



Hotel, Motel and Accommodation Association

▶ **HMAA
UPDATE**

February 2010

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▶ **WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF YOUR HMAA NEWSLETTER FOR 2010!**

In January we experienced the first 'Code Red' fire danger ratings and saw the impact only two such days had on regional tourism. We will continue to monitor this issue and work with Tourism Victoria and the CFA to improve bushfire messaging and provide members with information and updates. In conjunction with VECCI, we are also continuing to provide feedback on the warning system to the State Government.

In January we farewelled VECCI's General Manager of Tourism and Events, Anthony McIntosh. He will certainly be missed by the HMAA team here, and we look forward to working with his successor following the recruitment process.

The year promises to be another busy year for HMAA members, with plenty of opportunities to learn, network, get involved, stay connected and have your say on issues impacting our industry. Read on, and I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events soon.

Anita Donnelly



2009 QANTAS AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS

The National 2009 Qantas Australian Tourism Awards will be held on Friday 26 February 2010, with the winners of each category announced at the formal awards ceremony at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart.

The Qantas Australian Tourism Awards recognises and promotes excellence in tourism. They are the pinnacle of achievement for the tourism industry across Australia.

We wish HMAA member *Alto Hotel on Bourke* all the best at this year's awards in the category of Excellence in Sustainable Tourism.

[Click here](#) for more information on the awards



HMAA INDUSTRY BUSINESS FACT SHEETS

[Customers who want to cancel](#)

It is inevitable that some visitors will want to cancel their reservation whether it is because of adverse weather conditions, bushfires or even a personal reason. Learn some helpful tips on how to deal with customers in these situations.

[Click here](#) to view this fact sheet.

HMAA has developed a number of other handy business resources, designed to help members stay up-to-date with safety regulations, legislation and laws that apply to the accommodation industry.

Click on the links below to view our other fact sheets available on the website:

- [10 Reasons Why Websites Fail](#)
- [Advice for Regional and Local Tourism Organisations – Helping Businesses Become More Sustainable](#)
- [Green Design](#)
- [Helpful Hints for Assisting People with a Disability](#)
- [Holiday Accommodation Guide - a guide for providers and booking agents](#)
- [Responsibilities and Liquor Laws - Changes to the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998](#)
- [Search Engine Optimisation](#)
- [Single Price Advertising](#)
- [Starting Up A Touring Business](#)
- [Starting Up A Tourist Attraction](#)
- [Starting Up An Accommodation Business](#)
- [Suggestions for Combating Bed Bugs](#)
- [Tips for Dealing with Swine Flu Issues](#)
- [Top 15 Things Travellers Can Do To Be Green](#)



TOURISM AND EVENTS INDUSTRY WELL REPRESENTED IN THE VECCI STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

The VECCI State Budget Submission strongly advocates on behalf of all tourism and events members including those of HMAA, VTIC, VEIC, BOAV and TAV.

The tourism and events sector is vulnerable to fluctuations in the general economic environment and has been impacted by the recent downturn in the economy.

As such, it is important that the 2010-11 State Budget is used not only to assist the tourism and events sector recover from the effects of the downturn, but also help position the industry for sustainable real growth through a combination of strategic investment and marketing investment.

The submission recognises the following issues:

- the need to invest in key infrastructure assets such as the Melbourne Exhibition Centre and Melbourne's airports;
- the opportunity to capitalise on Victoria's abundant natural attractions;
- the increasing importance of public safety and the need to reduce anti-social behaviour;
- the importance of continued funding for marketing; and
- the need for product development, including pre-development research and planning.

Together with sector specific recommendations, tourism and events members stand to benefit from the many State wide recommendations presented on behalf of all VECCI members. These recommendations include:

- a reduction in payroll tax;
- a reduction in the middle-upper land tax rates;
- a reduction in average employer WorkCover premiums;
- a freeze on the indexation of all fees, fines and charges, together with no new or extended taxes or charges;
- the introduction of a Major Projects Facilitation Act to cover major non-transport projects;
- funding to support the development and commercialisation of low carbon energy technologies; and
- ongoing support for bushfire preparedness.

Advocacy and representation for the industry will continue over the coming months as VECCI CEO Wayne Kayler-Thomson and other senior representatives meet with various State Ministers to advocate strongly on behalf of members, reinforcing the recommendations highlighted in the State Budget Submission.

