



▶ **HMAA
UPDATE**

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In this Issue:

[LATEST NEWS](#)

[BUSINESS INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES](#)

[INDUSTRY NEWS](#)

[LATEST IN RESEARCH](#)

[UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

WELCOME TO YOUR LATEST HMAA NEWSLETTER

Victoria Tourism Industry Council are proud to advise that the final stages of evolution of a united voice for tourism across all sectors is complete, as such this marks the final edition of HMAA branded member communications. You will now receive VTIC communications which will include accommodation specific information and also relevant news and information across all sectors of the tourism & events industry. This is as a result of over 18 months of work to amalgamate HMAA, Tourism Alliance Victoria (TAV), Backpacker Operators Alliance of Victoria and VTIC into one body. As many of you would be aware VTIC will operate an Accommodation stream, to ensure continued engagement between the members with an interest in the market segment. You will be contacted by Lochlan McLachlan, Membership Sales for VTIC over the coming weeks regarding your membership and if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call him direct on 03 8662 5430.

The 2011 RACV Victorian Tourism Awards program is underway. Whether you've entered the Tourism Awards before, or you're a new entrant looking for that competitive edge for your business, the Victorian Tourism Awards is a great program that not only gives you the opportunity to showcase your business to the rest of the industry, but also gives you access to experienced industry leaders and mentors who will help you review your business objectively. The Victorian Tourism Awards are a unique opportunity to have your business independently assessed and benchmarked against your peers. The Mentor programs are a must for anyone looking to enter this year's awards program.

Keep an eye out for the next VTIC Quarterly Survey, which will come out soon. We are very keen to hear from all Victorian tourism businesses about how you are faring in light of the various flood events, natural disasters affecting interstate and overseas markets and the high Aussie dollar, to name just a few challenges facing the industry at the moment.

Finally, the State and Federal Budgets have been handed down. Whilst there's not much in either for tourism, at federal level the funding boost for vocational education and training, plus the increase in permanent migration are welcomed as the industry continues to struggle with skills shortages and workforce development. At state level, we welcome the feasibility funding for Avalon to become an international airport and also the increased support for international students.

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

LATEST NEWS

TOURISM & EVENTS EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE 2011



It is an exciting period for the Australian tourism and events industry with the inaugural Tourism & Events Excellence Conference (TEE) being held from 5 -7 September 2011 in Melbourne.

Our combined expertise from different corners of Australia will ensure for the first time that this truly national conference engages all facets of the tourism & events industry including key sectors such as accommodation, attractions, transport, events and destinations.

A primary objective of the TEE conference is to help ensure that tourism and events become a central focus of the Australian economy over the next decade, with every aspect of these sectors operating in harmony at a level that is acknowledged for its excellence by the world.

It is through defining excellence in both tourism and events across Australia that our industry will have the capacity to deliver long term, economic, social and environmental benefits to local communities and the country as a whole.

The Tourism & Events Excellence Conference is set to become a key feature of the Asia Pacific business events circuit and a leading centre for thought leadership in our industry.

A fitting backdrop given Victoria's world renowned examples of excellence in both tourism and event experiences.

The official conference website is now live www.teeconference.com. Explore the exciting and dynamic program and keep an eye out for all the latest news.

A Dynamic Program

The Conference will inspire delegates to achieve excellence in their organisations by addressing the following key topics:

- Tourism and Events Partnerships
- Marketing Strategies
- Aviation and Transport
- Sustainability and Growth
- Risk Management and Investment

[View the full program on the website.](#)

Looking for an opportunity to stand out?

The Tourism and Events Excellence Conference offers you the opportunity to share your experience with fellow delegates in our breakout sessions.

Showcase your expertise and knowledge while gaining exposure for your organisation. For more information on speaking topics or to submit a paper [click here](#).

Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for the Tourism & Events Excellence Conference. If your organisation would like to become involved in Defining Excellence in the tourism and event industry contact the Director of Strategic Partnerships, Raine Davies raine@tonycharters.com or 617 3012 9575 for a tailor made package.

VECCI APPOINTS NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE



VECCI President Peter McMullin has announced the appointment of Mark Stone as the new VECCI Chief Executive.

Mr Stone is an experienced and successful Chief Executive who has specialised in public sector management as well as collaborative private sector and business engagement.

Mr Stone is currently Chief Executive of Tourism Victoria and was previously Chief Executive of Parks Victoria.

Mr Stone will take up the role in mid-June. On 1 July, Mr Kayler-Thomson outgoing CEO will be taking up a new role as Chief Executive of the Australian Chamber Alliance Pty Ltd – a joint venture company owned by Australia's State and Territory Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as pursuing other interests.

