



▶ **HMAA
UPDATE**

February 2011

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WELCOME TO YOUR LATEST HMAA NEWSLETTER

This time last year we were all watching for bushfires and hoping we would have a reprieve from the fire events we had come to expect during summer in Victoria. A year later, the weather situation could not be more different, and instead we find ourselves listening for flood alerts rather than Fire Danger Ratings. The devastation wreaked by the floods in Queensland and Victoria has shocked us all and we welcome the pledge of [\\$1 million from the State Government](#) to support tourism in the affected regions of Victoria to help the industry get back on its feet.

It feels like the industry can't take a trick at the moment – in some regions the joy of the long-awaited end of the drought has been all too quickly replaced by despair as the much-longed for water now won't stop flowing. But the tourism industry is resilient and, once the danger has passed and recovery is underway, we will notice the proverbial silver lining: lakes given up as dustbowls will be full again, houseboats can be used as they were intended, water-based activities and events can be enjoyed once more and flora and fauna will thrive – all of which is good for tourism.

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

VTIC SURVEY OF TOURISM PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK

The February 2011 quarter Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) Survey of Tourism Performance and Outlook is now open for completion.

This quarter, the survey contains special questions on the impact of the flood events in Victoria. Your feedback on this issue will support our ongoing advocacy efforts in this area.

Please [click here](#) to complete the survey. Alternatively, please copy and paste the following link into your internet browser: http://fs16.formsite.com/vecci/VTIC_Survey_February_11/index.html

The deadline for submitting your response is Friday 25 February 2011.

The results of the survey will be presented and discussed at the next quarterly VTIC Forum on Wednesday 9 March at the Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre. To register your interest in this Forum, please email Mariella Mejia: mmejia@vecci.org.au.

Alternatively, respondents who provide details at the end of the survey will receive notification of the survey results upon publication on the VTIC website.

For further information about the survey please contact Todd Blake, General Manager - Tourism & Events Services, on 03 8662 5425. If you have any questions regarding VTIC, please email the VECCI Tourism and Events team at info@vtic.com.au.

LATEST NEWS

HMAA ANNOUNCES CHANGE OF NAME

On 15 February 2011, HMAA made an official announcement launching a new name for the Association. From this point onwards HMAA will be known as the 'Accommodation Association of Australia'. The change has united an expanding accommodation sector behind a single industry body and represents a new dawn for Australia's accommodation industry. For more information [click here](#).

QANTAS AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS - TICKETS NOW ON SALE

The 2010 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards will be held in Perth on Friday 11 March 2011 at Burswood Entertainment Complex in Perth.

Presented by the National Tourism Alliance (NTA) and Tourism Council Western Australia (TCWA), and sponsored by Qantas Airways, Tourism Australia and Tourism Council Western Australia, the 26th Australian Tourism Awards are the industry's biggest and most prestigious event of the year.



Finalists from every state and territory will compete in 27 categories to receive one of these prestigious awards.

To book your tickets and accommodation, go to <http://www.victoriantourismawards.com.au/>. Special accommodation offers are also available through the NTA website.

MELBOURNE NAMED IN '41 PLACES TO GO IN 2011' LIST

Melbourne has secured an impressive 15th spot on *The Sunday New York Times*' influential '41 Places to go in 2011' list. Citing the city's culinary marvels, thriving arts scene, stylish boutique hotels and the Crown Entertainment Complex, the prestigious paper has provided some fantastic positioning for Melbourne.

The Sunday New York Times reaches 1.3 million readers each week. The release of this list – as Tourism Australia prepares for a huge U.S marketing push – is fortuitous for Victoria's tourism industry. You can read the full article here: [The 41 Places to go in 2011](#).

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

2011 STUDENT SUMMIT - NOT TO BE MISSED!



The Tourism Alliance's third annual Student Summit will be held on Friday 25 March 2011 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. This year's Summit has been timed to coincide with the 2011 National Careers & Employment Expo - *be seen. be professional. be employed*, offering tourism, events and hospitality students a complete industry experience in the one day at the one venue.

Head to www.tourismalliance.com.au for more information on the informative program and the stellar lineup of invited speakers.

CALLING FOR MENTEES FOR THE ARTN RECOVERY MENTORS INITIATIVE

VECCI is working with the Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN) to provide ongoing and meaningful support to tourism operators and destination managers who have been impacted by the recent spate of natural disasters that have occurred throughout Victoria.

The ARTN is now calling for people to register their interest to participate as mentees in their Recovery Mentors Initiative.

