

POLICY STATEMENT

Standards and Excellence

Background

- The tourism and events industry plays a significant role in the Victorian economy, contributing \$11 billion annually to investment, output, export earnings and jobs. Operators within the industry face high external and internal competition. The cyclical nature of the industry, and the naturally high level of staff turnover present additional challenges.
- To ensure future success, the industry must demonstrate excellence, providing consistently high quality events. It is essential that visitors consider Victoria a desirable, high quality destination, where world class events can be experienced.
- Excellence is multi-faceted and encompasses:
 - Culture - developing a mindset of excellence and respected leadership.
 - Infrastructure and service delivery - the provision of supporting facilities and services.
 - Regulation - the existence of a well designed, supportive regulatory environment.
- Given that the events industry is characterised by a diverse array of operators, it is important that the industry itself takes the lead in meeting service excellence standards. However, Government needs to provide support by ensuring frameworks and industry standards are in place to promote excellence and provide confidence and certainty to both operator and customers.

Principles of Excellence

- Excellence goes well beyond compliance with legislation and service standards. Excellence involves; strategic thinking, effective leadership and communication, a culture of continual learning, and a customer focus. In addition to providing benefits to the consumer, a system of excellence should also provide benefits to the operators including; improved profitability, new market opportunities and competitive advantages. At an operational level, the application of excellence practices can drive greater efficiency in resource use and higher productivity.
- Achieving excellence is a dynamic process that requires continuous improvement. It should occur within a structured system that ensures visitor needs and preferences are better served, and that they receive better value for money. A link exists between excellence and yield, and operators seeking to attract high yield visitors must offer excellence.
- To fulfil customers' needs, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of differing visitor requirements, budgets and expectations, and also be able to accurately measure them. Industry participants must be committed to monitoring visitor satisfaction and their perceptions of quality, as well as changing tastes and preferences. Operators must be committed to rectify identifiable gaps.
- A consistently applied, credible and relatively simple system of quality assessment or accreditation is needed to promote excellence, and must be both recognised and supported by the events sector and its customers. A formal accreditation system or industry standard provides a recognisable measure of quality and certainty to consumers.
- There must be widespread and thorough collaboration with all levels of Government, the community and the industry in determining agreed excellence standards, providing a framework for implementation and subsequent evaluation. Wherever possible, industry standards should be consistent with international standards to ensure Victoria's competitive advantage is maintained and visitor expectations are met, if not exceeded.
- Excellence requires skilled and knowledgeable management and staff. Collaboration between the industry, Government and training providers is required to ensure appropriate training is provided in a timely and flexible manner. This training needs to be continually refreshed and renewed. Existing employees also require ongoing training and professional development, to ensure skills are relevant

and up to date. This is especially important in growth and specialised areas. Nationally consistent recognition of industry competencies will also contribute to excellence.

- Part of delivering high quality events involves the provision of high-quality and objective visitor information which is accurate, timely and accessible. In particular, quality, up to date content and booking services are required to meet the expectations of visitors. Industry participants must ensure they are able to use information technology and understand how visitors are using it.
- Sufficient and appropriate high quality infrastructure is required to support high quality events. Infrastructure includes; roads, public transport, public toilets, water and energy supply, car parking, and signage. Ensuring there is sufficient investment in infrastructure to meet both current and future needs is essential, underscoring the important roles of State and Federal Governments, as well as the private sector. Investment in broader infrastructure is also vital, including airport facilities, cruise-ship facilities, and convention and exhibition centres.

Key Issues

To ensure excellence, it is important that:

- Assessment standards continue to be raised over time, and are incorporated across the business and industry.
- The areas that are assessed continue to be extended over time, in line with changing consumer tastes, technologies and circumstances.
- Both industry operators and consumers receive benefits from excellence in service standards and their delivery.
- Agreed rating and endorsement systems need to be widely recognised and clearly understood.

A High-Quality Event Should:

- Incorporate quality products and customer service that represent “value for money”,
- Provide unique and authentic experiences with an opportunity for active involvement,
- Be safe, convenient and time efficient,
- Incorporate identifiable consumer benefits which can be customised to meet specific visitor needs,
- Be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and
- Meet or exceed visitor expectations.

Policy Position

- VEIC supports and endorses involvement in relevant industry-based business excellence programs and industry benchmarking.
- VEIC promotes the enhancement of Victoria’s competitive advantage based on quality events, delivered by skilled, competent staff.
- VEIC believes research needs to be conducted to determine industry-wide customer expectations, satisfaction and loyalty.

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