HMAA would like to thank Mr Kayler-Thomson for his support of the tourism industry and congratulate him on his achievements while at VECCI. We welcome Mark Stone to the role and we look forward to working closely with him from June.

FEDERAL BUDGET OVERVIEW

The National Tourism Alliance has released a first cut summary of the 2011-12 Commonwealth Budget for review. The new budget focuses on getting the country back to surplus in 2012-13 and more people into jobs.

In particular areas of interest within the budget that will affect the tourism and events sector include:

- A focus on small businesses with an immediate write off of the first \$5,000 on the purchases of any motor vehicle, assets valued at under \$5,000, other assets in a single depreciation pool at a rate of 30 per cent and a reduction in the company tax rate to 29 per cent for incorporated small businesses.
- Funding for Tourism Australia has risen from \$122 million in 2010-2011 to \$136 million for 2011/12. Tourism Australia have aligned their programs with the 2020 Potential Goals, including increased activity to help inform and facilitate tourism investment; play a strategic role in aviation and develop and implement a dedicated China plan.
- Cuts of \$34 million over four years to operational staff allocated to passenger facilitation in the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service at Australia's international airports.
- The Government will provide \$359.3 million over four years as part of the establishment of the National Workforce Development Fund to support enterprise-based training in critical occupations in identified high-need sectors in the economy.
- Funding of \$1.75 billion over five years from 2012-13 to the National Partnership on vocational education and training.
- Increase in permanent migration to 185,000 visas. Department of Immigration and Citizenship would also deliver an improved regional strategy to ensure regional employers secure the information they need about various migration and visa programs available to help them fill skilled vacancies.

For more information on the Federal Budget [click here](#).

2011 LYNETTE BERGIN TOURISM FELLOWSHIP – APPLICATIONS CLOSE 11 JULY 2011



The Lynette Bergin Tourism Fellowship is currently in its seventh round and has provided the previous six winners with amazing opportunities to expand their tourism knowledge and understanding as well as their connections within the Victorian tourism industry.

"My Lynette Bergin Tourism Fellowship project provided me with an invaluable two-week study trip to investigate the Indian travel market. Undertaking work placement within Tourism Australia and Tourism Victoria in market offices was a great experience and provided me with a better understanding of the operations and activities of these important organisations. Through meetings with retail and wholesale travel agencies and conducting interviews with some of their past clients who have visited Victoria, I was able to ascertain the motivations, expectations, experiences and perceptions of the Indian traveller.

During my trip I was exposed to a range of different cultural nuances and it was interesting to discover how these influence travel patterns and behaviours. Spending time interacting with the Indian travel trade, leisure travellers and the general population I gained an insight into and a broader perspective of the Indian culture" says Megan Peacock, 2010 Fellowship recipient.

The Fellowship is an industry funded annual award of up to \$8,000. The winner is able to apply the Fellowship funds to support an activity that provides both personal and business development benefits during the following year. In naming the fellowship in honour of Lynette Bergin, Victoria Tourism Industry Council seeks to perpetuate the skills and contribution Lynette made to the industry and celebrate the guiding hand Lynette offered to many of the industry's new recruits.

"The fellowship is an amazing opportunity for young people in the tourism industry. I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to broaden my knowledge about the diverse Indian travel market and develop my passion for international tourism through my fellowship trip" says Megan.

The Fellowship seeks to promote skills and excellence among young people and new entrants into the tourism industry; and contribute to the continued development and growth of tourism.

How do I find out more?

[Click here](#) for a copy of the application form or contact Victoria Tourism Industry Council on 03 8662 5425.

TOURISM FIRE RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY CONSULTATION



VTIC is currently working with key emergency services stakeholders to ensure the management of future fire and/or weather-related emergencies are responded to in a manner that will minimise negative impacts on the tourism and events sector.

VTIC will be working with the Fire Services Commissioner and Tourism Victoria in a bid to help shape next summer's fire awareness campaign. This is in addition to VTIC's work to ensure future fuel reduction burning also takes place in a fashion that minimises its impact on the sector.

Tourism Victoria and the Department of Justice are also undertaking a comprehensive research project to better understand the impact of fire-related messaging on the Victorian tourism industry.

This project will study:

- The impacts of fire-related messaging on travel behaviour (including any links between the dissemination of fire safety advice and tourists' perceptions of bushfire risk and/or safety).
- Victorian tourism operators' perceptions and capacity to deliver timely and relevant bushfire safety information to educate and inform tourists.

Once the final report has been received and strategic outcomes have been determined, Tourism Victoria will distribute the research findings to the industry.

2011 VICTORIAN TOURISM AWARDS – REGISTRATIONS FOR MENTOR PROGRAM CLOSES 20 MAY



Participating in the Victorian Tourism Awards program is an excellent way to raise the profile of your business and create new industry networks. If you have not thought about entering the awards before make sure you visit www.victoriantourismawards.com.au for more information. Not only is it great industry recognition if you do win, but many businesses use the process as an annual business development tool and

yearly review.

