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In this Issue:

- [NOTE FROM THE CEO](#)
- [VICTORIA SEES RISE IN NUMBER OF VISITORS FROM INDIA](#)
- ["BACK-TO-BASICS" TOURISM GIVES INDUSTRY A BOOST, AGAINST BACKGROUND OF APPREHENSION ABOUT SUMMER BUSHFIRE ISSUES](#)
- [MIXED RESULTS FROM LATEST INTERNATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY](#)
- [CONFUSION AS MODERN AWARDS AND THE NEW SAFETY NET COMMENCE ON 1 JANUARY 2010](#)
- [TOURISM FORECASTING COMMITTEE \(TFC\) FORECASTS 2009 ISSUE 2 " 30 DECEMBER 2009](#)
- [MORE AUSTRALIANS TAKE OFF OVERSEAS](#)
- [REX NAMED AIR TRANSPORT WORLD'S REGIONAL AIRLINE OF THE YEAR 2010](#)
- [AMERICANS STILL LOVE AUSSIE HOLIDAYS](#)
- [VIVA MACAU INCREASES SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO STRONG MELBOURNE MARKET](#)
- [QANTAS INTRODUCES A380 TO MELBOURNE-LONDON ROUTE](#)
- [TOURISM AUSTRALIA HOPES TO BOOST AUSTRALIAN VISA APPLICATIONS THROUGH EXPO 2010](#)
- [TOURISM BUSINESS SUPPORT AND EVENTS](#)

► **NOTE FROM THE CEO**

Welcome to the January edition of the VTIC newsletter.

The 'value of events' debate has continued to receive good media coverage in recent days with the State Government announcement of a \$34m dollar economic return on its \$3m investment in Tiger Woods at November's Australian Masters Golf tournament. This exceeds by \$15m the original estimates and may be dwarfed should Tiger be convinced to stage his return to golf at the same tournament in 2010!

Congratulations to the Melbourne Olympic Park Trust on their announcement of a \$363m revamping of Margaret Court Arena. Continued investment in this facility will assist it keep pace with public and player expectations of facilities and service provisions for events like the Australian Open Tennis, and help retain the event in its spiritual home in Melbourne. The Open contributes \$160m into the State economy,

and attracts more than 600,000 people, a third of which are from interstate and overseas.

On Australia Day weekend, the Audi Victoria Week sailing regatta comes to town. Traditionally staged in Geelong, this year's event is being shared with Melbourne, out of Docklands. Few in the tourism industry would realise the history (first held 1844) and scope (second largest sailing regatta in the world) of this event. While the sport of sailing struggles for consistent mainstream media coverage, Sydney to Hobart event aside, Audi Victoria Week brings big spending crews, large entourages and cutting edge fossil-fuel free technology to our doorstep. Further, significant investment in sailing spectator infrastructure is going on around Port Phillip Bay in Sandringham, Frankston, Queenscliff, Werribee and other places. There are tourism opportunities in sailing and the time comes for the industry to take a closer look. Finally, my tenure at VECCI comes to a close on 29 January. To work with VTIC has been an absolute privilege, and I'll remain a dedicated observer of the progress of Victoria's tourism industry.

Anthony McIntosh
Chief Executive Officer

 [TOP](#)

▶ **VICTORIA SEES RISE IN NUMBER OF VISITORS FROM INDIA**

Victoria has had a 34 per cent increase in the number of Indian visitors over the past year to reach 49,000 – the highest level ever recorded.

The International Visitor Survey for the year ending September 2009 also showed:

- Victoria's biggest growth in visitors was from Malaysia up 40.0 per cent, India up 33.8 per cent, Hong Kong up 21.6 per cent and Singapore up 12.1 per cent;
- International tourists contributed \$3.8 billion to Victoria's economy for the year, an 11.8 per cent increase on the previous year;
- International visitor nights to Victoria increased by 14.2% to 37.7 million nights; and
- Regional Victoria recorded a 14.3 per cent increase in international visitor expenditure to reach \$304 million.

