatives and will offer every assistance if elected.

Platform on which I stand:

There is a great need to rebuild confidence in the council and I am intent on doing that, given the communities confidence in me.

I am standing with no immediate agenda and offer my skills, knowledge and ethics for consideration.

I am a truly independent candidate and believe there is no room for party politics in local government.

I am not fool enough to think that guarantees can be offered at this time without knowing the make up and mix of council.

I can offer assurances that I will undertake the role in a fair and respectful manner.

The image of Bendigo has been damaged and must be improved.

There are other like minded independent candidates standing at this election. I would be happy to elaborate if required.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity and will continue to follow Board initiatives regardless of election outcomes.

Regards

Rosemary Glaisher

Dear Mr Downing,

Thank you for your letter. I found the figures you provided on the contribution made by tourism to our region very interesting. Although we all know that tourism is of vital and increasing importance to Bendigo, specific data is helpful.

Personally, I consider that we need to invest in both existing and new tourism ventures in any way we can, whether this is with advice, help with promotion or financially. The economic and employment benefits are obvious but additionally, those attractions that make Bendigo an appealing tourist destination also enhance the region for us, the residents.

Jobs are being lost in other industries locally and tourism has the potential to take up some of this slack. For instance, climate change is impacting on traditional models of agriculture and some farmers will benefit from diversifying into tourism.

Bendigo has a wonderful and well-deserved reputation which we need to protect if we want to continue to grow in popularity as a tourist destination. Some of most valuable features face threats. Ecotourism has a great future but only if we continue to be the City in the Forest with healthy ecosystems and biodiversity. Our wine and food industry may need help to adapt to a changing climate. Our beautiful built heritage needs to be jealously protected from insensitive development. Our cultural and ethnic diversity contributes enormously to our character and appeal, so we must defend that too.

I am clearly no expert on the tourist industry, but I believe that the role of councillors is to be willing to listen to stake holders and the experts, to take the time to understand the issues that arise and to ensure that all decisions made are in the best interests of the present and the future of the region.

Kind regards

Rosemary Glaisher

George Flack

Dear Mr Downing

As you may not be aware I served 6 years on the Bendigo Tourism Board from 2001-2007 as a Council appointed Community Representative under the former S86 arrangement.

That said I strongly support Tourism in Bendigo through my personal and active involvement in a broad range of sporting and Community Groups that have brought much to Bendigo and That includes putting my money where my mouth is by way of financial sponsorship over a long period of time alongside gaining support from Bgo Tourism
In addition I am currently into my second term as Chair Business and Community Network 3556 who liaise strongly with CoGBs Economic Development and also Katherine MacKenzie especially on our upcoming Services Guide likely to be released next March 2017.

There's more but why bore you.

Regards

Mr Flack

Yvonne Wrigglesworth

Dear Mr Downing,

Thank you for your email and provision of statistics in relation to the exciting and vibrant state of Bendigo's tourism industry.

I am delighted to be able to provide you with a response on my views of tourism and its importance to Bendigo and our greater region.

As a dedicated community leader, I have been privileged to work in partnership with businesses who leverage the potential of increased tourism in not only Bendigo, but importantly the flow on of visitation to small towns surrounding Bendigo. This visitation has benefited small towns, improving business trade and attracting visitors based on theming that may be related to events, festivals or marketing campaigns in Bendigo. I see significant importance in "Destination" support to areas such as Heathcote being vital, and of increasing appeal to tourists who "take the long way home". No longer do visitors want to fly down the Calder Hwy, when there is so much more to explore following an alternate return route to Melbourne.

I am also accustomed to the challenges that changing environments and situations impact on tourism. As President of Axedale Our Town – Our Future, I have been involved by appointment to the Lake Eppalock Advisory Group which was formed by Minister Neville in response to lower water levels and the resultant vocal community anxiety relating to impacts in recreation, amenity and business. My view of the complex situation, that ultimately is a by-product of a variable and changing climate, is that council's

opportunity is to support business resilience and diversification. Businesses that are agile and can respond to changing situations, can leverage tourism dollar opportunities by thinking outside the square and attracting new audiences.

As a candidate in the Eppalock Ward for the 2016 City of Greater Bendigo Elections, I see it important to promote our region and destinations on a world stage with appropriate investment and a strategic lens. I would be saddened to see council return to a roads, rates and rubbish mentality in particular in the rate-capping environment. The opportunity ahead lies with strategic collaborations that ensure arts, culture and tourism are supported and thriving.

I would welcome any further questions or opportunities to meet and hear from your members to understand the challenges ahead and how council could best support Bendigo and tourism.

Kindest regards,
Yvonne Wrigglesworth
0417 318 246

Susie Hawke

Dear Mr Downing,

Thank you for your email dated 22nd September 2016, requesting my views on tourism in Bendigo.