For the full submission [click here](#):

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HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE BUS RESTRICTIONS TO SWANSTON STREET

If you are an operator impacted by the bus restrictions to Swanston Street – we'd like to hear from you.

This short survey seeks to assess the impact of the decision by the City of Melbourne to ban access of all buses from Swanston Street, from 7am to 7pm, which started on 1 November 2009. Your feedback will greatly assist us in continuing to advocate on behalf of members on this issue.

To complete the survey, please access the link below:
<http://fs16.formsite.com/vecci/SwanstonStreet/index.html>

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SMALL ACCESS TO FINANCE - HAVE YOUR SAY AS INQUIRY KICKS OFF

A Senate Inquiry is currently underway investigating the issue of small business access to finance.

In order to strengthen our advocacy in this area, VECCI encourages small businesses to provide information outlining their own experience and concerns.

If you have experienced difficulty accessing finance as a small business operator in the past 6 months, we would like to hear from you.

Please contact **Jodie Wickham**, Senior Policy Adviser, on email jwickham@vecci.org.au or phone (03) 8662 5337.

The Inquiry is expected to cover the following areas:

- The costs, terms and conditions of finance and changes to lending policies and practices affecting small businesses;
- The importance of reasonable access to funding to support small business expansion and the sector's contribution to employment growth and economic recovery;
- The state of competition in small business lending and the impact of the Government's banking guarantees;
- Opportunities and obstacles to other forms of financing, for example, equity to support small business 'start ups', liquidity, growth and expansion;
- Policies, practices and strategies to enhance access to small business finance that exist in other countries; and
- Any other related matters.

Members wanting to provide their own submissions direct to the Senate Committee should do so by **31 March 2010**.

For more information on the Inquiry click [here](#)

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VICTORIAN ACCOMMODATION SEES QUARTERLY RISE

Victoria's accommodation sector has seen an increase in revenue for the second consecutive quarter, with a 0.3 per cent rise in the three months to September.

The September quarterly results released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last week showed that while Victorian accommodation takings increased slightly, takings in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australian all declined.

National revenue fell by 0.8 per cent for the fifth consecutive quarter. Australian takings from accommodation have declined by around 10 per cent in real terms since the previous peak in the June quarter 2008.

The room occupancy rate fell slightly in Victoria reflecting an increase in the number of rooms available. The change in national room occupancy rate was minimal.

Growth prospects for Victoria's accommodation sector are expected to be spurred on by the opening of the 658-room Crown Metropol early this year.

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STRATEGIC REVIEW OF STAR RATINGS AUSTRALIA

Tourism is undertaking a comprehensive strategic review of the complete STAR Ratings Australia business. The Board of Tourism recognises changing trends in travel distribution and evolving customer expectations has meant that the current STAR Ratings system requires significant revamping.

The independent strategic review will be undertaken by experienced tourism and hospitality industry leader, Tourism and Hospitality Services Australia Managing Director Rodger Powell. Rodger is well credentialed to undertake such a vital and comprehensive review

having held a range of senior management roles in accommodation management across the sector.

Tourism's previous audit of the Ratings system, which involved many of you within our industry, clarified that the focus of the STAR Ratings criteria is too technical in nature, and does not sufficiently consider consumer choice drivers, such as customer service levels and destination appeal, to allow for an equitable and relevant modern ratings system.

Implementation of the recommended criteria changes of this audit would have resulted in a significant number of accommodation properties in our industry being downgraded. This onerous reclassification is not something the Board of Tourism is willing to impose on the industry without further vigorous assessment.

What Rodger and his expert team will deliver, in consultation with the industry, will be a robust world class – and perhaps world first – system that will reflect consumer requirements of the accommodation sector and will make a significant contribution to tourism supply quality. Importantly, it will provide consumers with certainty and our industry with a consistent and reliable means to assess and improve standards.

The review will be conducted over a six month period. Tourism is committed to announcing a new strategic path in the second half of 2010 that will include a robust, credible and accurate STAR Rating Scheme relevant for this new era of tourism choice.

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ANOTHER QUEST FOR VICTORIA

Quest Serviced Apartments has opened the doors to its second property in Brighton with Quest Brighton on the Bay. This furthers Quest's ability to service the increasing need for corporate accommodation throughout the suburbs, particularly in the Victorian Bayside area where demand for short and long term accommodation is strong.

