

Statement of Tourism Victoria Chief Executive Officer, Greg Hywood

Select Committee on Public Land Development

Thursday 13 December 2007

1. I am Greg Hywood, the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Victoria. I am attending this hearing in my capacity as an employee of the Victorian Public Service and appear as a representative of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events.
2. Brad Ostermeyer is the General Manager Tourism Investment with Tourism Victoria. Brad is also attending this hearing in his capacity as an employee of the Victorian Public Service and appears as a representative of the Minister for Tourism and Major Events.
3. I refer to a letter dated 26 November 2007 from the Select Committee on Public Land Development, inviting me to attend a public hearing to discuss matters raised in submissions and hearings relevant to Tourism Victoria, particularly in relation to the proposed Apollo Bay Harbour redevelopment.
4. I note that the Select Committee on Public Land Development was established in May 2007 to inquire into:
 - (a) The sale or alienation of public land for development;
 - (b) The sale of alienation of public open space for the purposes of private development; and
 - (c) The sale and development of public land and the relationship to the Melbourne 2030 policy and Green Wedges.
5. In giving evidence today, I have had regard to the following:
 - (a) A letter dated 11 December 2007 from the Minister for Tourism and Major Events to myself, which attached a letter dated 11 December 2007 from the Attorney-General to the Minister for Tourism and Major Events. This correspondence outlines the Government's position that the Committee's terms of reference are limited to the definition of public land as described in the Administrative Arrangements Order No 58 of 1998, and advises me to provide information to the Committee in a manner which is consistent with the definitions used in the Administrative Arrangements Order No 58 of 1998;
 - (b) I also have regard to the Government's submission to the Select Committee dated 28 September 2007; and
 - (c) The Victorian Public Service Code of Conduct, (part 2.2), which provides that public servants may appear before parliamentary committees as representatives of the Minister and are not expected to answer any questions seeking their personal views on government policy or details of matters considered in relation to a ministerial or government decision or possible decision or that would require a personal judgement on the policies or policy options of the Victorian or other governments.

Mr Ostermeyer gives his evidence on the same basis.

6. Having regard to the correspondence to which I refer in 5(a), I understand that before a particular site can be said to fall within the Committee's Terms of Reference, three separate determinations need to be considered:
 - (a) Whether it involved public land as defined in the Administrative Arrangements Order No 58 of 1998;
 - (b) Whether the public land has been sold or alienated; and
 - (c) Whether the sale or alienation of the public land was for the purposes of private development.
7. On this basis, I believe that the Apollo Bay Harbour Project falls outside the scope of the Committee's terms of reference. I cannot discuss that project at this hearing.
8. I can, however, provide you with information on the role of Tourism Victoria. Tourism Victoria is a Victorian State Government Statutory Authority, established by the Tourism Act 1992. Tourism Victoria is responsible for administering the Act, and is subject to the direction and control of the Minister. Tourism Victoria is the vehicle through which the Government participates in the tourism and travel industries, and forms part of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development.
9. The Act sets out Tourism Victoria's objectives as follows:
 - (a) To market Victoria as a tourist destination for interstate and international visitors;
 - (b) To increase:
 - (i) the number of travellers to Victoria;
 - (ii) travellers' or tourists' length of stay at destinations in Victoria; and
 - (iii) the use of tourist facilities in Victoria;
 - (c) To increase the amount of travel within Victoria and the use of tourist facilities by Victorians;
 - (d) To improve and develop tourist facilities in Victoria;
 - (e) To support and coordinate the provision of tourist facilities in Victoria; and
 - (t) To provide more efficient and effective utilisation of investment in travel and tourism in Victoria.
10. Tourism Victoria's overarching objective is to implement current State Government policies as they relate to tourism development in Victoria and contribute to whole of government programs and policy implementation.
11. In a policy context, the State Government has a vision that Victoria will be the leading tourism and events destination in the region. This is articulated in *The 10 Year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy* and the draft *Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*, which provide the strategic basis for the supply of quality tourism infrastructure that is compatible with Victoria's natural environment. Tourism Victoria's investment strategies stem from this policy framework and the Government's broader economic development objectives to grow the entire State.

