



The Grampians Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report: Summary of results

The following Visitor Profile and Satisfaction (VPS) Report is based on a sample of 407 people who visited the Grampians in Victoria during October 2009. This report was completed as part of the Destination Visitor Survey Program (DVS) run by Tourism Research Australia (part of the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism).

For comparison purposes, some data are compared with benchmark data which includes all destinations completed within the VPS program. Comparisons against VPS benchmarks are made throughout this report.

The following discussion focuses on the key findings of the Grampians VPS Study. The majority relate to the Grampians as a whole but wherever possible the discussion also considers results at a sub-regional level within the Grampians. The three sub-regions are:

- Halls Gap
- Western towns (Horsham, Hamilton)
- Eastern towns (Stawell, Avoca, Ararat, Dunkeld)

These sub-regions exclude day trips and have been derived based on where visitors spent the most nights. While analysis of the regions outside Halls Gap is more limited due to small sample sizes, some interesting patterns are evident.

Visitor and trip characteristics

The majority of visitors to the region were there for holiday/leisure purposes, particularly at Halls Gap where this was true for 9 in 10 visitors. The Western and Eastern towns were not quite as holiday/leisure focused and attracted visitors for a broader range of trip purposes. In these two sub-regions, about a quarter of visitors were there on business, visiting friends and relatives or attending events (such as the races at Avoca, the Victorian Symphony Orchestra in Hamilton or conferences). This broader profile was evident in many of the characteristics of tourism in the Western and Eastern towns when compared to Halls Gap.

Visitors from all life stages were well represented in the Grampians. Halls Gap is distinctive in that family travel parties were about as common as couples. In the Western and Eastern towns, couples were most common. Outside Halls Gap, the industry also catered to a higher proportion of single travellers, reflecting the presence of more business, VFR and event visitors.

Across the whole region, most visitors were from Melbourne, regional Victoria, SA, and NSW. Halls Gap drew the highest proportion of visitors from SA. The Eastern towns drew a greater proportion from Melbourne, and the Western towns drew a greater proportion from regional Victoria.



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Planning periods for the Grampians were slightly longer than average planning periods for other VPS benchmark destinations. A higher proportion of visitors began planning three months or more before the trip. This was driven mainly by interstate visitors and those travelling with friends or relatives.

Internet usage for gathering information on the Grampians was relatively high compared to the VPS benchmarks. However, older non-working couples were less likely to use the internet and more likely to use non-internet sources only.

Of all the visitors who spent one or more nights in Halls Gap, seven in ten made a day trip to another town in the region. The most commonly visited towns were Stawell, Ararat, Dunkeld and Horsham.

Why did visitors choose to travel to the Grampians?

Visitors gave feedback on why they chose to visit the Grampians for their trip in a few ways (main reason, all reasons, experiences expected). To experience nature played the most significant role in the reasons visitors chose to visit. In this case, experiencing nature represents the flora, fauna and physical features of the region. The opportunity to tour around and explore and to have an adventure were also experiences that visitors expected.

Visitors to Halls Gap were the most strongly influenced by the scenic beauty, the nature experience and the fact that it was a great place for the family/couple to visit with a variety of things to do and plenty that the kids will enjoy.