The property has been purchased and re-branded by Quest Corporate Office. On opening, Quest Brighton on the Bay will generate 11 local jobs for the community.

To view full article [click here](#).

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CONFUSION AS MODERN AWARDS AND THE NEW SAFETY NET COMMENCED ON 1 JANUARY 2010

Some employers may have found themselves caught out by the new safety net that came into effect on 1 January 2010. On that date, existing awards and statutory minima were replaced by 122 modern awards and 10 national employment standards.

On 4 December, the AIRC made the final stage 4 modern awards. This final stage included the highly contentious 'Miscellaneous Workers Award', which at times has threatened to extend award coverage to those employees who have not historically been award-covered. In this instance, the AIRC has, correctly, narrowed the scope of coverage of this Award.

To view full Media Release [click here](#).

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AUSTRALIAN TRAVELLER GIVES BACK TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Australian Traveller has announced a special marketing incentive for tourism operators with an offer to give all of its February advertisers an additional advertisement free of charge.

Businesses that advertise in *Australian Traveller Magazine* will be entitled to equivalent space in a supplement called *The Little Book Of Big Savings*, which features holiday offers for readers.

[Enquire about advertising rates.](#)

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VICTORIAN TOURISM OPERATORS ARE OPEN FOR BUSINESS

To assist the Victorian tourism industry, a comprehensive guide to crisis management was launched by the Minister for Tourism and Major Events, the Hon. Tim Holding MP.

The online tool, *Open for Business: Crisis Management for Tourism Businesses* was developed to better equip tourism operators to prepare for, respond to and recover from crises such as bushfire, drought and floods.

The tool kit is another government initiative to ensure tourism in Victoria's regional areas remains strong. Developed in response to the impact of last year's severe bushfires, *Open for Business* includes tools, tip and case studies designed to complement the *Crisis Communications Handbook for Regional and Local Tourism*.

To view the *Open for Business: Crisis Management for Tourism Businesses* online tool go to the Policy, Advocacy and Representation page on www.hmaavictoria.com.au

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HOTEL CHAIN TO TRIAL THREE IN A BED SERVICE

A hotel chain is employing human bed warmers to help guests get a good night's sleep, according to a story in the UK's *Daily Telegraph*.

The walking electric blankets are dressed in special all-in-one sleeper suits and are sent to warm the beds of guests staying at the Holiday Inn before they get under the covers.

The five-minute free bed warming sessions were being tried out in London and Manchester at the end of January.

And even if the Holiday Inn does not get many takers for bed warming, no doubt the publicity the hotel chain receives will make the effort worthwhile.

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REGULATION BREACH WARNING PERIOD IS OVER

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has warned travel operators that the "informing and educating" period of price advertising breaches of the Trade Practices Act is over.

Companies that fail to declare the full price of accommodation, fares and travel services will face litigation and be fined.

The ACCC's policy of informing and educating about pricing breaches of the act will be replaced by enforcement and litigation.

The Trade Practices Act came into force last May to stop companies understating the real price of goods and services in a range of industries. According to the ACCC, the travel industry, led by airlines that were one of the main focal areas of the legislation, was among the worst offenders.

Advertised prices for goods and services must include all charges including taxes, fees and special charges. The advertised price must be what the consumer is expected to pay.

To view full article [click here](#).

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SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT LINE

The Small Business Support Line provides an initial single point of contact to access information and referral services that assist small businesses.

Advisers will be able to provide information, assistance or referral on small business issues including:

- business planning
- registration and licences
- e-business and online assistance
- marketing and promotion
- government initiatives, grants and assistance
- employing staff
- importing and exporting
- insurances
- government regulation
- personal stress and hardship counselling
- human resource management
- other issues small business are dealing with during the global recession.

The Support Line advisers may refer you to the nationwide network of Business Enterprise Centres, other small business advisory services or government agencies around Australia.

For more information contact the SBSL on 1800 777 275 or email sbsl@innovation.gov.au.

Another useful service for small business is www.business.gov.au

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EXPERIENCING DELAYS IN LIQUOR LICENSING APPLICATIONS?

In addition to concerns over increased costs associated with the new risk-based liquor licensing fees, member feedback indicates that there are also delays occurring in the processing of applications.

If you have experienced a delay in your liquor license application, or have experienced other related difficulties, we would like to know.

