



▶ **HMAA
UPDATE**

November 2010

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WELCOME TO YOUR LATEST HMAA NEWSLETTER

Hard to believe it's already November and the Melbourne Cup has been run for another year – I trust it was an enjoyable and successful Spring Racing Carnival for you.

We are pleased to present another bumper edition of industry news and information. In particular, I am pleased to draw your attention to the VCEC Inquiry into tourism, which represents a unique and significant opportunity for the industry to shape the regulatory environment in which it operates.

On another note I am pleased to congratulate the following HMAA members who were winners and placegetters at the Victorian Tourism Awards held on Monday night.

- Alto Hotel on Bourke - Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism
- Sovereign Hill - Major Tourist Attraction
- Comfort Inn & Suites Blazing Stump

And finally, as we approach the silly season what better way to celebrate the end of the year by attending the Tourism and Events Industry Christmas Party to network with industry colleagues. Read on for more details on how to register for this annual event.

Regards,

Todd Blake

GM Tourism and Events

TOURISM AND EVENTS INDUSTRY CHRISTMAS PARTY

If you only attend one end of year celebration this year make sure it's the official Victorian Tourism and Events Industry annual Christmas Celebration!

To be held at Studio 3 at Crown on **Wednesday 24 November 2010**, from 6-10pm this event is not to be missed!

This is a fantastic opportunity to network and celebrate the end of the year with your industry colleagues in the dynamic surrounds of Studio 3, while enjoying delicious food, beverages and entertainment.

[Click here](#) to register!



LATEST NEWS

HAVE YOUR SAY – VCEC INQUIRY INTO VICTORIA'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission (VCEC) has launched an independent inquiry into Victoria's tourism industry, releasing an Issues Paper last week which describes the scope of the inquiry, the information that it is seeking, the process and the timetable for the inquiry. In releasing the Issues Paper, presiding Commissioner Ms Deborah Cope said that:



"Tourism is an important and growing sector of Victoria's economy. But it has not yet reached its potential. There is a risk that this potential will not be realised if regulation and the way government manages its assets gets in the way unnecessarily. This inquiry is a great opportunity for Victorian businesses to highlight the costs of regulation on the tourism industry and how changing the way government assets are managed could create new tourism opportunities."

In particular, the VCEC is inviting views and submissions on:

- 1) unnecessary regulation and 'red tape'
- 2) how state assets (for example, natural and built assets, public land) might be managed to better meet the needs of the tourism industry, without compromising their primary management objective
- 3) the impact of international and domestic aviation policy on the Victorian tourism industry

The Issues Paper is available from www.vcec.vic.gov.au. To register your interest, please email your contact details to tourism@vcec.vic.gov.au. For more information, please contact Robbie Taylor (administrative matters) on 03 9092 5832 or Jason Knight (other matters) 03 9092 5823.

VTIC, with support from Tourism Alliance, will be preparing a submission on behalf of the industry. The type of information we are seeking includes, but is not limited to:

1. case study material about the operation of your lease from Parks Victoria;
2. material that could be used as evidence to demonstrate that there has been a measurable financial cost incurred due to the application of state or local government regulation (e.g. planning and zoning regulations), including holding costs due to delay
3. Input with regard to how the current system or a completely remodel system could work better.

If you have relevant material that you would like to have considered as part of our submission, please contact Kristina Burke on kburke@vecci.org.au or call 03 8662 5431.

\$10.3 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR PUFFING BILLY RAILWAY

Premier John Brumby recently announced the world famous Puffing Billy Railway will receive significant infrastructure investment as part of a re-elected Labor Government tourism plan.

Areas that the \$10.3 million investment will be allocated to over the next three years include:

- A Discovery Centre which will offer visitors information about the history and construction of the railway and its place in the broader history of the Dandenong Ranges. It will also include a learning centre catering to the needs of school groups, along with café and kiosk facilities.
- A new locomotive shed, carriage shed and paint shop.
- Refurbishment of a steam locomotive.
- Refreshment rooms for Belgrave Station.
- Rolling stock upgrades.
- Training provision for volunteers and staff.



COALITION ANNOUNCES FREE ZOOS POLICY

Coalition Leader Ted Baillieu recently announced that a Victorian Liberal Nationals Coalition Government would fund free admission for children to Melbourne Zoo, Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo.

The Coalition's \$10.7 million Victorian zoos initiative would provide free admission to all children under 16 on weekends, public holidays and during school holidays.