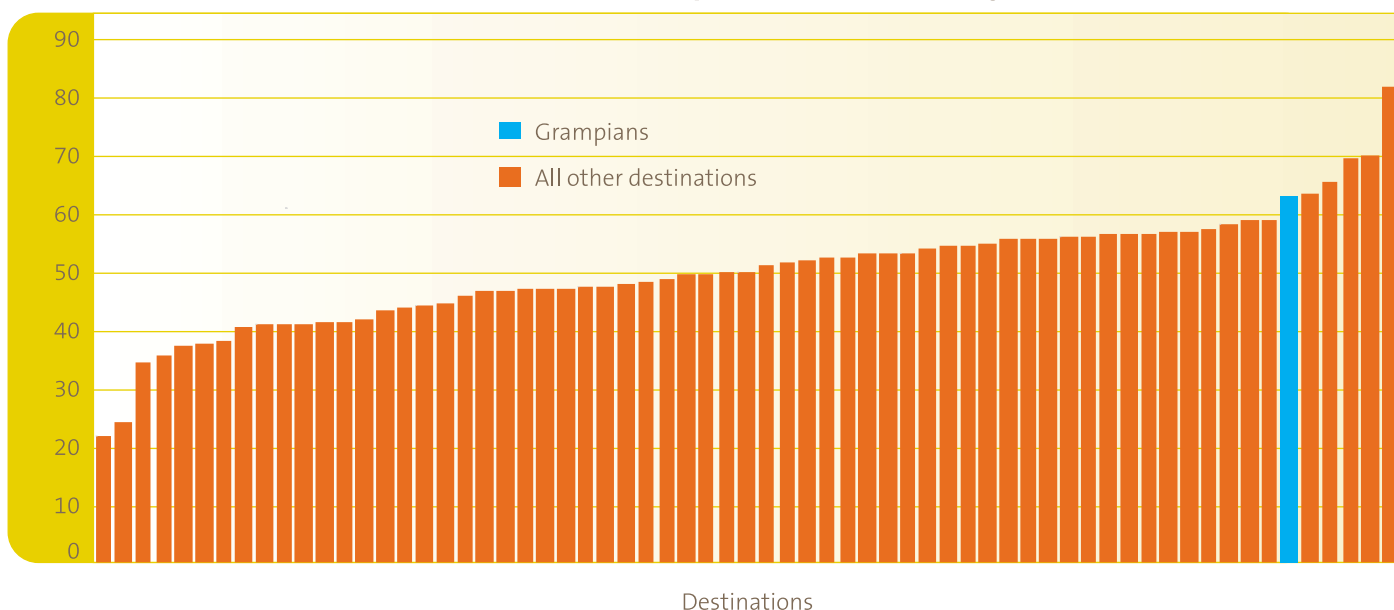
Events, the variety of things to do, suitability for families and attractions were important for Eastern towns – beauty and nature seemed to play a lesser role here. The expectation of a food and wine experience was also most commonly held by visitors to the Eastern towns.

Events, convenient stopover, nature, beauty and attractions all played a role for the Western towns and this region seemed to be more aligned with Halls Gap in terms of reasons for visiting.

Were visitors happy with their trip to the Grampians?

Visitors to the Grampians were very satisfied overall with their trip. In fact, the Grampians was the sixth highest rated destination of the 65 destinations included in the VPS benchmark database. Of all visitors, 64% reported that they were very satisfied with their visit to the Grampians, compared with the VPS benchmark of 51%. The Grampians (70%) also scored highly in terms of visitors very likely to recommend the Grampians as a destination, compared with the VPS benchmark (51%).

Overall satisfaction: Proportion of visitors very satisfied



The high overall satisfaction with the Grampians seemed mainly due to a number of attributes that recorded above benchmark satisfaction ratings: value for money, commercial accommodation, information services in the region, roads and signage. Apart from strengths in these mainly functional attributes, the Grampians delivered very strongly on satisfaction with attractions and the expectations visitors held for nature based experiences, with both scoring well above VPS benchmarks.

Visitors to Halls Gap generally had higher satisfaction levels, particularly in terms of experiences. However, outside Halls Gap satisfaction levels were still high, particularly with the more functional aspects of a visit. Halls Gap's strength in delivering nature based experiences to a range of visitor types acted as the major drawcard to the region. This presents opportunity to areas outside Halls Gap, particularly as the majority of visitors staying in Halls Gap visited other towns in the region. This opportunity was highlighted by the food and wine visitor segment evident in the Eastern towns, as they did not have a significantly different profile to the Halls Gap visitor population. Other areas in the region could leverage off the attraction of Halls Gap, particularly if complementary experiences are offered.

The Halls Gap Zoo appears a good example of a complementary experience to the nature based offerings at Halls Gap. It was nominated frequently by visitors as an exceptional experience they had in the region.

Aside from all the positive aspects of tourism in the Grampians, there were a couple of issues that stood out as possible areas for attention, particularly for Halls Gap. Shopping received very low satisfaction scores in the region compared with the VPS benchmark. Gauging from the open ended responses provided by visitors, this result seemed to reflect dissatisfaction with grocery shopping in Halls Gap, the main issue being the cost of items.

Food and beverage also received relatively low satisfaction scores in the region and again this seems to be focused on Halls Gap. The open ended responses of respondents point towards a lack of choice and in particular a lack of quality dining options in Halls Gap.

This summary is extracted from research conducted by Tourism Research Australia in partnership with Tourism Victoria and Grampians Tourism. For the full Visitor Profile and Satisfaction Report, please email tourism.research@ret.gov.au.

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