For The People

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Snowy Valleys
Signage Strategy

Signage for the Snowy Valleys has the opportunity to cement the narrative for the region and build on a united approach to branding across all towns and areas.

The opportunity to create a usable and robust system can guide visitors and locals, and enable helpful and more meaningful interactions with the physical environment, experiences and activities.

The following document covers some basic research in the wayfinding space, and will help to inform the best possible signage solution for the region, whilst addressing the unique requirements.

Purpose of signage

Signage can provide a region interesting opportunities to interact with its users. It can transform a town's appearance and the user's initial impression of the location, as well as provide key locations to interact with these visitors. Just like well-designed brands, signage that is designed to function together helps to remove confusion and creates a united messaging system.

Signage has the potential to add community meeting points or encourage people to utilise an area that would normally not be in use. Storytelling and sculptural signage can add beauty, interest and talking points to key locations and help to differentiate a town from others. While gateway signage should grab visitors attention and welcome them to your location.

When developing a signage system for a place,
it's important to:

– Clearly communicate the intended message in a concise way.
– Make the most of the space, architecture and landscape in question.
– Understand the user's behaviour and intent and meet their needs with a considered approach to information hierarchy and design.
– Be built to last in the environment it is intended for.
– Be aesthetically pleasing.
– Create a system that ties the region together and forms a cohesive style.
– Be placed in entry points and key decision points for usability.
– Have good visibility and be accessible to viewers.
– Show important wayfinding information i.e.. public amenities, tourist information, local attractions etc

Local Signage Audit

Signage and wayfinding across the Snowy Valleys region varies dramatically from town to town, and also differs significantly with each function.

This audit whilst not extensive, captures some of these variations in form, structure, and design.

Snowy Valleys Signage

Gateway and town signage:
- Little connection between towns (beyond previous Tumbarumba region branding).
- Ad-hoc approach to form.
- Mixture of photography, illustration and type.
- The new Snowy Valleys signage makes good use of long lasting materials - opportunity to continue this moving forward using local materials prominently.

Snowy Valleys Signage

Navigational signage :
- Ad-hoc approach to materials and form.
- Opportunity for introduction of sculptural signage, to engage and promote investigation.

Snowy Valleys Signage

Navigational map signage :
- Inconsistent styling of maps.
- Opportunity to improve information hierarchy and visibility.

Snowy Valleys Signage

Informative history/location signage:
- Numerous styles containing various fonts and colours, information layout.
- Some interesting approaches to design and materials that are more sympathetic to surroundings (Adelong Gold Mill, Southern Cloud Memorial).
- The flat informational signage panels while very functional, are unsurprising or memorable beyond the information.
- Long lasting and easy to produce.

World Class Signage Systems
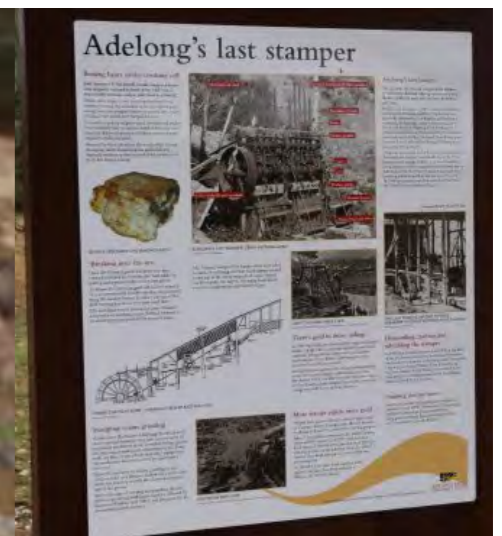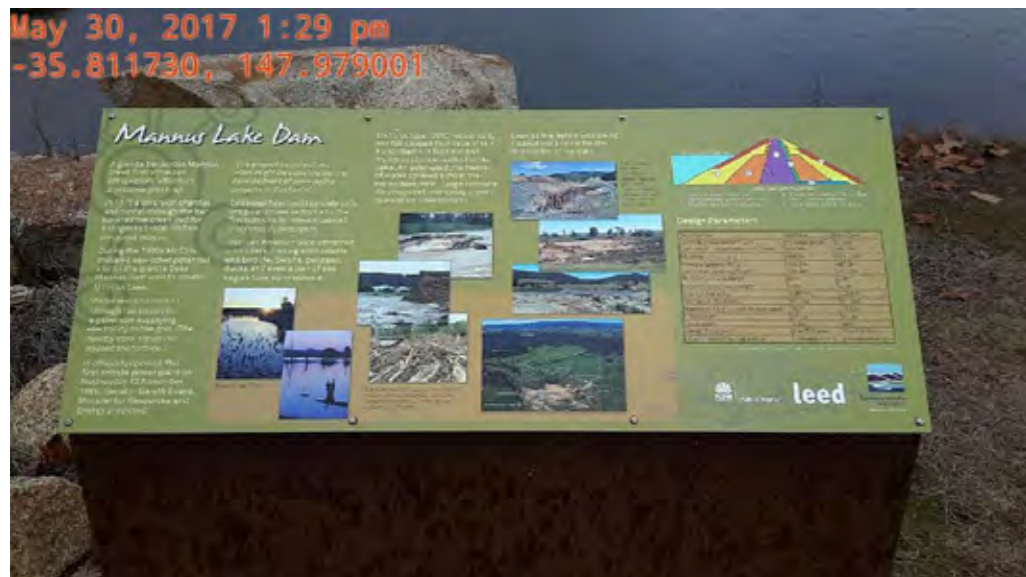
Research - Gateway