TWO NEW STATEMENTS RELEASED FROM THE BRUMBY GOVERNMENT



Keeping Victoria's Economy Strong provides an overview of the performance of the Victorian economy and *Victoria: The Innovation State* sets out some of the Government's economic agenda for creating better and more rewarding jobs, and stronger businesses through innovation and productivity.

Over the past decade, the Victorian economy has grown more rapidly than any of the non-resource states, more than half a million new jobs were created in Victoria, and Victoria's productivity has increased by an annual average rate of 1.6 per cent. Victoria's economy emerged from the global financial crisis stronger than almost any comparable economy.

This strength has been built on economic leadership, prudent financial management, efficient regulatory settings and tax competitiveness. The Government has invested heavily in health and education, and has developed significant capabilities in technology and innovation.

Through *Victoria: The Innovation State* the Government is taking new action that leverages Victoria's comparative advantages and capabilities to build a competitive and innovative economy. *Victoria: The Innovation State* presents a vision for the future in which innovation drives our future prosperity, and includes supporting action plans in reducing red tape, ICT, design, biotechnology and market design.

Both statements underscore the need to sustain economic leadership as we prepare for the global and domestic challenges ahead. We will continue to provide that leadership, keep our economy heading in the right direction, and invest in the drivers of growth that will secure Victoria's future prosperity, liveability and sustainability.

Keeping Victoria's Economy Strong can be found at www.premier.vic.gov.au/keeping-victorias-economy-strong and *Victoria: The Innovation State* is at www.premier.vic.gov.au/victoria-the-innovation-state.

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

Destination Melbourne has embarked upon an exciting new intrastate tactical opportunity in partnership with the *Herald Sun*.

**destination
melbourne**

They will now have a regular presence in the Escape section with a 38cm x 2 column tactical insertion allowing four hotel partners to advertise an accommodation package.

This regular presence in a state-wide publication has come from discussions with a number of accommodation providers who have indicated a desire for a frequent and affordable tactical advertising opportunity in print media.

All artwork will be created by the Destination Melbourne design department free of charge.

Investment:

One insertion: \$950 + GST per package.

Two or more insertions: \$900 + GST per package.

*Please note the option to buy the entire insert for \$3,600 + GST is available.

For more information or a list of proposed insertion dates, please email Lisa Newman lisa@destinationmelbourne.com.au

ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY FOR HMAA MEMBERS

BBM (What Media?) are now opening up their accommodation guide to cater for mid range to high end hotels and serviced apartments. Joint listings in print and online are usually valued at \$1,000 + GST for the year.

They are offering HMAA members a **25 per cent** discount on rate card for a years web and print listing which will bring the rate down to **\$750 + GST**.

They are also offering any businesses that would like to book into BBM weekly a 40 per cent discount off rate card and they will include the business listings for the duration of the booking.

Discounted rates are as follow:

- Full pages – \$588 + GST per page per week.
- Half pages – \$348 + GST per half page per week.
- Quarter pages – \$216 + GST per quarter page per week.

As we are heading into summer, and with the Ashes bringing a huge amount of traffic to Australia over the next month, BBM (What Media?) are offering any new clients the opportunity to lock in the above rates for long-term bookings over the next 12 weeks with free-of-charge web coverage on their Ashes pages.

BBM's Ashes pages are currently ranking no.1 on Google searches for “**where to watch the Ashes Melbourne**” and “**Watch Ashes Live Melbourne**” and for all of Australia's major cities.

For booking or any other enquiries, please contact BBM on (02) 8231 7701 or check out their website www.bbmlive.com.

MINOR BUSINESS EXEMPTIONS

The Victorian Government has introduced exemptions for bed and breakfasts, hairdressers, butchers, florists and gift makers who meet specific criteria. The government acknowledges that these businesses can supply alcohol as a minor part of their services and do not have to obtain a liquor licence as they need very little regulation.

Becoming exempt

The exemptions will apply from 1 January 2011. For a business to be exempt from the requirement to hold a liquor licence, the proprietor must notify the Director of Liquor Licensing (the Director) that they meet the specified criteria. The Director will send an acknowledgement letter to confirm your exemption.

What happens if I fail to fulfil the exemption criteria after an exemption has been acknowledged?

To be exempt from the requirement to hold a liquor licence you need to fulfil all the criteria for your business type on an ongoing basis. If you do not meet the criteria you are no longer exempt from the requirement to hold a liquor licence, this means you will effectively be supplying liquor without a licence. This serious offence can attract a maximum fine of \$28,668 (240 penalty units) or two years imprisonment.

