

Clay Baird

Regional Tourism & Creative Operations

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I'm Clay Baird, a father, storyteller and builder of meaningful experiences with a proven record in regional tourism leadership and business development. My career began in Australia's remote and wild landscapes, where I managed and developed award-winning tourism and hospitality ventures.

I have worked across tourism operations, leadership, business development and media production, building a practical skill set that blends creativity with commercial understanding. My experience includes tourism product development, event delivery, regional planning, business management, digital systems and film production.

I focus on leading steady, hands on projects that improve operations, support teams and strengthen long term outcomes for regional communities. I am currently completing a Master of Business Administration to build on my experience in finance, strategy and marketing and to support the development of sustainable ventures connected to people, place and the natural world.

Executive Summary

I am a regional tourism operator and manager with experience across accommodation, nature based tourism, events, digital education and content production. My background includes running small businesses, managing complex operations, improving financial performance and working with councils, operators and state bodies on regional projects. I have served as Deputy Chair of a regional tourism organisation, supporting marketing activity, industry capability programs and regional planning.

A large part of my career has been centred around horses and outdoor tourism. This includes national and international work in equine tourism, major events, training programs and media production. It gives me a practical understanding of an industry that will sit at the centre of the Brisbane 2032 program in Toowoomba and a clear view of how the region can use this opportunity to lift demand, investment and long term planning.

Across my roles I have led teams, managed budgets, delivered system improvements and developed new tourism products. I have also built a digital education platform from the ground up, using data to guide decisions and pitching growth plans to investors, grant bodies and programs such as LaunchVic.

I bring a hands on leadership style and lived experience grounded in rural life. I have lived the pressure that small operators face and I am committed to helping regional communities build sustainable outcomes.

View my digital CV at www.clay-baird.com

Or scan the QR code.

Warm Regads, Clay Baird



Relevant Experience

The Horsemen Collective PTY LTD

Founder & CEO

2021 - Current

I founded and grew The Horsemen Collective into a digital education platform working across Australia, New Zealand and the United States. My work combines operations, production, marketing and leadership, with a focus on building strong teams and delivering high quality content. The platform now includes more than 500 lessons and 20 educators and serves a growing audience of members worldwide.

I manage revenue across multiple income streams, including subscriptions, pay per view services, live streaming, partnerships and event based content. This includes budgeting, forecasting, pricing models, customer analytics and working with commercial partners to create sustainable income. I also manage operational reporting, profit share systems and customer journeys.

My work includes brand collaborations, trade stalls, event support, grant applications and pitching to investor and state funded programs such as LaunchVic.

Professional Competencies:

- Revenue management and multi stream income development
- Subscription growth, pay per view models and event based content
- Budgeting, forecasting and customer analytics
- Production leadership across multiple countries
- Hybrid team management
- UTM tracking, marketing systems and API integrations
- B2B partnerships and direct to consumer sales
- Brand collaborations, trade stalls and industry events
- Grant applications and investor pitching

The Houses of Daylesford

General Manager

2021

I stepped into this short-term role to steady the business after COVID and help the owners review their operations. My focus was on assessing the structure, improving communication, and identifying changes that would give the team clearer direction and a more reliable workflow.

I prepared a full operational review and began implementing updated systems, including a new RMS platform to replace manual processes. The owners later decided not to proceed with the wider changes, and the role concluded once the review and recommendations were delivered.

Professional Competencies:

- Change management in a short-term restructuring environment
- Operational review and system improvement
- Implementation planning for RMS and workflow upgrades
- Team support and communication during transition
- Stakeholder and property-owner liaison
- Clear reporting and recommendations to ownership

The Canopy Tree Houses

General Manager

2018 - 2021

Managed all areas of this eco-accommodation business, including staff, operations, payroll, maintenance and guest services across multiple properties. Built and implemented new booking and reporting systems to modernise workflows and give the owners clearer operational visibility.

I led the business planning, financial management and capital works program, covering water infrastructure, renovations, signage and walking tracks. I reported directly to the owners and had full responsibility for day-to-day operations, budgeting, compliance and system improvements.

I redeveloped the business plan during COVID to strengthen resilience and adjust to the changing tourism market. The role also included product development, sustainability work and assessing the business model to support long-term viability for a small regional operator.

Professional Competencies

- Operational leadership and business development
- Financial management and planning
- System design, reporting and workflow improvement
- Sustainable tourism and environmental management
- Capital works and infrastructure projects
- Communication with owners and local operators
- Product development and practical market evaluation
- Team management and steady leadership through change

Tourism Atherton Tablelands

Deputy Chair

2018 - 2021

I served as Deputy Chair for the regional tourism organisation representing operators across the Atherton Tablelands. The role involved working with local councils, small businesses and state tourism bodies to support industry growth and strengthen the regional visitor economy.

I helped guide destination marketing, regional planning and operator support programs, including work around recovery after environmental and economic disruptions. I worked closely with Tourism Tropical North Queensland to align local priorities with broader regional and state strategies and to coordinate funding and joint initiatives.

A large part of the role was stakeholder management, keeping operators, councils and partners aligned, working through different priorities and supporting small businesses with practical guidance and clear communication.

Professional Competencies

- Regional tourism leadership and board governance
- Working with multiple LGAs and state tourism partners
- Alignment of regional plans with state strategies
- Operator support and industry capability building
- Collaboration with TTNQ and government-funded partners
- Destination marketing and practical strategy delivery
- Stakeholder engagement across councils, operators and community
- Recovery planning after environmental and economic events

Spring Spur Stay

Owner Operator

2010-2018

I helped design, build and operate this family accommodation and hospitality business. My role covered day-to-day operations, staff management and developing new tourism products that kept the business steady through seasonal highs and lows. I also led the development of the paddock-to-plate restaurant and event offerings, expanding into weddings, retreats and regional events.