Gateway signage helps to establish the town's identity and also captures a sense of arrival to the destination. The signage can frame main entry points or at scenic locations highlighting features of that town.

- As the first impression of an area (especially in a touring region like the Snowy Valleys), gateway signage provides a huge opportunity to create impact on the viewer on arrival and encourage those driving through to stop in.
- Signage that is designed /embedded into the environment can leverage nature and landscape in a harmonious solution.
- Great signage can use materials that are locally sourced to build on the natural character of the place.

Research - Navigational & wayfinding

Wayfinding signage is used to navigate throughout a journey and provide the user with information at key decision points along the way. A good system will allow users to reach a destination in the most time effective manner as well as providing them with all the knowledge needed.

- Signage can use elements such as colour to differentiate between key information.
- Critical information is made clear, and secondary information such as the distance / direction of a walk etc can be highlighted
- The use of materials that are sympathetic to the environment can help establish a personality and character of place.
- Signage can exist on different surfaces, at different scales to create wow factor
- Unified and modular signage systems fit a vast array of needs whilst maintaining a cohesive identity.

Research - Navigational & wayfinding

- Replication of materials and forms can create cost effective and powerful signage.
- Use of Icons can reduce the amount of text and allow a user to quickly locate key information.
- Outdoor signage can be designed to work with nature to have a low impact on the visual landscape but still display useful information.
- Signage can also be used to create an interesting focal point to reclaim underutilised areas.
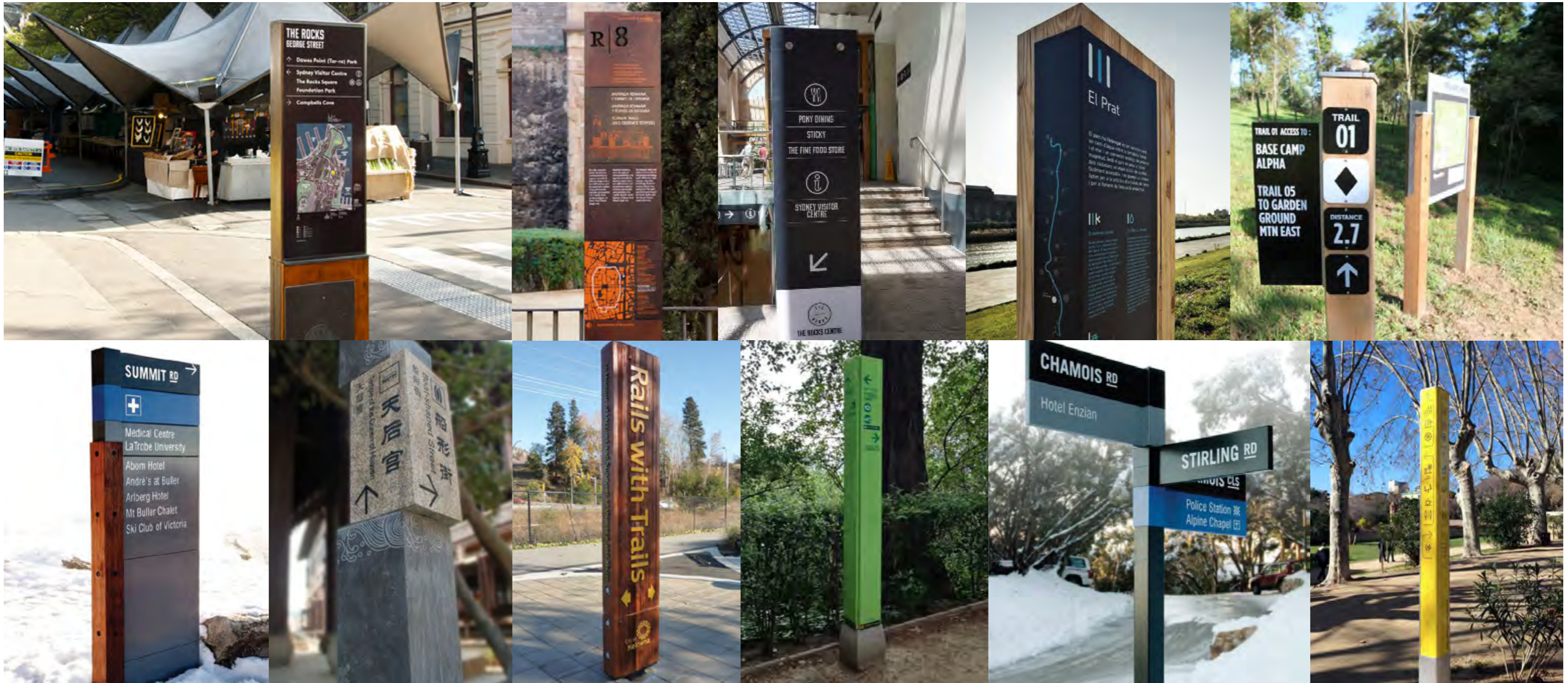
Research - Sculptural