Bed and Breakfast

For the purpose of the exemption, a bed and breakfast is operated by the permanent resident of the premises.

- The bed and breakfast business must not provide accommodation for more than eight adult guests at any one time.
- Liquor must only be supplied to a person staying at the accommodation facility.
- The liquor supplied must be purchased by the proprietor on a retail basis.
- In the three years prior to the date the exemption commences, the proprietor must be trained in the Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA), using a course approved by the Director of Liquor Licensing.
- Liquor must not be supplied to a minor.

FIRE SAFETY

Licensees should be aware that new regulations surrounding fire safety will be coming into force in the coming months. This new law will apply to all liquor licences.

Fire safety inspectors from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) will have the power to enter and search licensed premises (and areas in close proximity to the licensed area like the kitchen) without notice, where the fire safety inspector suspects a serious fire threat.

If the fire safety inspector believes a serious fire threat exists, he or she can ask the Director of Liquor Licensing (the Director) to immediately order the evacuation and closure of the licensed premises until the threat is rectified.

If the Director closes the premises, it is an offence for the licensee to allow anyone to enter unless they are carrying out work to rectify the threat.

If appropriate, the fire safety inspector may allow the licensee an opportunity to rectify the serious fire threat immediately before asking the Director to order the closure and evacuation of the premises.

Once the licensee has undertaken any required rectification work, the licensee can ask for the work to be inspected. The fire safety inspector will need to reinspect the premises within 48 hours.

Following an inspection, if the fire safety inspector is satisfied, he or she will ask the Director to immediately revoke the order to close the premises.

Conditions that may constitute, alone or in combination, a serious fire threat are:

- locked and blocked exit doors
- obscured exit signage
- disconnected or faulty alarm systems



These new laws do not alter the relevant building standards for fire safety in licensed premises. Instead, they provide new powers to enforce existing standards.

Licensees are encouraged to inform themselves of the standards relevant to their premises and ensure compliance to protect the safety of staff and the general public.

INDUSTRY NEWS

2011 MELBOURNE TOURISM INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Do you see yourself as a potential leader with a passion for the tourism industry?

Do you have....?

- A passion for tourism industry and its future growth
- Experience in the tourism industry and/or have extensive exposure to the industry
- Understanding of how tourism works in Melbourne
- Willingness to engage in open discussions with peers
- Professional attitude and willingness to learn



If the answer is yes! Then the Melbourne Tourism Industry Leadership Program could be the program for you.

The Melbourne Tourism Industry Leadership Program (MTILP) is a personal and professional development program, which provides practical learning and network building opportunities for tourism industry leaders.

The program is delivered through 5 full day workshops and 3 overnight 2 day residentials over 6 months. The format includes presentations by engaging speakers, personal development workshops and exercises covering subjects such as emotional intelligence, goal setting, and leadership concepts.

For further information including past participants, program schedules from previous years, please visit the [Destination Melbourne website](#) or call Denise Castro on 9869 2444.

Expressions of interest for the 2011 program are now open. Applicants are required to complete an application form, and submit along with a copy of their CV to denise@destinationmelbourne.com.au. **Applications close Friday 26 November.**

PETER CRINIS ANNOUNCED AS NEW CHAIRMAN OF AHA'S VICTORIA ACCOMMODATION DIVISION

The AHA accommodation division announced that Peter Crinis, Executive General Manager - Crown Hotels & Retail, which includes Crown Towers, Crown Metropool and Crown Promenade Hotel as well as Crown Entertainment Complex's impressive stable of international brands and retail precinct, has been appointed to the role of Chairman of the AHA, Victoria Accommodation Division.

Among other significant endeavours, Peter has been responsible for ensuring the successful opening of Australia's newest \$300 AUD million hotel, Crown Metropool and brings to his new role a wealth of relevant experience and expertise. [Read more...](#)

MELBOURNE CHOSEN AS MOST LIVEABLE CITY IN AUSTRALIA

Melbourne has continued its dominance as Australia's most liveable city and most popular interstate tourist destination with new research by Roy Morgan showing Melbourne continues to outperform Sydney, Brisbane and Adelaide.