As the peak national body representing regional tourism, the ARTN has enlisted tourism professionals from around the country who have themselves bounced back from disaster, to mentor their counterparts currently facing similar circumstances.

The Initiative is connecting people based on commonalities such as organisation type, role and the scale of the impact on their businesses and destinations.

To register your interest, contact the ARTN by emailing vivienne@artn.com.au or by phoning 02 6620 3785.

GREEN STEPS @ WORK – AN INCENTIVE TO GO GREEN

Destination Melbourne is running an environmental sustainability training program tailored for the tourism industry.



The highly interactive *Green Steps @ Work* program will bring together motivated people with a passion for creating positive environmental change in their workplace.

The course will provide:

- A deeper understanding of environmental sustainability issues
- Practical skills to initiate and drive sustainability programs in the workplace
- Access to a national alumni and network of sustainability practitioners.

Details:

Dates: 27-28 June and 4-5 July, with a half day session on Tuesday 30 July.

Cost: \$900 plus GST. This represents a significant saving on normal course cost.

Contact: Denise Castro, email: denise@destinationmelbourne.com.au, phone: 03 9869 2410

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR NEW QUALITY TOURISM PROJECTS

Applications opened on 7 February 2011 for a fresh round of Australian Government funding for tourism projects that will nurture quality tourism experiences and support Australia's marketing campaigns.

This delivers on the Government's election commitment to provide \$40 million over four years to the *TQUAL Grants* program. Applications for funding under the *TQUAL Grants - Tourism Quality Projects* are for Australian Government support of up to \$100,000 for smaller-scale projects to stimulate private sector investment in the community.

The *TQUAL Grants* funding is separate and in addition to the \$10 million joint Australian and Queensland Government tourism support package to assist Queensland tourism operators following the floods. The grants are open for applications from organisations across Australia. The grants are competitive and are independently assessed on merit.

Applications for *Tourism Quality Projects* will close on 15 April 2011 with announcements of successful projects by the middle of the year.

For further information on *TQUAL Grants*, visit www.ret.gov.au/tourism. *Tourism Quality Project* applications and program guides are available at www.ret.gov.au or by calling 13 28 46.

STARTING UP IN TOURISM SEMINARS

VECCI Tourism & Events, together with government and industry partners, have combined their expertise and resources to develop this introduction to the tourism industry for new and potential businesses. The aim is to provide a strategic insight across a range of essential business practices and improve overall business acumen and planning.

Topics covered

The following topics will be covered in the four hour workshop:

Setting up a Tourism Business

- Licenses and insurance
- Health and safety
- Risk management
- Business and marketing planning.

Tourism Industry Overview

- Tourism industry structure
- Research
- Networks and resources available to help you.

Dates

- Thursday 3 March, 5pm-9pm at VECCI (Level 5, Room 5.3).
- Tuesday 19 April, 9am-1pm at VECCI (Level 5, Room 5.3).

For further information and a downloadable registration form, visit www.vtic.com.au.

CITY OF MELBOURNE SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Did you know that small businesses make up 83 per cent of all businesses in the City of Melbourne? Small business makes a massive contribution to the local economy and quality of life for visitors and residents.

The City of Melbourne actively supports small business through a number of initiatives, including its [grants and sponsorships program](#).

Round 1 opens on 14 February and closes on 15 March 2011. This includes:

- [Small business grants](#)
- [Social enterprise and micro business grants](#)
- [Business events sponsorship, and](#)
- [Event partnership program](#).

For businesses that operate within the City of Melbourne..

INDUSTRY NEWS

HOW PRICE CUTTING AFFECTS YOUR PROFITS

When occupancy rates are falling, there is a natural temptation to discount room rates.

Caution needs to be shown though that the discounting will provide a big enough increase in occupancy to offset the discount. Price discounting is relevant in only one situation and that is where you have a definite cost advantage over competitors. [Read more...](#)

VCEC INQUIRY INTO TOURISM UPDATE



The first stage of the VCEC Inquiry into Tourism in Victoria is complete with initial [submissions now available online](#). Together with Tourism Alliance Victoria, the Victoria Tourism Industry Council produced a comprehensive submission.

The timeline for the remainder of the Inquiry is as follows:

- Draft report released for further consultation: February 2011
- Draft report submissions due: April 2011
- Further consultation on the draft report: April - May 2011
- Final report to government: June 2011

More information will be provided as the Inquiry continues.

BUSHFIRE SAFETY DVD UPDATED

Tourism Victoria's *Bushfire Safety Advice for Travellers* DVD has been updated to reflect changes to the Fire Danger Ratings, and this year's key fire safety messages.

