

## **Limestone Coast Collaborative**

### **Regional Branding Forum: Lucindale Country Club, 5th March 2015**

The Limestone Coast Collaborative held its first Forum in the region on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> of March at the Lucindale Country Club. The event attracted 63 registered participants including primary producers, service providers, tourist operators and representatives from the Limestone Coast Food Group, Limestone Coast Red Meat Cluster, Regional Development Australia Limestone Coast, South Australian Tourism Commission, Primary Industries SA, Local Government and Food SA.

The Forum introduced the Limestone Coast Collaborative Project to the region as well as was useful in engaging with stakeholders. Facilitator Louise Stock facilitated a process to enable participants to comment on directions for the Project as well as themes, impressions and ideas on the region.

This document lists those views from the event in the unedited format.

#### ***Q1: How do you think consumers see the Limestone Coast?***

##### **LOCATION**

- What is it? Not known
- The South East
- Beaches/holiday
- Distant/far away; not a day trip
- Diverse
- Too large: coast-Tatiara
- We're in the middle
- Is it the Coorong?
- Unknown/undiscovered
- Where is it? What are the boundaries?
- 'A surprise': we are found by mistake
- Longer travel time/trip; not a quick trip/requires a stay (not necessarily a bad thing)
- 'Hidden gem'
- Can't identify where it starts and ends
- Not seen as a discrete region
- On the way to somewhere
- End of Great Ocean Rd

##### **PHYSICAL RESOURCES**

- Water
- Green & blue
- Caves/sinkholes/Limestone
- Flat/wide open spaces
- Swamps

- Fertile, green and abundant
- Clean, fresh, pristine
- Blue Lake
- Cool climate
- Caves, Blue Lake, Coonawarra
- Great beaches
- Clean family environment

### **CULTURAL**

- Sophisticated
- Diversity
- Heritage
- Old fashioned, conservative culture
- Safe
- Healthy lifestyle
- Limestone Coast people love it!
- Quiet, raw, quaint, character, country feel
- No regional identity, invisible/not identifiable

### **PRODUCE**

- Food bowl
- Crayfish, seafood
- Beef
- Abundant
- Productive
- Value good produce
- Grazing/agriculture
- Wine
- Heard of it, but not near water; not sure of its boundaries

### **MARKETING/PROMOTIONS/COMMUNICATIONS**

- Lack of promotion, it's not seen by consumers!
- Fractured: mixed messages, so diverse; no glue binding industries together
- Not seen, low level of awareness, unknown outside of the state
- Individual attractions, not linked up; 'gems' need linking
- Diverse consumer groups identified with different needs and consumption
- Fresh new experiences and products
- International tourist as a consumer
- Diversity – done well
- See it as expensive
- Depends on your perspective: food vs wine vs tourism consumers (i.e. wine has individual brands established; foodies identify cheese & crayfish; in tourism it's seen as a drive & family destination)
- Limestone Coast consumers:
  - Don't understand quality
  - Want quantity vs quality

- Low population density
- Conservative culture
- No identity
- Accept mediocre service
- Don't like paying for quality
- Outside/online consumers:
  - Population density
- Recently changed to 'Limestone Coast'; inconsistently used
- E.g. Coonawarra, Robe do it better

**Q2: What could a brand do for our region's food, wine agriculture and tourism offerings?**

**SINGLE IDENTITY**

- Create sense of sellable identity/image
- Telling the same story
- Single identity for funding opportunities
- Gives focus
- Gives a destination
- Consolidate the region: 'this is the Limestone Coast'
- Unity
- Tie it all together
- We need a message: diverse is good, but the message is weakened if too broad/big
- Combined experiences
- Share the love
- Endorsement – word of mouth
- Awareness, Trust
- Peace of mind

**QUALITY MARK**

- Association of the region with quality
- Sign of confidence/quality
- A focus; efficiency of effort and cost
- Give integrity
- Value: cost effective, leveraged marketing
- Pride of region and produce
- Instant recognition, exposure of product
- Shared cost
- Maintain quality
- Support; teamwork; pay it forward
- 'Best Effort'
- Repeat customers/visitors
- Encouraging business growth

## **CREATING COLLABORATION CONNECTIONS**

- Leveraging the success of others
- Cross promotion - will need more active famils & education
- Structured marketing and promotion
- Build associations about what exists
- Increases collaborative efforts
- Uniting: have to work together & not be fearful of someone stealing your thunder
- Potential to change a culture
- Decrease competitiveness
- Provide a regional claim
- Power allow all producers in a geographic area to say we are working towards 'this'

## **VALUE ADDING**

- Co-branding advantage to new and emerging businesses.
- Cross-selling, feeling more included and responsible for the brand
- Value adding, Greater efficiency
- Allow us to package the experience
- Raise expectations for the consumer experience
- Choice & change
- Improving ability to charge a premium price

## **ENHANCING REGIONAL PRIDE**

- Improve it/profiles our region & products
- Create word of mouth/trust
- Can increase community pride/morale
- Sense of belonging, pride and worth
- Recognition of region
- Break down barriers
- Allows us to compete on a par with other regions with identities e.g. EP, Barossa

## **INCREASING REGIONAL PROFILE**

- Tells a deeper story
- Increased profile could = increased sales
- Collaborative opportunity
- More hits on websites
- Put us on the map
- Help with labelling; help tell the story
- SE Field Days; Limestone Coast; gives positioning
- Helps put 'it' on the map
- Improve Google hit rates
- Becomes more of a destination



**Q3: What actions are required to implement a regional brand here? What needs to happen?  
Who needs to be involved?**

**Sustainable funding/resources**

- A resource in the region to attract and seek funding (membership, levy, govt. etc.,) to keep momentum and grow; pool resources and funding; ongoing funding support; money; a sustainable collaborative to see the brand story through

**Collaboration**

- Collaboration between all stakeholders; inclusive; involve all commercial industries; networks; need to make the broader community realise that they are part of it (the Brand), not just tourism operators etc.; encourage increased involvement by local participants/producers/Councils/businesses

**Commitment/ownership**

- Commitment: financial and emotional; to listen and learn; commitment to drive the project and see it through; \$\$\$ investment, total ownership; achieve regional buy in- ownership within regions of the LC; buy in from 'peak government organisations; what's in it for me?

