

Government Response – Inquiry into Rural & Regional Tourism

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| <p>Key Recommendation 1: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria, provide rural and regional tourism leadership by supporting the development of peak tourism bodies. In doing so the Government should consider examples from Queensland and New Zealand.</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points: This could be achieved by:</p> <p>a. placing senior managers within each of the ten regional campaign areas, in conjunction with local governments;</p> <p>b. supporting and funding existing regional tourism organisations that have the potential for development into peak tourism bodies; and</p> <p>c. investigating effective business and governance models for regional tourism organisations in Victoria.</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Government supports the placement of an executive officer employed by local tourism, within the regions, with industry supporting a shared funding model, similar to Gippsland. This role would serve as a conduit between Tourism Victoria and the region. The Government will provide financial support supplemented by local Government and/or industry contributions.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Under the Regional Tourism Action Plan 2009-2012, peak tourism bodies will be established in each region and will replace existing Campaign Committees.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has reviewed industry structures in other jurisdictions, including New Zealand and Queensland.</p> |

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| <p>Key Recommendation 2: That VicRoads work collaboratively with stakeholders in the tourism industry, to improve tourism signage throughout Victoria for the benefit of the industry and of rural and regional communities.</p> <p>The Committee recognises that this must be done without compromising VicRoads principal priority for road safety.</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> <p>a. VicRoads, as a matter of urgency, to conduct an audit of all tourism signage with the purpose of replacing outdated signs, and determining consistency of signage throughout Victoria.</p> <p>b. VicRoads to establish a process to ensure that Tourist Signing Guidelines are applied consistently, but with the flexibility to deal with anomalous situations, by regional officers across the State.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>VicRoads will continue to work closely with the Victorian tourism industry to improve tourist signage throughout Victoria. Good signage practices will assist visitors to find tourist attractions, minimise unnecessary signs, reduce sign clutter and maintain the principles of road safety.</p> <p><i>See further details in individual points below</i></p> <p>a. VicRoads has commenced a program to progressively remove outdated and redundant tourist signs on arterial roads and freeways. As a pilot project, Tourism Victoria, VicRoads and the Northern Grampians Shire Council, in consultation with the Halls Gap Tourist Association, have initiated a review to remove unnecessary signs and rationalise tourist signs in Halls Gap. The project is a pilot to show how to improve visitor navigation, road safety and the visual amenity of a destination.</p> <p>Revised Tourist Signing Guidelines, developed by VicRoads and Tourism Victoria, will be launched by the Government in early 2009. The new Guidelines will assist the promotion of rural and regional tourism through more consistent and better designed signs directing tourists to key attractions and accommodation. The revised Guidelines will be clearer and more comprehensive and will lead to greater consistency of signage across the State.</p> <p>b. VicRoads has formally centralised its approval process to ensure consistency between VicRoads regional offices.</p> |

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| <p>c. VicRoads to acknowledge the promotional role tourism signage plays, and review policies and practice to more effectively address this important function</p> <p>d. VicRoads to work closely with local and/or regional signing committees to improve the administration of tourism signage.</p> <p>e. Where local and/or regional signing committees do not currently exist, VicRoads to work with Tourism Victoria to support their establishment.</p> | <p>c. VicRoads acknowledges that standard white-on-brown tourist signs have a promotional role as well as a directional role. However, the directional role is the primary focus and the promotional role is secondary.</p> <p>Funding of \$390,000 has been allocated through the Provincial Victoria Statement to replace pictorial tourism promotion signs across the state. Tourism Victoria will complete this task in early 2009.</p> <p>d. VicRoads and Tourism Victoria will work more closely with peak tourism bodies within each tourism region, and with local signing committees, to improve communication and the consistency in applying the Tourist Signing Guidelines.</p> <p>e. The Government encourages local signing committees and will look at their establishment in areas where they are currently not represented.</p> |
| <p>Key Recommendation 3: That, as a matter of urgency, the State Government investigates the impact of current planning laws on the development of tourism infrastructure.</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points: In particular the Government must:</p> <p>a. develop plans, with the assistance of Tourism Victoria, to ameliorate the effect of restrictions on tourism developments associated with the new farming and rural activity zones.</p> <p>b. as an interim measure work closely with local councils to allow variations in the farm zoning regulations for tourism businesses.</p> <p>c. work closely with local councils to streamline the planning process for the development of tourism</p> | <p>a. & c. Agree in principle</p> <p>a. & c. In response the Government will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the completion of rural strategies currently being undertaken by rural councils through the Rural Land Use Planning Program funding and expert advice and use these strategies to identify areas suitable for the facilitation of tourism facilities through the application of the Rural Activity Zone • The Government will examine the Victoria Planning Provisions Practice Note on 'Applying the Rural |