The DVD, which will be played in Visitor Information Centres across the state, is an important educational tool for consumers.

The *Bushfire Safety Advice for Travellers* DVD is aimed at visitors travelling to bushfire prone areas and features advice from Steve Warrington, Deputy Chief Officer, CFA.

Visitors are reminded that the risk of fire is high on hot, dry and windy days, and they should check for weather updates, and pack woollen blankets, protective clothing and extra drinking water before travelling.

Visitor Information Centres are key locations to educate and inform visitors.

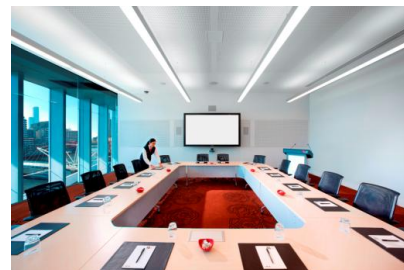
The DVD was developed by Tourism Victoria in partnership with CFA.

FREE WI-FI FOR ALL AT THE MCEC

Visitors to the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) now have access to free wireless internet, a first for any centre in the country.

Delegates, event attendees and the general public will be able to stay connected to the web, Facebook, Twitter and check emails while out of the office.

Offering free Wi-Fi further establishes the venue as an industry leader, as no other centre in Australia provides visitors with this technology. Internet coverage will extend throughout the venue, including meeting rooms, exhibition bays, the plenary and all other public spaces.



Event planners will have the option of upgrading to a platinum Wi-Fi service that can be designed specifically for their delegates and offers unrestricted internet access, including Skype.

NEW TEAM MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome Lochlan McLachlan as the new Membership and Advertising Sales Executive for the Tourism & Events Unit. Lochlan joins VECCI with considerable experience working within the Tourism industry. Lochlan has been involved in providing sales and marketing expertise to the hospitality industry for a number of years and has worked in a variety of prestigious hotels in Australia and overseas.

THIEF TARGETS WEALTHY GUESTS AT MELBOURNE HOTELS

A thief has fleeced wealthy guests at some of Melbourne's most exclusive hotels of \$100,000 in jewellery and other items after posing as a member of staff.

Police fear the well-dressed conman, who is believed to have struck three times this month, is working his way through hotels in a crime spree that has left some victims questioning security at Melbourne's high-end accommodation.

In one case at the Grand Hyatt in Collins Street, the thief claimed he needed to fix a couple's air conditioner and then moved a handbag into the outside corridor while the room was unattended. He left the suite picking up the bag, which contained a Cartier bracelet and a diamond bracelet worth a total of \$90,000.

Police described the thief as a suave, confident and impeccably mannered man who always waits in the hotel lobby before pretending he is a staff member and entering guests' rooms using only charm and deception. They say the latest incident could be a copycat of a similar incident at the Grand Hyatt earlier this month.

MELBOURNE AIRPORT SOARS TO 27.7 MILLION PASSENGERS IN 2010



Melbourne Airport has reached record numbers of travellers passing through Melbourne. The Victorian tourism industry relies heavily on the work Melbourne Airport does in continually bringing in strong numbers of interstate and international visitors to Melbourne and regional Victoria.

A strong December saw a record 27.7 million travellers pass through Melbourne Airport in the 2010 calendar year, an increase of 10 per cent on 2009 numbers.

The record result was boosted by a 14 per cent increase in international passengers in 2010, to reach 5.9 million international passengers.

Total passenger numbers at Melbourne Airport during December 2010 increased by 12 per cent compared to December 2009 to reach 2,498,813 passengers, excluding transits.

International passenger numbers for December 2010 increased by 13 per cent to reach 591,108 passengers, totalling an additional 67,682 international passengers.

The strong international passenger performance was driven by growth from the United Kingdom, Asia and New Zealand. United Kingdom passport holders were up 20 per cent, China up 26 per cent, New Zealand up 19 per cent, Malaysia 12 per cent, Singapore 7 per cent and India 6 per cent.

Domestic passengers increased by 11 per cent in December, or an additional 188,848 passengers, compared to the same period last year, to reach 1,907,705 passengers.

[Click here](#) for more information.

AUSTRALIA ENJOYS SURGE IN VISITOR ARRIVALS FROM CHINA

Despite the strong Australian dollar, visitor arrivals from China continue to surge, with the latest figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showing 42,400 visitors in November 2010.

These are the highest for any November on record, up 35 per cent from November 2009 and almost four times the number of arrivals recorded in November 2000.