Please contact Senior Policy Adviser, Jodie Wickham on email jwickham@vecci.org.au or phone (03) 8662 5337.

This information will assist with our policy and advocacy activities in this area.

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ALLEGED ACCOMMODATION “SCAMMERS”

HMAA has received feedback from Birches Serviced Apartments regarding three alleged “scammers” who had been staying with them.

The people Birches Service Apartments have raised their concerns about have been described as three ladies:

- “Mother” aged approximately 65 years, slim build with short, grey hair.
- “Daughter” (may be known as Skyla Thompson), aged 39 years with auburn hair, dark brown eyes, larger build, generally wearing long t-shirts, leggings and sports shoes.
- “Daughter” aged approximately 20 years, with auburn hair, brown eyes, larger build, generally wearing long t-shirts, leggings and sports shoes.

The story the three people in question told Birches is that their husband and father is dying, and they are waiting on funds from overseas. Allegedly, emails arrive to the accommodation provider from their lawyer/QC or book publisher; however, it is believed that they are likely to be all from the same aol.com account with different names attached to them. It is alleged that all these various alias emails are actually operated by the trio.

If you are concerned about anyone staying with you and believe they may be suspicious, do not hesitate to contact the police.

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VECCI TRAINING

VECCI have announced some new Short Courses for their 2010 training calendar, which are available to all HMAA members.

Sales and Marketing:

- Effective Selling has been replaced with two 1-day programs: Selling Strategies that Work and Selling Fundamentals and Advanced Selling.
- Standing out from the Crowd - Meaningful Product Differentiation
- How to Attract more Quality Clients to Grow your Business
- Basic Marketing Skills
- Advanced Marketing Skills
- Powerful Branding
- Develop a Basic Marketing Plan
- Develop an Advanced Marketing Plan
- Your Business Success - Setting Up and Running
- Direct Marketing Campaigns
- Social Media

Members are also able to attend the following Briefings at no cost.

- OHS:
 - Harmonisation of OHS legislation in Australia - what it means for you and your business
- WPR:
 - Fair Work Act (non-Government Funded)
 - Modern Awards and National Employment Standards (NES)

Further details on these courses are available from www.vecci.org.au/Training

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GREEN LEARNING

The green jobs industry is growing every year, and with the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme soon to be implemented, every business needs to be aware of the opportunities available in a low-carbon economy.

Environmentally-friendly businesses are those that make a conscious decision to choose sustainable practices. Customers, staff and suppliers increasingly want to work with and for

these businesses. Sustainability in the workplace is fast becoming key to giving your business the competitive edge.

VECCI offers a range of training courses, from two-hour seminars to diploma qualifications, to help your business and staff stay up to date with the latest developments in environmental business practices.

To find out more visit www.vecci.org.au

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GREEN CLEANING

The clean green revolution is here and it's time to find out how to be environmentally friendly and chemical-free, while also maintaining high standards of cleanliness. In AMG issue 28 it was reported that cleanliness was the number one priority for travellers. Holidaymakers are also becoming more environmentally conscious and are increasingly paying attention to green initiatives.

Green cleaning is a term that describes cleaning processes that use non-toxic and biodegradable products, with the aim of protecting human health as well as the environment.

To view full article [click here](#).

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WORLD CANCER DECLARATION

Melbourne Convention + Visitors Bureau (MCVB), in conjunction with Cancer Council Australia, is bidding to host the World Cancer Congress in Melbourne in 2014. It is a 2,000 delegate Congress that would most likely be held in late August over a five day period. They will be submitting a bid document to the International Union Against Cancer (UICC) by the end of March. One of the key initiatives of the UICC is the **World Cancer Declaration** which was developed by international cancer control advocates to bring the cancer crisis to the attention of policymakers worldwide.

For the purpose of the Melbourne Bid Document and Presentation, they are aiming for as many Australian Organisations and Individuals as possible to sign the declaration this month. They are able to track the number of signatures they have been able to obtain.

Signing is a **very fast** process, you can sign as an organisation and as an individual by clicking on the link below:

http://www.uicc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14227&Itemid=737

If you would be willing to sign the declaration and forward this email onto family, friends and colleagues to show your support for Cancer Control and assist with the bid from Melbourne for the 2014 Congress, it would be greatly appreciated.

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GET TO KNOW YOUR HMAA BOARD

Name: Dean Minett

Title: Country General Manager, Australia for Ascott International.

