



Backpacker Operators  
Alliance of Victoria

▶ **BOAV  
UPDATE**

April 2011

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**WELCOME TO THE LATEST EDITION OF YOUR BOAV NEWSLETTER**

Progress towards the launch of a more unified tourism & events industry structure in Victoria is continuing with the re-launch of VTIC as an independent entity representing the industry on track for 1 July 2011. Following stakeholder engagement, the process of constitutional development, brand development and membership packaging has been taking place over the last 18 months and we are now at a point where we have a Membership Kit that will be distributed to all members of BOAV in the next couple of weeks.

VTIC continues to advocate on behalf of the industry and through VECCI's Pre-Budget Submission, VTIC has repeated its calls for the State Government to:

- Commit funding for the completion of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre extension
- Secure more international direct flights to Melbourne Airport
- Secure international airport status for Avalon Airport
- Provide funding for an upgrade of the Geelong Convention and Exhibition Centre and assess the viability of additional facilities in other regions
- Develop a Tourism and Events Investment Development Profile that identifies the top 10 'investment ready' infrastructure projects across the State.

The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's Draft Report "Unlocking Victorian Tourism" was released in early March and made for interesting and encouraging reading. Following a recent roundtable consultation with the Commissioners and the industry VTIC has prepared its response to the Draft Report, which is now available at [www.vcec.vic.gov.au](http://www.vcec.vic.gov.au).

Moving forward VTIC will be involved in the recently announced Inquiry into Victoria's Taxi Industry. VTIC has been raising the issue of taxi quality for some time, including advocacy on the issue leading up to the 2010 State Election. VTIC welcomes the direction taken by Minister Mulder and will continue to work on the issue until meaningful improvements in the quality of taxi services become evident in Melbourne. VTIC will also work with Tourism Victoria to make a submission to the State Government's Floods Review, with a view to achieving greater inclusion of the Visitor Information Centre network in the official emergency services information messaging system.

In other exciting news planning for the inaugural Tourism & Events Excellence Conference is well underway with a website to go live soon. The Conference, with the theme of "Defining Excellence", will bring international leaders to Melbourne to share their knowledge and experience of excellence to the tourism and events industry. I encourage you to register to our mailing database to hear the latest news of the conference and keep checking the website for exciting developments. The Conference will be held on 5-7 September as part of an exciting line up of events to be held during Victoria Tourism Week. Stay tuned for more information...

It is great that all businesses are now able to trade on Easter Sunday. However, with ANZAC Day falling on Easter Monday this year, the potential for confusion exists among employers about what to pay employees, costing them time and money in the process. Employers should be especially wary that ANZAC Day (25 April) is a non-trading day until 1pm, while the relevant public holiday will fall on Tuesday 26 April. The issue arises in Victoria's case because the Public Holidays Act empowers the Victorian Government to declare additional as well as substitute public holidays when, as occurs this year, ANZAC Day falls on Easter Monday or when New Years' Day falls on a weekend, as happened last summer.

Whether you are working over the Easter/ANZAC Day long weekend, or taking a well-deserved break, we wish you and yours a safe and happy Easter.

**Regards,  
Todd Blake  
GM Tourism and Events**

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## **LATEST NEWS**

### **NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR THE 2011 RACV VICTORIAN TOURISM AWARDS**

On 31 March, the Victorian Tourism Awards Program was officially opened to industry for 2011.



The awards are an online submission and site visit-based competition for all tourism businesses and industry suppliers based in Victoria.

Submissions for business categories are due on **Friday 12 August** and submissions for the individual categories are due on **Friday 23 September 2011**. The awards process will culminate in a presentation and gala ceremony to be held on Monday 14 November 2011 at Crown.

BOAV Members are encouraged to consider entering the awards this year. Some big winner's from last year's awards were:

- Habitat HQ - Backpacker Accommodation
- Old Melbourne Gaol - Crime and Justice Experience - Heritage and Cultural Tourism (Hall of Fame)
- Bunyip Tours - Tour and/or Transport Operators (Hall of Fame)
- Melbourne Aquarium - Major Tourist Attraction
- Phillip Island Nature Park - Major Tourist Attraction
- Sea All Dolphin Swims - Tour and/or Transport Operators
- Destination Melbourne - Tourism Education & Training

Some hands-on support will be provided again this year for both experienced and first-time entrants to ensure they have the best possible chance at the awards. Below is some information for those thinking of entering this year.