Australians now consider Melbourne to be the best city for:

- hosting world-class sporting and cultural events
- cafes, bars and nightclubs
- food experiences and world-class restaurants
- shopping and retail
- world-class golf courses
- hosting musicals and theatre shows
- regional experiences close to the city



Releasing the research at Puffing Billy in Belgrave, Premier John Brumby and Tourism and Major Events Minister Tim Holding, said Melbourne had come a long way over the past 10 years. [Read more...](#)

MELBOURNE AIRPORT EXCEEDS 27 MILLION ANNUAL PASSENGERS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Continued passenger growth at Melbourne Airport has produced the highest international and domestic passenger totals on record for the month of October, with the airport exceeding 2.5 million passengers in a calendar month and 27 million annual passengers for the first time.

International passengers for October 2010 increased by 14.3 per cent over October 2009 to reach 532,046 passengers - an additional 66,514 international passengers through Melbourne Airport.

The strong international passenger performance was driven primarily by growth to and from Asia out of Melbourne. Malaysian passport holders were up 42.7 per cent, Thailand up 41.9 per cent, Taiwan up 27.3 per cent, India up 14.6 per cent and China up 14.5 per cent.

Traditional markets also experienced growth, with passport holders from New Zealand up 8.3 per cent, United Kingdom up 8.3 per cent and United States up 3.9 per cent.

International travel by Australian passport holders continued to increase, up by 16.0 per cent from October last year, as Australians continued to take advantage of low fares, a strong Australian dollar and solid economic conditions.

Domestic passengers increased by 9.6 per cent, or an additional 172,092 passengers, over the same period to reach 1,968,009 passengers. [Read more...](#)

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR HISTORIC CHALET



The spectacular Mount Buffalo Chalet ski lodge, which celebrated its 100th anniversary this year, may soon reopen after a three-and-a-half-year closure.

Mount Buffalo Chalet, one of the state's tourism landmarks, could get a new lease of life under an ambitious plan by a north-east Victorian community group to reopen it as an eco-tourism resort showcasing local food and wine.

The community group proposing to operate the chalet, which has been closed for almost four years, includes influential local hospitality and tourism business people, as well as former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer.

Photo: Joe Armao

Victorian Environment Minister Gavin Jennings has announced that the State Government will work with the Mount Buffalo Community Enterprise company over the next 12 months to help develop an accommodation and tourism plan for the chalet.

The chalet needs substantial investment, with the group estimating it will need at least \$25 million spent on it. The last private operator pulled out in early 2007. [Read more...](#)

AIRFARES AND HOTEL TARIFFS PREDICTED TO INCREASE

Airfares and hotel accommodation rates around the world are tipped to increase by up to 10 per cent next year as business travellers return to the market after the global financial crisis.

Australia will face some of the biggest rises in the Asia-Pacific region, with increases of about 10 per cent expected for economy class flights, up to seven per cent for mid-range hotels and up to 10 per cent for top-end hotels. American Express Business Travel's annual report forecast companies would increasingly lift travel restrictions imposed during the economic downturn. It predicted the pricing advantage would swing back to airlines and hotels as there was more competition for limited seats on planes and increased occupancy at hotels.



SELLING INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES DOMESTICALLY

A new guide on how to sell Indigenous experiences to the domestic market has been released. The guide was produced as a result of research commissioned by Tourism Australia and the Department of Resources, Energy & Tourism to better understand what Australians expect of Indigenous tourism experiences. [Selling Indigenous Experiences to the Domestic Market](#), summarises the research findings, provides insight into what the domestic market looks for and provides guidance on how best to sell Indigenous experiences to Australians.

ALICE HAS ASIA-PACIFIC'S MOST SUSTAINABLE HOTEL



Crowne Plaza Alice Springs was recently unanimously voted Asia Pacific's most environmentally sustainable hotel, at Hong Kong's HICAP 2010 Asia Pacific hotel investment conference.

Assessed by an independent panel of respected judges, including representatives from the National Geographic Society and the World Wildlife Fund, the highly-contested award was established in 2007 to inspire industry-wide commitment to sustainable hotel operations.

Crowne Plaza Alice Springs' \$3.6 million investment in a multitude of water, waste and energy management projects has seen water usage reduced by 26 per cent, electricity usage by 36 per cent and gas usage by 49 per cent over the last three years.