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| <p>accommodation and attractions.</p> | <p>Zones' dated March 2007 to ensure they provide sufficient and appropriate guidance in relation to tourism operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with key tourism organisations and local government to identify where guidance about the planning system may be required and develop information products that may assist. • On the basis of evidence such as the recent Government investigation of the rural and green wedge zones, implement appropriate fine tuning of these zones to facilitate tourism development consistent with the primary purpose of the zones. • Investigate the need for a preferred process for the consideration of proposed tourism projects of state significance. <p>b. Disagree</p> <p>b. Interim variations to the zone provisions by individual councils would be inefficient and burdensome for local councils (requiring individual planning scheme amendments) and result in ad hoc provisions across the state and consequently a lack of certainty for the tourism industry and the community. A better public policy outcome is to identify and implement permanent measures which bring about long term certainty, as per the response to recommended actions a. and c. above</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 4: That Tourism Victoria explore options for improving the collection and analysis of tourism data at regional and destination levels. This work should focus on the types of tourism developments and market segments that are most likely to contribute to the future economic, social and environmental well-being of rural and regional Victoria. This could be achieved through:</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> |

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| <p>a. Development by Tourism Victoria of a program to assist local governments to collect and analyse locally relevant tourism data, and to measure the economic impact of tourism at a local level, using consistent methodology across the State.</p> <p>b. State Government liaison with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre and the Australian Regional Tourism Network to determine research priorities for the Victorian rural and regional tourism industry. This should include investigating the possibility of developing Regional Tourism Satellite Accounts for Victoria (such as those being conducted in Western Australia and Queensland).</p> <p>c. Investigation by Tourism Victoria of the reasons for a discrepancy in tourism industry employment levels between different regions, as illustrated in Figure 3, with a view to determining whether funding should be allocated on the basis of employment outcomes.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p><i>A Talking up Tourism Resource Toolkit</i> and <i>Tourism Excellence</i> module has been launched to assist local governments and industry in undertaking and planning research.</p> <p>Tourism Research Australia has also produced a suite of tourism reports for Local Government Areas (LGA), primarily utilising International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey data.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has an agreement with the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) to assist in the provision of research data. The STCRC is currently working on a full suite of nationally aligned state-level Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSA). Tourism Victoria is already in discussions with the STCRC regarding Regional TSA estimates for Victoria.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria, in conjunction with TTF Australia, is examining opportunities to collect and analyse tourism employment data from regions across the state. This will build on and update the Victorian Tourism Employment Atlas released in 2005.</p> <p>In allocating funds to a region, Tourism Victoria considers the level of tourism-generated employment, guided by the type of research outlined above. However, the key determinants for regional funding are visitation and visitor expenditure, industry maturity, international-readiness and future market potential of a region.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 5: That the State Government encourage Tourism Australia and the newly formed</p> | <p>Agree</p> |