I worked with Tourism North East on off-season initiatives, including Harvest Festival events and celebrity chef weekends, and collaborated with operators across the region to lift the visitor experience. I handled our marketing, prepared grant submissions, contributed to award submissions and worked with LTOs, the RTO and the broader Tourism Australia network to promote the property and secure new opportunities.

This experience gave me a clear understanding of how small operators work, how to diversify income and how to build strong relationships across local, regional and national tourism bodies.

Professional Competencies

- Tourism product development and event planning
- Staff management and seasonal workforce leadership
- Grant writing and contribution to award submissions
- Marketing, partnerships and cross-collaboration with LTOs, RTOs and Tourism Australia
- Accommodation, food and hospitality operations
- Business diversification and practical problem-solving
- Community engagement and regional tourism initiatives
- Customer experience and guest relations

Bogong Horseback Adventures

Owner Operator

2006-2018

I worked across all areas of this remote adventure tourism business, leading multi-day expeditions through the Victorian High Country and managing the logistics, safety and daily operations. The role covered staff coordination, guest safety, horse care, environmental compliance, risk management and the practical delivery of nature-based tourism experiences.

As an owner operator, I worked with Parks Victoria as a stakeholder in the Alpine Management Plan, specifically around the use of horses in the alpine environment, environmental impacts and nature-based tourism operations. This included involvement in discussions around infrastructure inside the park and sections of the Alpine Walking Track, as well as meeting permit and compliance requirements that guided how operators worked within sensitive landscapes.

During this time, the business won multiple Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards. I contributed to this through product development, operations, compliance work, guest experience and support for award submissions.

I also contributed to eco-accreditation processes, grant activity, marketing and cross-collaboration with regional operators. As with many SMEs in tourism, I handled the operational challenges around PLI requirements, seasonal staffing and increasing compliance and cost pressures.

Professional Competencies

- Expedition leadership and remote nature-based tourism
- Stakeholder involvement in the Alpine Management Plan (horses, environmental impacts, park infrastructure, Alpine Walking Track)
- Risk management, guest safety and environmental compliance
- Contributions to multiple Victorian and Australian Tourism Awards
- Eco-accreditation processes and grant activity
- Understanding of PLI obligations and SME compliance pressures
- Product development and practical tourism operations
- Seasonal workforce leadership and operational problem-solving

Other Experience

Rock Creek Pack Station

Seasonal Tour Guide

1999 -2018

Worked seasonally in the High Sierra running remote wilderness tours and supporting horseback expeditions of up to 30 days at high elevation. The role was highly customer-facing and involved logistics, stock handling, and guest safety in isolated environments. I also had the opportunity to work alongside traditional owners, the US military and veterinary schools during training programs and extended pack trips.

Van Diemans Land

Unit Manager - Film Production

2009

Worked across remote locations in Victoria and Tasmania, managing logistics, crews and day-to-day operations for large field units. The role included budgeting, resourcing, coordinating remote setups and keeping teams moving safely and efficiently in challenging environments.

Equitana Melbourne

Trade Stalls & Event Conferences

Managed a trade stall, delivered presentations and supported event activities. This included customer engagement, industry meetings and marketing support for The Horsemen Collective.

Equifest NZ

Filming and Content Production

Filmed live demonstrations and worked with trainers and event staff to produce educational content for post event release.

Legacy of the Horse

Live Streaming & Film Production

Provided live streaming and film production support for this colt starting event. Managed multi camera capture, on site logistics and post event content delivery. Supported event marketing through interviews, social content and promotional footage.

Runway & Launch Vic Events

Pitching Events

Participated in pitching events through Runway and LaunchVic. Presented business concepts, discussed growth plans and received feedback from investors, mentors and industry panels.

Education & Certificates

Masters of Business Administration
Australian Institute of Business - Online
2025 - Current Enrolment

Film & Television
Footscray City Film School
2006 - 2008

Wilderness & Level 2 Workplace First Aid
Wodonga Tafe - ODE - Red Cross
2005

Digital Marketing
RMIT - Online
2007

Multi Media Design
Holmsglen TAFE
2003

Working With Children Check
Victoria
2025

Skills

97%
Tourism & Business Management


90%
Leadership + Teams + Culture


75%
Building Maintenance & Repairs


82%
Photography & Film Production


95%
Marketing


95%
Financial Planning & Strategy




Calm & Effective

I stay calm and effective under pressure, leading through challenges like bushfires and severe weather. I balance quick decision-making with responsibility, ensuring safety, guest experience, and compliance remain priorities.



Work Ethic

Growing up in tourism taught me the value of hard work and consistency, often putting in long hours through school and public holidays to keep things running.



Problem Solver

I approach challenges by listening, evaluating, and planning from different perspectives, allowing me to find practical solutions others might miss.



Versatile Skill Set

I work equally well in business planning and marketing as I do on a building site or in delivering a tourism experience, combining strategy with practical execution and a smile.

Financial Acumen

I've built strong financial and operational skills, able to analyse performance, manage risk, and adapt business models to stay profitable through changing conditions like Covid-19.



Persuasive Leader

I lead with authenticity and trust, focusing on developing capable, confident teams that can thrive independently while sharing a clear sense of purpose.