The most visible component is the solar photovoltaic 1326-panel installation which reduces the hotel's annual carbon footprint by a massive 420 tonnes of CO² and generates over half a million kWh per year – enough to power over 60 family homes. It was the largest roof-mounted installation in the southern hemisphere when commissioned in 2009. [Read more...](#)

STAR RATINGS AUSTRALIA – NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Over the past 12 months, AAA Tourism have completed a detailed Strategic Review of STAR Ratings. They consulted widely with their members, the consumer, and the Australian tourism sector in developing a new strategic direction for the program.

The Executive and Board of Australian Motoring Services have now endorsed the recommendations from their Strategic Review of STAR Ratings Australia.

More than 8,000 Australian accommodation operators can now capitalise on the following changes they have planned, namely:

- Consolidation and reduction of categories from ten to six.
- Introduction of a new quality-based assessment and rating model.
- Development of consumer ratings as an official component of the scheme.
- New technology systems and platforms.
- Brand and Product strategy for the STARs.



Industry Advisory Panels, comprising key stakeholders and operators, will direct comprehensive Scheme Reviews over the coming months, leading to the introduction of our new quality-based assessment and rating model from 1 July 2011.

The STARs are an internationally recognised and trusted symbol of quality assurance for accommodation properties and the aim is to re-energise the STARs brand as well as the Auto Club retail distribution channels to deliver value to members and, more importantly, drive business to their properties.

If you would like more details on the proposed changes please contact Peter Blackwell on 03 8602 0611 or email pblackwell@aatourism.com.au.

MEMBER NEWS

AWARD FOR ALTO

Australia's first carbon neutral city hotel received the influential Conde Nast Traveler World Savers Award 2010 for environmental preservation at the World Savers Congress held in Singapore last month.

In the opinion of 21 international judges, Melbourne's Alto Hotel on Bourke was rated the highest of all entries worldwide from airlines, cruise lines, city hotels, resorts, hotel chains and tour operators for the Environmental Preservation category of the Conde Nast Traveler World Savers Award 2010. Finalist in the category included Qantas, Accor Hotel Group and Banyan Tree Hotels.

Being the first carbon neutral city hotel in Australia would have made an impression on the judges, however the range of initiatives are significant and cover all aspects of the hotel, including design, materials used in construction as well as daily operations. Some of the initiatives that may have caught the judges attention include:

- Key cards and pens for guest rooms made from renewable and biodegradable cornstarch.
- Free parking for guests with hybrid or electric vehicles. Electric vehicles can plug into charging points in the car park for recharging using 100 per cent renewable wind-generated electricity.
- 95 per cent of lighting uses LED or compact fluorescent globes of 4 to 15 watts.
- EarthCheck independent benchmark data at minimum 60 per cent better than best practice target for per guest use of energy, water and waste.

LATEST IN RESEARCH

NEW ABS ARRIVALS FIGURES RELEASED

There were 5.8 million visitor arrivals during the year ended September 2010, an increase of 6 per cent relative to the previous year. There were 4.2 million visitor arrivals to Australia in the nine months to September 2010, an increase of 6 per cent relative to the same period of the previous year. [More...](#)
[Read the Minister's press release.](#)

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

The first ever *State of the Industry* report outlining how Australian tourism is currently performing, the challenges it will face and how the industry needs to respond was released yesterday. The publication, developed by Tourism Research Australia, is available for free [download](#). [Read Minister Sherry's press release.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

VICTORIA'S INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE 2010

Victoria's International Exchange (VIE) will be held on Wednesday 24 November at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Held annually on the day of the Tourism & Events Industry Christmas Party, VIE provides for interactive sessions to be conducted between Tourism Victoria's overseas-based Regional Managers and industry representatives active in the international marketplace. It also allows tourism industry colleagues to learn about the current trends within the international marketplace and identify opportunities.

Registrations for VIE 2010 are now open.

Date: Wednesday 24 November

Venue: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Cost: \$230 for first delegate; \$180 for additional delegates from the same organisation

Registrations close: Wednesday 17 November. For more information click here or email sarah.brehey@tourism.vic.gov.au.

INDUSTRY BRIEFINGS 2010

Tourism Australia is holding a series of industry briefings to deliver to industry the latest intelligence on tourism in Australia. The half-day seminar is **free of charge** for industry members and will feature an overview of the Australian Tourism Directions Conference including analysis of the issues, trends and opportunities affecting international and domestic tourism.

The briefings will also include information on Tourism Australia's strategic direction and a campaign update. **A briefing will be held in Melbourne on Tuesday 30 November** at Crown Towers, 8 Whiteman Street, Southbank. [Click here](#) to register.

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