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

 [TOP](#)

▶ **BACK-TO-BASICS TOURISM GIVES INDUSTRY A BOOST, AGAINST BACKGROUND OF APPREHENSION ABOUT SUMMER BUSHFIRE ISSUES**

The Victorian tourism industry is bouncing back as visitors embrace simple, fun family holidays that make the most of the great outdoors, although there is apprehension about the upcoming Summer season, particularly in relation to bushfires, according to VTIC.

The latest Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) survey showed that general business conditions improved significantly over the November quarter 2009 – a much stronger result than in the previous quarter and the corresponding quarter of 2008.

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

 [TOP](#)

▶ **MIXED RESULTS FROM LATEST INTERNATIONAL VISITOR SURVEY**

Latest results from Tourism Research Australia's International Visitor Survey show that Victoria continues to buck the national downward trend.

Victoria recorded a 1 per cent increase in international overnight visitation (1.5 million visitors for the year ending September 2009), which is better than the national figure (-2 per cent) and our key competitor States: New South Wales (-5.7 per cent) and Queensland (-5.5 per cent).

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

 TOP

► **CONFUSION AS MODERN AWARDS AND THE NEW SAFETY NET COMMENCE ON 1 JANUARY 2010**

Some employers could be caught out by the new safety net in effect from 1 January 2010, when existing awards and statutory minima will be replaced by 122 modern awards and ten 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](#).

 TOP

► **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>

 TOP

► **MORE AUSTRALIANS TAKE OFF OVERSEAS**

The gap between the number of Australians travelling overseas and international visitors coming here continues to widen, Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF) analysis of the latest *Overseas Arrivals and Departures 1* data shows.

520,400 Australians travelled overseas in November against 485,000 tourists arriving in Australia, a difference of 35,400 for the month.

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

 TOP

► **REX NAMED AIR TRANSPORT WORLD'S REGIONAL AIRLINE OF THE YEAR 2010**

The airline world's most coveted and valued honour, the Air Transport World's (ATW) Industry Achievement Award, has been conferred on Regional Express (Rex) as the Regional Airline of the Year 2010.

This award is in recognition of the airline's superior safety record and operational excellence that have been demonstrated by outstanding punctuality and flight completion. The airline was also praised for its outstanding customer service as evidenced by the consistent top rankings in consumer polls over the years.

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

 TOP

► **AMERICANS STILL LOVE AUSSIE HOLIDAYS**

While many Americans may have been pinching their pennies during the global economic downturn, it hasn't stopped them from spending up big on Australian holidays.

Tourism Australia will be looking to capitalise on the recent surge in American travellers interested in holidaying in Australia with a number of events this weekend to promote the country's food, wine, culture, music and travel experiences as part of **Go Day USA**.

This year, Tourism Australia is hosting six events across Palm Springs, Los Angeles and San Francisco as part of the 2010 Australia Week promotion.

Tourism Australia Executive Chairman, Rick Allert said Australian tourism had seen a four per cent increase in travellers from the United States in the past year despite the challenging global economic environment.

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

 TOP

▶ **VIVA MACAU INCREASES SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO STRONG MELBOURNE MARKET**

Melbourne Airport has welcomed Viva Macau's decision to increase services from Melbourne, with an additional weekly flight commencing from March 28 this year. The announcement comes after Viva Macau's decision to temporarily suspend its service to Sydney.

Viva Macau launched services from Melbourne in December 2009 – the third international airline that month to commence flights from Melbourne Airport for the first time.

Qatar Airways also increased capacity from Melbourne earlier this year, progressing to daily services. V Australia will launch services to Johannesburg in March and Qantas is soon to launch A380 services on the London – Melbourne route.