**Strategy**

- Need a strategy to build benefit and commitment; planning; strategy; keep it simple; a goal

**Marketing the concept**

- Marketing what the Collaborative is trying to achieve- get the message across; travelling seminars/forums- hold forums in different places so others can come; develop a clear message of what the brand would do; market to the right members that covers the diversity of the region; the Collaborative needs to communicate well with stakeholder groups

**Consultation & communication**

- Consultation; take time; listen; don't rush; consolidate and communicate; communication about what is happening, goals, outcomes; consult community; accept every point of view; communication; accessibility, approachability of people on steering committee; need to be heard; consultation; comprehensive survey & public forum; involve the consumer

**Champions/heroes**

- Identify 'hero' products; brand champions/heroes; bring stakeholders on the journey; need local 'drivers', energy and enthusiasm

**Expert/professional help**

- Consult expertise; lessons from big business (generational/evolutionary change); use existing research/resources; engage outside expertise to assist; involvement of expertise, experts; need professional help to develop brand, marketing, deal with challenges

**The Limestone Coast 'story'**

- Cornucopia; build the story (ancient & modern); acknowledging the richness; 'wealth'; explore the layers (like Barossa chapters); understand ourselves & our culture; develop the story: truthfully, buy in, over time; work through Brand SA: step through the front door, drop downs

to areas of industry; connectivity- tie the brand to something believable; “don’t make a casserole, present a smorgasbord”; what are we selling?; a personality for the region; a brand is a symbol not a representation; defining the diversity of the region; we need to define why this region is called the Limestone Coast & communicate to the key stakeholders, we all use the water; identify what the region has to offer; be clearer on what our common story is- and our chapters- distil the story to a simple, memorable tagline

### **Annual event**

- Annual umbrella marquee event: music as an attraction, produce, local providers, raise community awareness of opportunity. SE Field Days??

### **Skill development**

- Skills building: make the practices that ‘sell’ the brand a habit (i.e. quality of service, presentation, trading hours etc.)

### **Wall questions:**

#### ***What do I value about the Limestone Coast region?***

- Diversity, nature, purity, people, produce
- Lean, quiet, low cost of living
- Huge potential/diversity of cultural tourism opportunities: art galleries, art festivals, theatres, art studios, jazz academy, jazz festival, public artwork, etc....
- Clean, green, safe
- Climate/weather, beaches, produce (quality & clean)
- Untapped potential
- Diversity
- Broad
- Generosity of the people

#### ***How do consumers see the Limestone Coast region?***

- Fractured, difficult to find info, friendly
- Unaware of the quality of produce available
- Reluctant to pay a premium for premium produce
- More than a day trip from Adelaide/Melbourne
- Still a local ‘service’ town focus for many mid-sized towns i.e. service locals only. Need to think outside this: “it’s not too hard & I can do that”
- Where is it? What’s the story?
- Where can I buy your product – locally and outside the region?
- Where does it start....where does it finish?

#### ***What words describe the Limestone Coast region?***

- Great food, hospitality, country style
- High number of poor, high unemployment, quality can be a hard sell
- Hard workers continuing to grow exceptional produce
- Diverse, A great place to explore our diversity
- Clean, Beautiful

- Ocean, Beaches, Coastal
- Rugged
- Wet
- Agriculture, Seafood
- Cornucopia
- Abundance
- Limestone – origin of our soil & water
- Coast – our magnificent coastline & associated seafood
- Welcoming
- Not all about the food – hospitality
- Hard-working
- Passionate producers “made with love on the Limestone Coast”

***What would a regional brand mean for the Limestone Coast?***

- Collaboration, leveraging opportunities, cost effective
- Fantastic opportunities in promoting the fantastic produce we have on offer/tourism opportunities
- More sales
- Opportunity to collaborate: unify producers and region to create consistent image
- Recognition of quality consistency, memorable ‘experience’
- Collaboration, part of a team, not doing it on our own
- Inclusivity
- Direction
- ‘common ground’
- Make us ‘bigger’

***What is important to consider in developing a regional brand?***

- Covers all aspects of our food industry
- Focus on key produce areas
- Informing regional stakeholders both big and small; communication, communication
- Overcome the current fractured system, too many groups doing the same thing e.g. farmers markets
- Push the clean, green image like EP
- Considerable variations in climate – dry to wet & cooler (Keith to Mt Gambier)
- Regional champions & innovators leading the way
- \$ funding
- Simple, catchy brand
- Long term – able to be transferred between the decades/generations
- Including all towns/areas
- Communication
- Remember the smaller centres – we don’t all come from Mt Gambier!
- Get rid of ‘South East’; reborn as ‘Limestone Coast’ (e.g. Limestone Coast Field Days, ABC Limestone Coast); advise the media (news and weather)
- One concise message – not diversity e.g. wine or lobsters or caves