- Sculptural Signage can create interest in an area and can provide places for people to congregate, create a point of interest and enable sharing on social media.
- Sculpture gives people a different way to experience a particular space, can aid in storytelling for the region, and add value to unused locations.

Research - Informational/historical

- Informational signage provides an opportunity to build the narrative unique to a place into otherwise functional signage.
- This kind of signage can exist beyond the traditional placements and become a great piece for storytelling (historical and brand led) around towns, trails and activity spots.
- Considered information and visual hierarchy can play different roles - helping users make their way through heavy information without overwhelming with interactivity, highlight particular facts or figures, and draw the eye and attention to important points of interest around the sign.
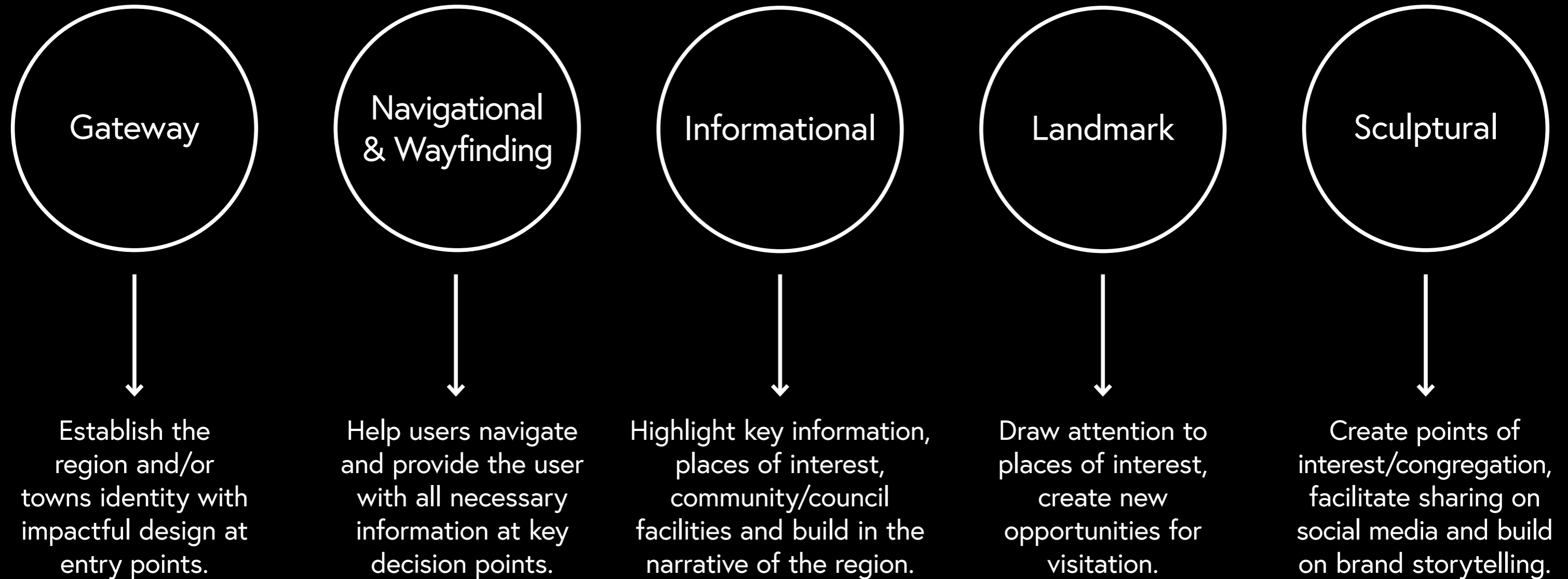
Opportunity for the Snowy Valleys region