#### **Mentor program**

##### Experienced entrants

Registrations are now open for the Mentor Program for experienced applicants. If you have entered the awards before and would like to seek assistance and guidance from a mentor, make sure you do so before **20 May 2011**. Go to [www.victoriantourismawards.com.au](http://www.victoriantourismawards.com.au) for more information or [click here](#) to register.

##### First-time entrants

If you are a first-time entrant and would also like to get an experienced eye to help guide you through the process, please email either:

**Nicole McLean**  
Manager, Tourism Awards  
Email: [nicole.mclean@tourism.vic.gov.au](mailto:nicole.mclean@tourism.vic.gov.au)

or **Kerry McClure**  
Senior Coordinator Tourism Awards  
Email: [kerry.mcclure@tourism.vic.gov.au](mailto:kerry.mcclure@tourism.vic.gov.au)

#### **Preparatory workshops**

Don't forget to register for one of the six workshops in Melbourne and regional Victoria to gain some helpful tips and examples for preparing your submission. A judge, a mentor and a previous winning entrant will be attending each of the workshops to answer any questions regarding preparing a submission. [Click here](#) to view the workshop schedule for 2011.

For more information, including key dates and the process for entering this year's awards, visit [www.victoriantourismawards.com.au](http://www.victoriantourismawards.com.au).



## VTIC CULTURAL AWARENESS WORKSHOP



A recent forecast by Tourism Victoria states that the Chinese and Indian visitor markets are expected to grow in the coming years, with China expected to become the largest visitor market in 2012.

With this burgeoning visitation from these cultures, the question on most people's minds was how do I best service these cultures and what are their expectations?

There are three workshops scheduled around Melbourne and Regional Victoria. See information below or [click here](#) to download program and registration form.

### **Mornington Peninsula**

Wednesday 4 May 2011  
Meeting Room 1  
Mornington Peninsula Shire Offices  
Besgrove Street, Rosebud

### **Bendigo**

Tuesday 10 May 2011  
Reception Room  
Bendigo Town Hall  
Lyttleton Terrace, Bendigo

### **Melbourne**

Wednesday 22 June 2011  
Level 5 – Clarendon Room  
Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre  
2 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne

For more information, contact Mariella Mejia on [mmejia@vecci.org.au](mailto:mmejia@vecci.org.au).

## **\$3 MILLION FUND OPENED FOR VICTORIAN SMES**

The Victorian Government has made \$3 million available to small businesses as part of its Competitive Business Fund, designed to help start-ups improve their competitiveness, productivity and export potential.

Introduced in 2010, the fund supports growing and competitive businesses with the potential to move into new markets, develop processes and solutions, or invest further in their business.

Funding is allocated via one of two streams on a co-contribution basis:

- Enterprise – up to \$250,000 for a project involving one company, to be matched by a minimum of \$3 for every \$1 granted.
- Supply chain – up to \$500,000 for a collaborative project involving multiple companies, to be matched by a minimum of \$2 for every \$1 granted.

[Click here](#) for more information.

## **VECCI BUSINESS RELIEF FUND**



The VECCI Business Relief Fund (VBRF) has been established to provide short-term emergency financial support for businesses indirectly impacted by natural disaster, such as the recent Victorian floods.

Grants up to \$5,000 are available for small businesses (less than 100 full-time employees) who have suffered INDIRECTLY as a result of the floods through loss of trade and income.

Applications are to be made by completing an application form (and Statutory Declaration) and attaching supporting documentation by no later than **31 May 2011**.

Applications will be assessed against the Application Criteria by a panel comprising of VECCI's CSR Steering Committee, nominated representatives with relevant expertise, and The Salvation Army.

The Application Panel will make a decision on the 'successful' applications by no later than 29 July 2011.

Please refer to the VECCI website for program guidelines and more information [www.vecci.org.au/floods](http://www.vecci.org.au/floods) or direct any further queries to Michelle Hayward, CSR Manager on 03 8662 5227 or [mhayward@vecci.org.au](mailto:mhayward@vecci.org.au).

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## **INDUSTRY NEWS**

### **CHARGES LAID OVER ROGUE HOSTELS IN MELBOURNE**

Four people and a company have been charged in relation to allegedly running illegal backpacker hostels in Melbourne's inner south-east. But legal red tape is preventing councils from shutting down rogue hostels housing up to 45 backpackers. It has been revealed backpackers were living in dangerously overcrowded houses and flats in squalid conditions while owners reaped thousands of dollars in rent each week.