As I am not in the tourism or hospitality industry, I appreciate your email detailing current data and statistics relevant to the Bendigo Tourism Industry, as well as the attached Membership Prospectus. Both of these pieces of information provided me with a much greater insight into your industry and the enormous financial contributions to the Bendigo Loddon region tourism makes. I am impressed by the number of tourism businesses operating in the Greater Bendigo region, and pleased to hear employments rates in this area are growing.

I acknowledge the importance of the partnerships your industry maintains, particularly with the City of Greater Bendigo (COGB), to support tourism and the work to attract major events. I also wholeheartedly support efforts to continue to bring major events to the region which attract tourists, particularly families. It is wonderful to showcase Bendigo in the way.

If I become a councillor for COGB I would relish the opportunity to support any efforts to maintain or expand the industry and would appreciate meeting with your board on relevant matters.

Please do not hesitate to contact me again if you have any further enquiries.

Yours Sincerely,

Susie Hawke

Colin Carrington

Bendigo Tourism Board

Dear Mr Downing,

I am pleased to respond to the invitation of the Bendigo Tourism Board, to pass on my thoughts about Tourism.

It is undisputed that tourism is a vital part of Bendigo and the surrounding regions economy.

Tourism has been well supported in the past, and it is important that continue into the future.

Bendigo is fortunate to have a high quality Art Gallery, that is well managed, with art on display often rotated.

The success of virtually all special exhibitions, especially the most recent Marilyn exhibition, that was successfully marketed by having the huge statue imported and erected so prominently in Rosalind Park, has done much good for Bendigo and surrounding areas.

The long running Bendigo Easter Fair, Sheep and Wool Show, more recently Groovin' the Moo, to name but a few, along with many other events, all combine to make Bendigo a 'regional centre for tourism'.

Ulumbarra Theatre, has and will continue, to be an enormous asset to Bendigo. I need not state the obvious.

As I have publicly expressed my concern about the amount of council, especially ratepayers' money, that is expended annually to promote tourism, and the number of staff in the City Futures Directorate that underpin tourism, it would be hypocritical of me if I did not state that that remains one of my concerns with current council budgetary and 'management' decisions.

It is obvious that tourism not only brings large amounts of money into Bendigo annually, and therefore that justifies council support. However, it is largely hospitality businesses that benefit. Little wonder they are the strongest supporters of continued council financial and 'in kind', staff and administrative support.

I believe proprietors of hospitality businesses, and the Bendigo Tourism Board, need to be mindful that there are many other retail businesses who get little 'spin off' business income, if in fact any, from tourism. And there are large numbers of manufacturing and service businesses who are not 'subsidised' to the degree tourism is.

The time may come when council, by budget necessity, is unable to maintain the current level of financial and administrative to Bendigo Tourism.

It would be remiss of me if I did not acknowledge the enormous number of volunteers who work tirelessly to assist with tourism related work. The Visitor Information Centre, Ushers at both the Capital Theatre and Ulumbarra theatre, to mention but a few. And the huge numbers required for the Bendigo Easter Fair parades.

I commend the Bendigo Tourism Board on the excellent work done and results achieved over many years.

Should I be elected as a councillor in the Eppalock Ward, I look forward to working cooperatively with the Bendigo Tourism Board, other councillors, the CEO and council officers to continue promoting tourism, not just in Bendigo, but throughout the entire geographic area of Greater Bendigo City Council.

Whipstick Ward

Thomas Prince

Hello Bob,

Although I would like to give a far more detailed response, I haven't had the opportunity to engage with the officers in the tourism sector in the council to help understand financial commitments the city has with Tourism.

However I have been happy with the direction of tourism the City of Greater Bendigo has undertaken over recent years, particularly in the arts industry. I do acknowledge that some constituents would like to see other industries supported as well as the arts industry via tourism (such as sports and recreation) but I do believe that the support of tourism through the arts has set a great standard and this should be a minimum for all industries and tourism as a whole.

I would be curious to hear what the Tourism Board thoughts were on the topic and areas you believe we succeed in and areas we could improve in.

Best regards,
Thomas Prince

Gordon Moore

Good evening,

I'm not sure what I can say about tourism in the region that you are unaware of. I believe continuing support for the industry is vital. Unlike other industries the opportunities for tourism haven't been fully realised and the potential for growth and employment is vast. I can only really say that I believe tourism is a vital part of Bendigo's future.

Regards

Gordon Moore

James Williams

Thanks Bob,

As you all well know the council continues to support tourism in our region and I thank you, the board and its members for the great contribution you all make to the industry. As in all sectors the collective actions of the group make for a stronger and better outcome as demonstrated with the Marilyn exhibitions and the many exhibitions and demonstrations the council support. I have always supported this sector and as with revitalising the discovery centre, the Bendigo trust and the many other partnerships like Ullumbra theatre the council continues to strongly support this important and growing tourism sector.

It has been my vision for tourism in the region that to continue to grow tourism and interest in the area we need to intergrate and work more closely together. As when I visit overseas I am always looking for cultural, heritage and Eco tourism as a point of interest and differation. A trip to Bendigo, stay for a few nights, catch the train to Echuca, paddle boat to Swan Hill, train to Bendigo and fly or catch the train to next destination.