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

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 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

or

Kerry McClure

Senior Coordinator Tourism Awards

Email: kerry.mcclure@tourism.vic.gov.au

If you have not yet registered your business for this year's Mentor Program make sure you do so before **Wednesday 20 May**.

BUSINESS INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES

LEARN MORE ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

To educate businesses on the marketing opportunities available internationally Tourism Victoria has compiled an *International Opportunities Guide – 2011-2012*.

Tourism Victoria seeks to consistently strengthen its relationships with industry and key distribution partners to work collaboratively and ensure that Melbourne and Victoria continue to maximise yield from international tourism.

If you require assistance locating or downloading the document, please contact Sarah Breheny on (03) 9653 9722 or sarah.breheny@tourism.vic.gov.au

VICTORIA TOURISM WEEK 5-10 SEPTEMBER 2011



The second Victoria Tourism Week is scheduled to be held from Monday 5 to Saturday 10 September, 2011. The inaugural Victoria Tourism Week was a roaring success seeing thousands participating in events all over Victoria.

This year, Victoria Tourism Week is back in September and our aim is to make it bigger and better.

The launch of tourism week will be at the inaugural national conference, The Tourism & Events (TEE) Excellence Conference focusing on Defining Excellence in our industry.

Our partners Destination Melbourne will be hosting a series of functions with further information coming soon.

Back by popular demand is the Tourism Amazing Race.

Grab a bunch of your colleagues to make a team, pick a great costume, some sensible shoes and race through the streets of Melbourne to try and reign supreme.

We are inviting the tourism industry, both in Melbourne and regional Victoria, to become involved in Victoria Tourism Week.

Tourism Industry leaders interested in building events that will support Victoria Tourism Week, or participating in planned events, are encouraged to contact Mariella Mejia on email mmejia@vecci.org.au or call on 8662 5217.

TRAIN YOUR FRONT OFFICE STAFF WELL

As revenue managers work diligently these days to try to maximise profits during the economic recovery, there seems to be a disproportionate amount of efforts focused on the electronic distribution channels. As addressed in another recent article, the savvy hotel marketers recognise the value of their voice distribution channels. Yet there is still another distribution channel that is far too often overlooked: the hotel front desk.

At most properties the front desk team faces a myriad of other opportunities to increase sales and optimise profits every day. Depending on factors such as your property's destination, location, brand and market segment, here are some situations your front desk salespeople might encounter daily, along with corresponding training techniques for review at your next departmental meeting.

- Capturing more walk-in business.
- Securing 'move-overs' from disgruntled guests currently staying at other hotels in the area.
- Upselling effectively during registration.
- Securing return reservations at departure.
- Maintaining rate 'fences' and eliminating 'rate slippage'.
- Using 'channel conversion techniques'.
- Capitalising on 'after-hours'.
- Discovering leads for new local corporate accounts from current in-house guests.

By expanding your front desk training to address these sales and profit optimisation opportunities, you will ensure that your team capitalises on each and every chance to secure additional business and to maximise the margins. [Read more...](#)

INDUSTRY NEWS

IMPROVE YOUR TOURISM BUSINESS

Register for a Business Victoria Website Account to help keep your business organised. Your account will help you:

- stay up to date with tourism business news
- manage your regulatory requirements
- find and save useful business forms and applications
- get involved in networking groups to develop your business and have your say
- book for business workshops, seminars and conferences
- access business success stories, tips and how-to articles.

Visit business.vic.gov.au/tourism and choose the 'More help for your business' tab.

CHANGES TO THE MY.VISITVICTORIA.COM OPERATOR PORTAL

The new my.visitvictoria.com will go live on 1 June 2011. Tourism Victoria are currently migrating all live product and event listings into the new system. A completely new visitvictoria.com site will go live in July 2011.



To make the most of the new design of visitvictoria.com operators need to login at my.visitvictoria.com and update three parts of their listing: images, room types or tour information, and tariff information.

Please note, if listings are not updated before the site is launched in July, operator listings will still appear on the site. However, unless updated, listings will not display information about rooms and tours, or tariff information. The new system requires operators to load larger photographic images. The old images will still appear but the images will not be the correct size for the page, reducing the visual appeal of your listing.

More details will be sent out by email to operators shortly, and [for further information please visit Tourism Victoria's corporate site.](#)

VISA REVIEW WELCOMED

The Government's review of a range of visa classifications headed by tertiary education minister Michael Knight, is examining the working holiday visa, student visa and general holiday visas, with the aim of keeping Australia competitive in tourism and education.