Glen Eira Council has laid charges against the owners and operators of two properties allegedly housing dozens of backpackers in Caulfield and East St Kilda. Aribec Properties, the registered owner of a Marriott Street house in Caulfield, has been charged with building a shed without a permit to allegedly squeeze in more backpackers at the property. Graeme and Emilia Halperin are the directors of Aribec Properties. The council has ordered the shed be destroyed and banned backpackers from the house. Helen and Julian Silverman of Brighton East have been charged with breaching the *Planning and Environment Act* at a property they own in Hotham Street, East St Kilda. Guy Sinvani and Sam Shaltiel, both of East St Kilda, have also been charged with breaching the *Planning Act* for allegedly running the hostel.

Both, Todd Blake, General Manager Tourism and Events and David Fitzpatrick, Chair BOAV support the efforts of councils to stamp out this issue and provided statements to this effect on ABC radio with the deputy commissioner of MFB and within various print media.

### **AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIONAL SYMBOL OF TOURISM QUALITY**



A key vehicle for driving improvement in the quality of Australia's tourism product, the TQUAL (Tourism Quality) mark, was launched at ATE by the Minister for Tourism, the Hon. Martin Ferguson AM MP. "Quality tourism businesses can sign up to use the TQUAL mark on a voluntary basis as a means to show consumers that they are committed to offering quality, reliability, professionalism and good customer service," said Minister Ferguson.

The initiative is part of the National Long Term Tourism Strategy and helps support excellence in Australia's \$34 billion tourism sector, which employs almost a million Australians directly and indirectly. [Learn more...](#)

### **VICTORIAN FLOODS REVIEW**

Between September 2010 and February 2011, many Victorian towns and communities were affected by floods that caused widespread damage and loss. Several communities were subjected to successive floods causing repeated damage. On 8 February 2011, Premier of Victoria Ted Baillieu announced the [Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings and Response](#).

Community knowledge and experience will form an important base for the work of the Review of the 2010-11 Flood Warnings and Response. Tourism stakeholders – operators, VIC staff and tourism managers – particularly those from flood-affected areas, are encouraged to contribute to the review through written submissions addressing the review's [terms of reference](#).

If you wish to provide feedback to VTIC for inclusion in our submission, please email your comments to [kburke@vecci.org.au](mailto:kburke@vecci.org.au) by Friday 13 May.

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## **LATEST IN RESEARCH**

### **NATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY RESULTS – DECEMBER QUARTER**

The latest National Visitor Survey results are now available. Despite relatively flat growth in visitor numbers (+0.5 per cent to 15.8 million), domestic overnight expenditure increased by 2.7 per cent to \$8.6 billion for the year ending December 2010. Despite the decreasing visitation to regional Victoria from year ending December 2006 to 2010, regions closer to Melbourne have shown growth in interstate overnight visitation – Yarra Valley and Dandenong Ranges (+6.9 per cent per annum) and Mornington Peninsula (+3.9 per cent per annum).

[Click here to download the full report for the NVS Year Ending December 2010.](#)



## **SURVEY OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION – DECEMBER QUARTER**

Overall the room occupancy rate for hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15 or more rooms was 66.3 per cent in the December quarter 2010.

- For Victoria for year ended December 2010 the room occupancy rate was 64.5 per cent up 2.3 per cent for same time last year.
- ACT recorded the highest occupancy rate of 73.3 per cent followed by NSW (67.6 per cent and Victoria (67.6 per cent) over the same period.
- The average length of stay for hotels, motels and serviced apartments was 2.3 days for Victoria is was 2.2 days during the December quarter, which is unchanged as at year ending December 2009.
- Bed occupancy rate for year ended December 2010 was 40.9 per cent up 1.3 per cent as same time last year.
- Average takings per room night occupied were \$158.77, up \$3.03 since this time last year.

Note that the scope of the STA covers hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15 or more rooms. To view the full report, [click here](#).

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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS – SAVE THE DATE!**

Make sure you save the following dates in your diary, to ensure you don't miss out on these industry forums and events:

- [Victorian Tourism Awards Preparatory Workshops](#) – May
- VTIC Quarterly Forums – 22 June, 6 September & 15 November
- Tourism & Events Excellence Conference – 5 to 7 September
- Victoria Tourism Week – 5 to 9 September
- [Adventure & Backpacker Industry Conference](#) – 27 October 2011 @ Sydney
- [Golden Backpack Awards](#) – 27 October 2011 @ Sydney
- [Adventure Travel & Backpackers Expo](#) – 29 October 2011 @ Sydney
- Victorian Tourism Awards Gala Dinner – 14 November 2011
- Tourism & Events Industry Christmas Party – November (TBC)

We welcome your contributions to the BOAV newsletter. To share your news and stories, email Tamara: [tristevski@vecci.org.au](mailto:tristevski@vecci.org.au)