The figures demonstrate a continuing trend, which will see China become Australia's most valuable inbound market in 2010, with a forecast value of \$3.1 billion. In addition to China, South Korea (up 28 per cent), Japan (up 17.4 per cent), Malaysia (up 16.8 per cent), and Singapore (up 10.2 per cent) all posted strong growth.

The decline in visitors from Europe (down 1.1 per cent) and North America (down 6.6 per cent) continues, with less than favourable economic conditions and consumer confidence affecting travel. [Read more...](#)



BUSINESS TRAVELLERS GIVE HIGH FIVE TO WI-FI

Business travellers have reaffirmed that free Wi-Fi tops their hotel services wish list.

The need for a free newspaper appears to be declining as business travellers opt to get their news online.

Results from an online survey by business travel specialist Corporate Traveller revealed business travellers consider Wi-Fi, breakfast, and early check in and late check out the top three services that should be included free of charge during their stay.

A total of 172 business travellers participated in Corporate Traveller's survey, which asked respondents to rank in order of importance which hotel amenities they thought should be provided for free. [Read more...](#)

NEW MEMBER

QUEST CHELTENHAM



Quest Cheltenham is anticipated to be a 4.5 star AAA Tourism rated property, located at 37 – 39 Station Road, Cheltenham, just 15 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. The property is in close proximity to Royal Melbourne, Victoria and Kingston Heath golf courses, Moorabbin Airport and Flying Services, Monash University and surrounding business hubs.

The property offers a combination of 49 studio, one, two and three bedroom serviced apartments and conference facilities which cater for up to 30 people. Each spacious apartment features kitchen and laundry facilities, a separate work desk, living and dining areas and broadband internet access. In addition, the property offers on-site underground car parking, on-site gymnasium, local restaurant chargeback arrangements and a pantry shopping service.

Visit their website for more information: www.questcheltenham.com.au.

LATEST IN RESEARCH

HOTEL FUTURES UPDATE FOR SEPTEMBER QUARTER

Demand Up, Rates To Follow

This update reports on data recently published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for the September quarter 2010. An update on the short term element of the annual forecasts published in *Hotel Futures 2010*. This data and other relevant information is compared to the full year 2010 forecast from *Hotel Futures 2010*.

Hotel Futures 2010 and Hotel Futures Quarterly Updates are available on www.dransfield.com.au. See attached Summary Report.

SURVEY OF TOURIST ACCOMMODATION (STA) SEPTEMBER 2010 QUARTER RELEASE

State and National Results: September quarter 2010 compared to September quarter 2009

Victoria had stronger increases than New South Wales, Queensland and the national average for rooms available, room nights occupied, occupancy rates, takings and employment.

Compared to the September quarter 2009, Victorian hotels, motels and serviced apartments with 15 rooms or more experienced growth in supply, i.e. rooms available (up 951 to 41,140), however a decline in establishments (down 8 to 811). Note however, that the increase in rooms can be attributed to the opening of Crown Metropol in 2010.

For the demand-side indicators, increases were recorded for room nights occupied (up 9.9 per cent to 2.4 million), occupancy rates (up 4.2 percentage points to 63.3 per cent) and takings (up 12.3 per cent to \$380 million) in the September 2010 quarter.

Melbourne experienced growth across most indicators: rooms available (up 1,051 to 25,520), room nights occupied (up 13.8 per cent to 1.8 million), occupancy rates (up 6.2 percentage points to 74.6 per cent), takings (up 15.2 per cent to \$292.5 million) and employment (up 4 per cent to 15,647). Regional Victoria experienced growth in room nights occupied (up 0.5 per cent to 644,200), occupancy rates (up 0.5 percentage points to 44.8 per cent) and takings (up 3.5 per cent to \$87.5 million).

For full details, [click here](#).

ABS ARRIVALS FIGURES RELEASED

There were 5.9 million visitor arrivals during the year ended November 2010, an increase of 6 per cent relative to the previous year. There were 5.2 million visitor arrivals to Australia in the eleven months to November 2010, an increase of 6 per cent relative to the same period of the previous year. [More...](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- VTIC Forum and Cultural Guidance Workshop – 9 March, 22 June
- [TAV Student Summit](#) – 25 March
- Victoria Tourism Week – 5-9 September
- Tourism & Events Industry Christmas Party – November (TBC)

WE WELCOME YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HMAA NEWSLETTER. TO SHARE YOUR NEWS AND STORIES, EMAIL THEM TO TAMARA at tristevski@vecci.org.au.