

## TOURISM INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION

### BACKGROUND

The tourism industry plays a significant role in the Victorian economy, contributing to export earnings, output, investment and jobs.

The tourism industry is, by nature, both highly competitive and diverse. There are many tourism operators, of various sizes, offering a wide variety of products and services, to a broad range of visitors. The industry is also characterised by strong interdependencies, with operators providing complementary products and services, including accommodation, transportation, activities, food and entertainment.

Given the level of both diversity and interdependencies, effective communication is essential to the success of the industry. Tourism industry communication includes communication between:

- Industry and Governments,
- Industry participants, and
- Industry and visitors.

### KEY ISSUES

#### Communication between Industry and Governments

- A collaborative approach to tourism industry development must continue to be encouraged, with industry and all tiers of Government working together to promote and support the tourism industry in Victoria.
- Effective marketing plays an important role in the future of tourism in Victoria. While the State Government (more specifically, Tourism Victoria) plays a major role here, industry input is imperative.
- It is important that the significance of the tourism industry is communicated to both Government and local communities.
- It is important that State and Federal Governments ensure greater alignment of policies to incorporate tourism interests and seek input from industry to help develop practical solutions to industry challenges.
- Industry growth is reliant on appropriate development. In order for this to occur, Victoria's planning system and legislation must provide clarity in communication and certainty of process, together with the incentive to encourage appropriate investment.
- Communication is important to ensure that Government recognises and supports the important role that industry and business associations play in delivering a range of services and information to the tourism industry in Victoria.
- VTIC is the peak policy council for the Victorian tourism industry, providing one united industry voice. As such, industry concerns should be directed to VTIC who can provide representation to Government on their behalf. In addition, industry support should be given to the VTIC quarterly industry survey, to enable benchmarking of business performance and assist VTIC in its representations to Government.

#### Communication between Industry Participants

- Given the natural degree of industry diversity and interdependencies, it is important that industry bodies communicate and work together closely. For example, there are many benefits to be gained by collaboration between the tourism and events industry, and ensuring visitor needs and expectations are met.

- There is also a need for the industry to collaborate, sharing information and resources, in order to find feasible and innovative solutions to industry challenges, including climate change and the skills and labour shortage. This collaboration needs to extend to regular liaison between industry and third party suppliers, including those in the building, accommodation, transport and logistics, and education and training sectors.
- There is merit in the creation of business clusters to share skills, training knowledge and experience. Such clusters may involve businesses associated by geography, sector, and supply chain or other common interests.

### Communication between Industry and Visitors

- To maximise the success of the industry, the unique aspects of Victoria's attractions and features must be effectively communicated to visitors using a clear and consistent message. This applies to both domestic and international visitors. Communication, including branding and marketing, should be modified to suit the audience. This is particularly important for growth markets, such as China.
- It is also important to understand and promote the true value of tourism (including direct dollar, strategic and intangible contributions) and the associated benefits for the local community and the State. The support of the local community is vital to the success of the tourism industry, as community attitudes and involvement can contribute greatly to a positive visitor experience. This is particularly true of tourism in regional Victoria.
- Communication must include up-to-date and accessible visitor information including pricing and availability, and more generally, resources, maps and signage. Information regarding Industry standards and accreditation should also be clearly communicated.
- It is important to have a clear and consistent message in regard to industry challenges such as climate change. This is particularly important given visitors increasing demand for environmentally sustainable products and services, and Victoria desire to promote nature-based tourism. Showcasing innovative businesses is one way to communicate this.
- It is important to gather feedback from visitors regarding their experiences, preferences, expectations, and suggested improvements. Programs such as the 'Secret Shopper' program and other initiatives promoted under Victoria's Tourism Excellence program can assist in gathering feedback. To be useful, feedback should be measurable and ongoing.

### **POLICY POSITION**

- VTIC supports ongoing effective communication between the industry, between the industry and all tiers of Government, and between the industry and visitors.
- VTIC supports the establishment of business clusters that encourages collaboration and sharing of knowledge and ideas.
- VTIC provides in principle support for a State-wide register of all tourism-related businesses, in order to widen the scope of communication to the industry and encourage further participation in industry development and leadership activities.
- VTIC believes that industry and business organisations must continue to work together to provide a unified voice for the tourism industry in Victoria and influence the policy agenda.
- VTIC supports the expansion of Victoria's Tourism Excellence program in order to increase participation and leadership.
- VTIC supports the ongoing provision and expanded scope of the VTIC quarterly industry survey.