Place of birth: Melbourne

Zodiac sign: Aries

Favourite holiday destination: Anywhere worldwide where Ascott operates....and that is a lot of places!

Dream holiday destination you've not yet travelled to: Scotland or Japan

A location you'd never go back to: Gold Coast

Favourite movie: Zulu

Most prized personal possession: My family (personal possessions can be replaced)

When I was a child I wanted to be...a pilot or restaurateur



If you could have 3 people to dinner who would they be and what would you cook? (1) My maternal grandfather who died well before I was born. By all accounts a very intelligent engineer and thorough gentleman; (2) my older brother, who died too young; and (3) my Dad, who I know would enjoy the company. Food? Who cares.

If you were given \$20,000 to invest in your business, what would you do? Enhance our Corporate Social Responsibility investment so that our success is shared around.

Finish this sentence: "I'd love to take a booking from..." the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

What do you value most about your HMAA Membership? Having an advocate with government and other agencies for industry concerns

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LATEST IN RESEARCH

TOURISM FORECASTING COMMITTEE (TFC) FORECASTS 2009 ISSUE 2 – 30 DECEMBER 2009

The Australian tourism industry was negatively affected by the global financial crisis in late 2008 and through 2009. It was expected that international arrivals to Australia would slow; however, Australia has been one of the better performing international tourism destinations supported by an increase in international aviation capacity and a favourable exchange rate in early 2009.

For further details, including forecasts per International market, refer to the full report which will be available at <http://www.tra.australia.com/forecasts.asp?sub=0090>

AUSTRALIAN HOTEL PRICES PLUNGE

Hotel prices in Australia have fallen by six percent to an average \$154 in the September quarter in the wake of the global financial crisis, largely due to a drop in business travel.

Sydney was the worst affected city in the country, with average room rates plummeting by nearly 12 per cent to \$157, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics quarterly survey of tourism accommodation.

It is now cheaper to stay in a hotel room in Sydney than it is in Melbourne, with average room prices in the Victorian capital only falling by 2.6 per cent to \$161 over the same period.

Across Australia, revenue dropped by more than eight per cent.

In Cairns, which has seen a large drop in Japanese tourists, revenue fell by nearly 16 per cent per available room.

To view full Media Release [click here](#).

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UPCOMING EVENTS

2010 VICTORIAN TOURISM CONFERENCE

The 2010 Victorian Tourism Conference will be held on **19 and 20 May**. Some of the key themes to be discussed at this year's conference are:

- What do travellers really think of Melbourne/ Victoria
- Media
- Websites & Gen Z. Are you ready?
- Surviving external pressures on your business
- Marketing

As we are still developing the full program for the conference we would love to hear from you any speaker and topic suggestions. Thank you to everyone who has already provided us with valuable feedback. Stay tuned to our conference website www.victoriantourismconference.com.au for all the up to date information.

2010 AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL TOURISM CONVENTION 16 - 20 August 2010

The 2010 Australian Regional Tourism Convention will be held Monday 16 August to Friday 20 August in the gorgeous Yarra Valley and the Dandenongs region of Victoria.

The Australian Regional Tourism Network (ARTN), producers of the Convention and the peak national body representing regional tourism practitioners, are excited and proud of the program which is already well into development.

For more information [click here](#).

HOSPITALITY AND GAMING AUSTRALIA/ISA (HGA)

The Hospitality and Gaming Australasia event is an opportunity to showcase products and services to the Accommodation Industry at a HMAA-partnered event to be held at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre from 19-20 April 2010.

The HGA is owned and operated by HMAA and the Queensland hospitality industry's other peak bodies – Clubs Queensland, Queensland Hotel Association and Restaurant & Catering Queensland.

It is one of the key buyer's shows of its kind in Australia where *all* the key elements of modern hospitality and tourism are collectively represented: from bedding, textiles, appliances, climate control and reservation systems; to food produce, equipment and services, venue design and construction, and the latest showcase of wines and boutique beers.

Should you require any additional information in the meantime please visit the trade shows official website (<http://www.hospitalityexpo.com.au>) or contact Morgan directly via morgan@hospitalityexpo.com.au, or alternatively on 0408 186 831.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- 26 May - HMAA Accommodation Forum (TBC)
- 30 July - HMAA Accommodation Awards for Excellence Gala

Member contributions welcome

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