The Snowy Valleys requires a robust signage strategy that incorporates different approaches to signage that work together to unite the region, facilitate navigation and access to information, create points of interest and provide usable items for the community and visitors.

1. Unify all gateway signage, whist enabling town specific variations.
2. Utilise materials and history of the region to create a holistic signage and wayfinding system that adheres to the same logic.
3. Favour consistency over uniformity and deploy signage at different scales.
4. Build the brand (story, attitude, design) into functional signage.
5. Create a universal approach to iconography, symbols, and mapping that draws from the brand look and feel.
6. Mitigate maintenance where possible with long lasting and sustainable suite of signage.
7. Develop an information system that is long lived and resilient future changes as tourism evolves.
8. Find areas across the region to create standout signage (functional, sculptural, navigational).

Snowy Valleys Signage Roles

Gateway

Establish the region and/or towns identity with impactful design at entry points.

Navigational & Wayfinding

Help users navigate and provide the user with all necessary information at key decision points.

Informational

Highlight key information, places of interest, community/council facilities and build in the narrative of the region.

Landmark

Draw attention to places of interest, create new opportunities for visitation.

Sculptural

Create points of interest/congregation, facilitate sharing on social media and build on brand storytelling.
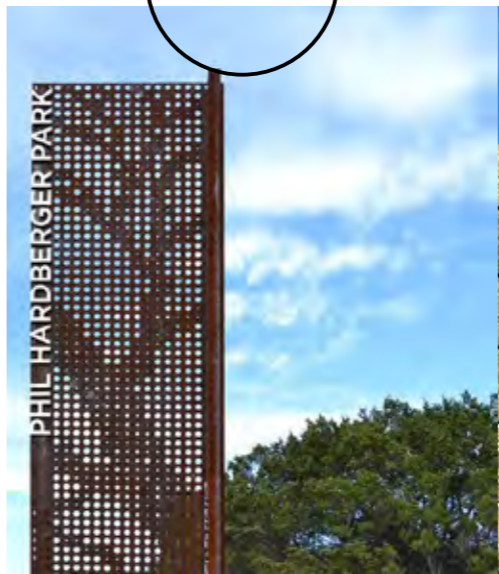
Materials at the core

A modular signage system influenced by the textures of the materials found in the Snowy Valleys and created predominantly from local materials to complement the surrounding environment. The signs would be built to last in the Snowy Valleys environment in treated timber, powder coated steel and stone. The use of universal iconography and symbols depict the activities available with important information enlarged where possible to be seen from a distance.

Materials at the core

Wayfinding

OLD PINE TRAIL

TUMUT

2.2KM

OLD PINE TRAIL

OLD PINE TRAIL
8.5KM →

TALBINGO
SNOWY VALLEYS

BATLOW
SNOWY VALLEYS

TOOMA
SNOWY VALLEYS

Gateway

Materials at the core - dual roles

Interactive Experience / Informational

Sculptural / Informational

Sculptural / Landmark

OF ANCIENT WAVES

Landmark / Interactive Experience

FISZMAN PARK

Sculptural / Gateway

Questions to ask before designing signage

1. What is the role of the signage? Does it fulfill its role?
2. Does it fit the Snowy Valleys brand?
3. Does it have good visibility and legibility?
4. Does it aid in telling Snowy Valleys stories?
5. Is it modular in its construction and design? I.e. Is it cost effective and can it be deployed easily at different scales and signage requirements?
6. Does it consider present day accessibility requirements?
7. Does it use or is it inspired by local materials and utilise local craftspeople?
8. Is it designed with long lasting materials?
9. Does it complement its surroundings?
10. Is it worth engaging with and even sharing with others?

Thank you