Well done to all on the success so far and I look forward to a bright and prosperous future.

P.s. Recently through the Central vic ag forum and organised by Martin Szakal, who will judge the Australian tourism awards, we hosted 25 Chinese from the hot pot consortium who where here to locate fresh product, potential sites for a restaurant and tourism. They represent about 1,000 restaurants world wide and enjoyed both their stay here in Bendigo and the many sites they visited.

Kind Regards,
Cr James Williams
City of Greater Bendigo

Wayne Gregson

To Bob Downing.

Bob, thanks for the email about the importance of tourism in our region.

I am flabbergasted in this day and age there are still any people - let alone those who regard themselves as potential community leaders - who fail to understand the scale and importance of tourism to Bendigo, or who fail to see the need to constantly enhance and protect the tourism industry.

You're probably aware that I have been a long-standing director of the Bendigo Trust, now Bendigo Heritage, and recently sat in the CEO's chair for three months while we hunted a replacement for Ian Hart. Before that I had also some time on the board of the Bendigo Art Gallery.

I also had a small part in bringing about the Ulumbarra Theatre.

So, it's safe for you and Bendigo Tourism to assume I have a deep understanding of tourism and its place in our community and its future.

Sadly, my views are not universally shared among candidates.

Yours with fingers crossed,

Wayne Gregson,
candidate
Whipstick Ward.

Michelle Goldsmith

Hi Bob – thank-you for your congratulations and for the great precis of the tourism industry in Bendigo. It is exciting to be receiving so much valuable information about the various and vital organisations with which Council works so well to promote Bendigo as the premier regional city that it is. I have no doubts about the value of tourism to Bendigo, and, as a local am always proud to see visitors to our city enjoying all Bendigo has to famously offer. As a potential councillor, I would be keen to maintain the close collaboration between Bendigo Tourism Board and the City of Greater Bendigo. I would also be particularly keen to repair any damage to Bendigo's reputation as a welcoming, safe and increasingly diverse regional city, in support of Bendigo tourism and hospitality operators, as well as our local communities.

I am passionate about encouraging diversity and inclusiveness in Bendigo, and my vision for Bendigo is of a progressive society which values fairness, respect, equality and the environment – Bendigo has much to recommend it, in terms of history and heritage, arts and culture, wine and food and our unique status as the “city within a forest”. I would work on council to promote respectful and cohesive community relationships, for the benefit of all Bendigonians, including your members and all of the people they employ, and the guests they accommodate and welcome to our municipality.

Thanks and regards,
Michelle Goldsmith
Candidate for Whipstick.

Andrea Metcalf

Thank you for providing this information about the work the Bendigo Tourism Board does and its role in Bendigo's economy. If elected I will be doing my research to make informed decisions and having information already from your Board will help me in my role.

I would love to sit down with you to learn more about what the Tourism Board does and to hear about what other ideas the Board has to market Bendigo and the surrounding areas to tourists.

When I travel I use tourism information that is available on the internet in planning my trip so that I get to see as much as I can in the time I have available.

Andrea Metcalf
Whipstick Ward Candidate

Malcolm Pethybridge

Thank you to the Bendigo Tourism Board for the information that you supplied i am sorry for not replying earlier. As i have lived and worked in Bendigo over 40 years i've seen a lot of great things over the years achieved by the Bendigo Tourism Board, so if i am elected to be a councilor i would be delighted to support you in any way this can only be good to support Bendigo.

Thank you from Malcolm Pethybridge Candidate Whipstick Ward

Peter Cox

Hi Bob,

For some reason it appears I did not receive your earlier email. Thank you for following up. Please note my election email address.

During my time on Council over the past 8 years I have supported promotion of Greater Bendigo and tourism. I have attended many of your functions and as Mayor spoke widely about the joy in visiting Bendigo as a destination.

It's great that Council and your Board can work closely together. Tourism plays an important role as stated in Council's Economic Development Strategy and your figures of 1561 tourism businesses in Greater Bendigo create important employment opportunities for many families.

Council has had some wonderful art exhibitions at the Art Gallery and other venues and it has been important that we have all worked together on these projects. Council has committed funds in its budget to promote tourism for many years and this will continue in the years ahead.

We have had many capital infrastructure projects while I have been on Council including developments to the Art Gallery, Ulumbarra Theatre, library, Tourist Information Centre and now with projects like the Soldier's War Memorial, Vahland's Drinking Fountain and Airport upgrade.

I will continue to advocate for Greater Bendigo as a great destination to visit.

I thank all of your members for continuing to promote Greater Bendigo and all of its tourism destinations and let you know that I appreciate the hospitality that is extended by your sector to visitors.

Regards

Cr Peter Cox
Whipstick Ward

Stuart Symes – no comment received

Julie Hoskin – no comment received

Total responses: 27 comments recieved – 10 Eppalock / 8 Whipstick / 9 Lockwood