

POLICY STATEMENT

Government Resourcing and Support

Background

- The tourism and events industry plays a significant role in the Victorian economy, contributing \$15.1 billion annually to investment, output, export earnings and jobs.
- Melbourne has built a reputation as a world leading destination for major events and business events. Regional Victoria has also developed a vibrant annual, special and business events program. In 2006 Victoria attracted over 324,000 international visitors to major events, generating over \$1.2 billion in economic activity.
- The industry is currently facing numerous challenges, including but not limited to; climate change, changing international and national growth markets, skill and labour shortages, and strong domestic and international competition. In addition the industry is cyclical by nature and has a naturally high level of staff turnover. As such there is a strong case for maintaining Government resourcing and support in the development of the events industry, particularly at a time like this when considerable constraints in markets exist and industry operators are facing increasingly difficult trading conditions.

Key Issues

- While the importance of private sector investment is central to long-term viability, Government plays a vital role in terms of skill development, marketing, investment promotion, infrastructure planning, regulations and policy direction, all of which have a significant impact on the success of the industry. Government also has a vital role to play in providing leadership, direction, and long-term confidence and certainty to industry and investors.
- Government provides resourcing and support both directly and indirectly. It provides this directly, through funding, undertaking infrastructure projects, and taking on a key leadership role. It also provides resourcing and support indirectly, by ensuring the planning system encourages appropriate private sector investment.
- Government resourcing and support currently takes a number of forms, including resourcing and support for new infrastructure, as well as spending to maintain and expand existing facilities. Both types of resourcing and support are needed to ensure Victoria's events industry remains competitive and is able to capitalise on future demand growth.
- For Government resourcing and support to be effective and efficient, a 'whole of government' approach is required, with improved coordination across all levels of Government. Improved reporting, planning and cooperation between agencies is also required, including strengthening information flows, linkages and networks between tourism agencies, institutions, customers and businesses.

Specific areas in which further Government resources and support is needed include:

- The attraction and retention of major sporting, cultural and business events, as well as significant regional events. Support needs to be given to established events as well as smaller events that have the potential to grow (such as the Melbourne Flower and Garden Expo).
- Marketing support and resources are required to maintain international and domestic competitiveness, maximise returns on industry investment and ensure a sustainable future for the sector.

- Support to integrate speciality tourism sectors such as nature-based tourism and spa and wellness tourism with Victoria's events, so as to further extend the sector's competitive positioning.
- Resources for the expansion of the Melbourne Exhibition Centre to support increased opportunities for business events (including opportunities to attract large international trade shows), as well as support for the development of business events facilities outside the metropolitan area.
- Resources for the upgrade of significant attractions and venue infrastructure, including Melbourne and Olympic Park, in order to retain the world-class reputation such facilities currently hold, and continue to ensure the success of high-profile events such as the Australian Open.
- Support and assistance for events and related businesses affected by climate change and the introduction of an emission trading scheme through well designed adaptation strategies and the effective promotion of the benefits of sustainable events.
- Resources to increase funding for events related training, to allow the industry to respond to the strong growth forecast over the next decade. This must include a focus on specific skills to meet the needs of international growth markets (including improved language and cultural skills), as well as enhancing broader industry-based skills.
- New investment in physical infrastructure and supporting services is vital to support the future growth and success of Victoria's events industry, including roads, airports, cruise-ship facilities, public transport, public toilets, water and energy supply, car parking and signage. Current infrastructure should not only be more effectively maintained but actively enhanced in order to maximise the use of current assets and the yield from event attractions, now and into the future.

Policy Position

- VEIC believes Government resourcing and support, together with strong industry involvement, is vital to the ongoing strength and prosperity of the Victorian events industry.
- VEIC supports a unified representative voice for the events industry at a State level.
- VEIC supports continued open and regular dialogue and consultation with all levels of Government on key advocacy and related programs impacting on the industry.
- VEIC supports the progression and implementation of long-term strategic directions and performance measures, in order to encourage appropriate private sector investment.

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