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

 TOP

▶ **QANTAS INTRODUCES A380 TO MELBOURNE-LONDON ROUTE**

Qantas will increase the size of two of its Melbourne-London services to the superjumbo A380 aircraft, with once a week services commencing 18 January and twice-weekly services from 29 March.

The use of the A380, the largest commercial aircraft in production, will help to increase tourist traffic into Victoria bringing 10,000 additional seats per year.

The popular Melbourne to Los Angeles route, launched in October 2008, will also see an increase in A380 services from 29 March, increasing from two to three flights per week.

Along with Qantas' additional seats, Victoria has boosted the number of international airlines servicing Melbourne Airport in the last 12 months from 21 to 26.

 TOP

▶ **TOURISM AUSTRALIA HOPES TO BOOST AUSTRALIAN VISA APPLICATIONS THROUGH EXPO 2010**

Australian tourism see Expo 2010 as a perfect opportunity to boost visitors.

Tourism Australia is hoping to boost the number of people looking to apply for [Australian visas](#) to allow them to visit Australia next year, through its special events being planned for the Expo 2010 in Shanghai.

Chinese people are moving to Australia in huge numbers at the moment, and Tourism Australia sees this as a chance to also promote the country as a holiday destination for the Chinese.

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

 TOP

► TOURISM BUSINESS SUPPORT AND EVENTS

New social media streams for VECCI

At VECCI, we see social media as a means to open up channels of communication with those we represent.

The VECCI Blog is your policy and advocacy forum

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On the policy and advocacy front stands [The VECCI Blog](#), a resource fuelled by the unique voices and perspectives of our expert advisors. Updated regularly, the blog will cover issues that affect Victorian business and industry in a variety of ways and aims to be an interactive hub for interested parties to have their say and be heard.

Events@VECCI is

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your

Facebook connection

We've established a presence on Facebook – the most extensive networking site on the web. [Events@VECCI](#) is designed as an online hub of interaction and networking for past and potential attendees of VECCI's suite of events.

We encourage you to explore these resources and fully utilise them as avenues that help us continually improve the quality of our services for Victorian business.

THE 3RD ANNUAL TOURISM NETWORKING EVENT

Forge New Tourism

Connections Heading

into 2010

To be held in the magnificence of the Long Room at the Immigration Museum to network the night away. The event is sponsored by Tourism Alliance Victoria and the Victorian Attractions Group and includes great prize giveaways throughout the evening.

The format of the evening will comprise both structured and unstructured networking opportunities and will include insights into various tips and strategies to help you network effectively and make the most of every opportunity that comes your way. Each networker will have three minutes with each contact to exchange information, offer contacts, provide ideas, exchange business cards and have some fun at the same time. The event is being held in the opulent surrounds of the 1870s Long Room which was once the thriving centre of customs and trade activity in Victoria for more than a century.

Where:

The Immigration Museum
Level One, Old Customs House
400 Flinders St, Melbourne

When: Wednesday 17 February 2010

Time: 5.30pm – 8.00pm

Cost: \$52 (Includes Drinks and Canapés)

2010 VICTORIAN TOURISM CONFERENCE

The 2010 Victorian Tourism Conference will be held on **19 & 20 May 2010**. 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 <http://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.

As ever, the ARTN is seeking to include its members and the industry its activities and so is inviting suggestions and contributions to the Convention program by way of a *Call for Papers*™.

The attached document provides further details on the Convention and guidelines for the submission of abstracts. The deadline for submissions is Friday 5 February 2010. Stay tuned for further announcements regarding Convention registration which will commence early in 2010.

For more information [click here](#).

Other important dates for 2010:

- VTIC Forums - 10 March, 16 June, 15 September, 24 November
- VEIC Minister's Lunch - 29 June
- VTIC Minister's Lunch - 13 August
- TAV AGM & Members Lunch - 13 October
- VEIC/VTIC World Cup event - TBC
- Tourism & Event Industry Christmas Party - 29 November (TBC)

 [TOP](#)