The review has been praised by Australian Tourism Export Council managing director Felicia Mariani.

"There are currently too many roadblocks to Australia as a tourist destination including the rising Australian dollar, increasing fuel surcharges, the passenger movement charge, along with the cost and complexity of getting a visa, so we welcome any changes the government can make that will ease this burden to our visitors," said Ms Mariani.

The student visa review comes amid concerns over a drop in the number of international students coming to study in Australia. The review will assess the efficiency of existing threshold requirements for student visa applicants, including English language proficiency, financial capacity and previous education level.

The review will be submitted to the Government in mid 2011.

FREE HOTEL SHOWCASES COOL MELBOURNE



More than 16,000 people applied last year to stay for free at the Lost & Found hotel room, a Tourism Victoria initiative designed to spread the word about Melbourne's cultural scene.

Applications are now being taken for this year's room, which has relocated to a space above the uber-cool Captains of Industry, a gentleman's outfitter and cafe at 2 Somerset Place, a lane near Elizabeth Street.

The interior has been filled with furniture, fittings and items from some of Melbourne's finest design talent and guests have access to a cultural concierge who will ensure they find their way into the hottest bars and restaurants, even those with waiting lists.

The Lost & Found hotel room is open until July 31 for stays of up to three nights. To apply, you need to be a subscriber to the cultural e-newsletter, Lost & Found. [Read more...](#) See wearelostandfound.com.au.

PARKROYAL LAUNCHES AT MELBOURNE AIRPORT

Last month the Hilton Melbourne Airport was rebranded to the PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport.

Located at the doorstep of the domestic and international airport, PARKROYAL Melbourne Airport offers 276 guest rooms and is also a popular business and conference destination.

The PARKROYAL brand was founded in Melbourne in 1962 and now consists of properties throughout Asia and Australia.

LATEST IN RESEARCH

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR ARRIVALS IN MARCH 2011

Details of short-term visitor arrivals to Australia for March 2011 are now available on tourism.australia.com.

Key findings:

- There were 5.9 million visitor arrivals during the year ended March 2011, an increase of 3.6 per cent relative to the previous year.
- There were 1.5 million visitor arrivals to Australia during the three months to March 2011, a decrease of 0.3 per cent relative to the same period of the previous year.
- There were 501,100 visitor arrivals during March 2011, a decrease of 5.1 per cent relative to the same month of the previous year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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 is still one workshop scheduled in Melbourne in June. See information below for workshop dates and locations.

Melbourne

Wednesday 15 June 2011

Level 5 - Clarendon Room

Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre

2 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne



For more information and to register, contact Mariella Mejia on mmejia@vecci.org.au.

VTIC FORUM – 15 JUNE 2011 - THE ECONOMICS OF INCLUSIVE & ACCESSIBLE TOURISM



The Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) invites you to the quarterly tourism industry forum.

The size of our ageing population is set to increase dramatically in the coming years. This cohort will be retiring sooner and living longer, and may be even travelling more frequently.

But of course, with age come physical and mental ailments and this presents challenges not only for those affected, but for the communities and businesses around them.

Each year, 88 per cent of people with a disability take a holiday with the total tourism expenditure attributable to the group being over \$8 billion per year, or 11 per cent of overall tourism expenditure. The numbers are staggering.

What does this mean for the tourism industry?

At the Forum learn about:

- What constitutes inclusive and accessible tourism.
- Cost of compliance with accessibility legislation.
- What the tourism industry is doing to meet the needs and demands of this market segment.

DATE AND TIME:

Wednesday 15 June 2011

Forum: 4pm – 6pm, **Networking:** 6pm – 7pm

VENUE:

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

Clarendon Room, 2 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Melbourne

COST:

Member: \$50, **Non-member rate:** \$70

[Click here for program and registration details.](#)

ADVENTURE AND NATURE BASED FORUM 4-5 AUGUST 2011

The Adventure and Nature Based Forum will be held from 4-5 August in Geelong, Victoria.

This year's forum will help adventure and nature based operators take advantage of tourism and how it can grow your business.

The forum will provide professional development for operators around Victoria as well as an opportunity to network with managers of Visitor Information Centres in an unforgettable setting.

For more information and to register your interest contact Mariella Mejia at mmejia@vecci.org.au or 8662 5217. This is one forum not to be missed!

2011 CALENDAR OF EVENTS – SAVE THE DATE!

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

- VTIC Quarterly Forums – 6 September & 15 November
- Serviced Apartment Summit – 22 June
- Tourism & Events Excellence Conference – 5 to 7 September
- Victoria Tourism Week – 5 to 10 September
- Victorian Tourism Awards Gala Dinner – 14 November 2011
- Tourism & Events Industry Christmas Party – November (TBC)