12. The *10 Year Tourism and Events Strategy 2006* provides a strategic basis for Victoria to be a leading tourism and events destination and focuses on four key initiatives including building upon existing strengths, developing new strengths, focussing on long terms growth opportunities and strengthening the partnership between Government and industry.
13. The Strategy will deliver a comprehensive framework for all Government action that affects the tourism and events industry. Tourism marketing activities are to be complemented by an increased focus on investment, policy development and interaction with the community on environmental and planning issues. The Strategy is designed to integrate land use planning, industry and product improvement, visitor servicing and community engagement by all levels of Government in partnership with the Victorian people and the tourism and events industry. The implementation of this Strategy requires the delivery of tourism supply side (infrastructure) outcomes.
14. Tourism Victoria, Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) are jointly working on the draft *Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008-2012*, which, with industry involvement will provide a coordinated approach to planning and development of the nature-based tourism sector. The strategy aims to capture economic yield from visitors and to ensure a viable and environmentally sustainable industry that encourages private sector investment in ecologically sustainable nature based tourism infrastructure.
15. Comprehensive tourism development plans for Victoria's regions have been developed under extensive consultation with various public sector and industry stakeholders for seven campaign regions: Great Ocean Road, Grampians, Goldfields, Gippsland, Murray, North East Victoria and Melbourne Surrounds. The Plans also outline key tourism infrastructure initiatives to be undertaken or explored over the coming years as infrastructure priorities for the State. The current plans expire at the end of 2007 and Tourism Victoria is currently involved in a planning phase with key stakeholders for a new set of plans.
16. Tourism Victoria has a multi-faceted approach to investment attraction and facilitation. Tourism Victoria has a small team of specialists who have the responsibility to attract and facilitate new tourism investment in Victoria, with a particular focus on new projects that will be of net benefit to Victoria and which will help induce new visitation to the State.
17. Key project priorities are identified through a process of consultation with stakeholders and investor groups. Primarily, the Investment team works with tourism investors to develop and facilitate proposals that seek to capitalise on the identified key priorities and market opportunities.
18. Tourism Victoria's assistance includes:
 - (a) Acting as a first point of contact for developers on business and planning development matters;
 - (b) Coordinating Government-wide assistance where applicable;
 - (c) Providing advice to proponents on development approvals;
 - (d) Providing access to Tourism Victoria's market research; and

- (e) Providing advice on key development and investment opportunities.
19. The following mechanisms are also utilised to assist Tourism Victoria to attract and facilitate new tourism investment:
- (a) The Tourism Task Group (TTG) was established by the Secretaries of the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD) and the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE). The TTG comprises senior Executives (Deputy Secretary level) from Tourism Victoria, Regional Development Victoria, DIIRD, DSE, Department of Planning and Community Development, and Parks Victoria. The TTG's role is primarily to identify and facilitate key projects for the growth of the Victorian tourism industry, with a particular focus on public infrastructure. The TTG provides a whole of government forum for the consideration of key tourism infrastructure and investment projects;
 - (b) Tourism Victoria recently produced the *Geothermal and Natural Mineral Water Tourism Investment Opportunities*, a publication designed to provide a broad insight into the demand for services and facilities, location and characteristics of Victoria's geothermal and natural mineral water resources, the opportunities available to expand and establish new facilities and an indication of the success of overseas developments with the potential to be replicated in Victoria. The publication has been distributed to all of Tourism Victoria's industry stakeholders and the broader investment community; and
 - (c) Tourism Victoria is currently working on an update of its publication, *Tourism Investment Guidelines*. The Guidelines are intended to encourage quality, well researched and self-sustaining tourism projects that contribute to maximising Victoria's net tourism value. The Guidelines will assist developers to navigate the business planning and statutory planning processes for project development, and also assist local government to facilitate tourism development proposals that will achieve strategic planning objectives. The publication will be distributed to all of Tourism Victoria's industry stakeholders and the broader investment community.
20. I now welcome the Committee's questions.