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| <p>Regional Development Australia to ensure the extension of high speed broadband internet and mobile phone coverage to all areas of the State, in line with international developments.</p> | <p>The Victorian Government has been active in advocating to the Commonwealth Government and regulatory agencies for improved telecommunications services, particularly broadband.</p> <p>The agencies identified in Recommendation 5 are not the key telecommunications decision makers at a federal level and, as such, Victorian advocacy is directed to the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and regulatory agencies such as the Australian Communications and Media Authority.</p> <p>Most recently, the State’s advocacy has centred on the Commonwealth Government’s proposed National Broadband Network (NBN). The Victorian Government believes that the proposed high speed fibre network has the potential to deliver significant economic, community and regional benefits for Victoria and is engaging constructively in the NBN process to ensure that the network delivers the best outcomes for all Victorian broadband users.</p> <p>In addition, the Victorian Government is directly supporting investment in improved telecommunications services for regional Victoria through a number of Government initiatives, including the \$20 million VicFibreLINKS (VFL) project.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 6: That the State Government plan for safer, improved local roads and bridges in rural and regional Victoria by matching the Federal Government’s ‘Roads to Recovery’ funding program (R2R).</p> | <p>Disagree</p> <p>The Victorian Government has spent over \$2.5 billion on regional road infrastructure since 1999.</p> <p><i>The Victorian Transport Plan (VTP)</i>, released on 8 December 2008, includes \$1.2 billion of improved regional road links, including shoulder sealing, rest areas, overtaking lanes, road widening and duplication of selected routes and planning for town bypasses. Maintenance for regional roads will also be increased on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>In addition, \$650m has been committed to safer roads across the state through the <i>arrive alive 2008-2017</i> strategy.</p> <p>This funding facilitates investment and economic growth across regional Victoria and across regional industries. Since the early 1990s, the Commonwealth Government has been responsible for assisting local governments maintain and enhance their local road network. This arrangement was reaffirmed at the time when the former Howard Government introduced the Goods and Services Tax, with strong support from the Australian Local Government Association.</p> <p>The Victorian Government, through VicRoads, provides an average of \$6 million per annum for rural local road projects through the Local Timber Road and State Impacted Local Roads programs.</p> <p>The Victorian Government does not support the redirection of state funds from rural arterial road projects towards initiatives that have been agreed to be the shared responsibility of the Commonwealth Government and local governments.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 7: That the State Government identify priority areas for sealing roads within National Parks to facilitate visitation by tourists travelling in hire cars.</p> | <p>Agree in Principle</p> <p>The Department of Sustainability and Environment in conjunction with Parks Victoria, manages approximately 40,000 km of relatively low-standard and mainly unsealed roads on public land across Victoria. These roads provide access to national and state parks, state forests and other Crown land and are used primarily for fire protection access as well as timber harvesting and recreational uses.</p> <p>While it would be impractical and costly to seal all public land road networks, the Victorian Government supports the principle of identifying sections of roads and car parks in both State Forests and National Parks that could be improved to provide access to attractive destinations for tourists in hire cars.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 8: That the State Government continue to provide funding for the upgrade of regional airports.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>In 2006, the Government allocated \$5 million, through the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), to establish a Regional Aviation Fund. This program recognises the potential for regional airports to boost economic development in regional Victoria by catering for increased numbers of tourists and business travellers, while complementing the Government's broader commitment to improving regional infrastructure and assisting regional development and population growth.</p> <p>The Regional Aviation Fund has supported 4 projects with a total investment value of \$4.09 million (\$2.78 million RIDF). Since its inception, the RIDF has approved funding for 13 regional airports to a total grant value of \$7.9 million against a total investment total of \$11.8 million. This generates \$1.49 leveraged investment for every \$1.00 from RIDF.</p> <p>RDV is continuing to work with local governments and the aviation sector to identify priority areas for future investments.</p> <p><i>The Victorian Transport Plan (VTP), released December 2008, will invest \$20m in upgrading regional airports across Victoria, starting with Mildura and Ballarat in 2009</i></p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 9: That the State Government extend the current Star 6 program of subsidised coach travel, to allow for both Melbourne-based and regional students to visit rural and regional historical and cultural tourism attractions.</p> | <p>Noted</p> <p>Response: The Star 6 Program is currently being reviewed and funding will be determined on a priority basis with other Government initiatives.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 10: That Tourism Victoria join the Transport Connections Project with a view to investigating the feasibility of extending this project to other key locations across the State and therefore ensuring a further benefit to the tourism industry.</p> | <p>Disagree</p> <p>The Transport Connections Project (TCP) responds to highly localised needs by building local capacity to address issues relevant to passenger access and mobility. While tourist related activity is not a focus of the TCP, a number of TCP initiatives have assisted transport disadvantaged individuals and communities to access tourism and recreation opportunities.</p> <p>The <i>Victorian Transport Plan</i> (released in December 2008) committed \$80 million to expand the Transport Connections program to help local communities in outer suburban and regional areas develop innovative transport solutions to meet local needs.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 11: That the State Government exempt national bus lines such as Greyhound Australia from s28(3) of the Public Transport Competition Act 1995, to allow them to pick up and put down passengers travelling on routes between Melbourne and other capital cities.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Following Greyhound Australia’s submission to the Regional Tourism Action Plan, the Department of Transport has reviewed the specific routes and times of Greyhound’s proposed services and intends to grant a service agreement for the specific routes and times contained within its submission. As a result, the Department of Transport will consider applications by national bus operators on specific services on a case by case basis.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 12: That the State Government develop rural and regional infrastructure affecting the tourism industry.</p> <p>This could be achieved through:</p> | <p>See <i>individual points below</i></p> |

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| <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> <p>a. a full review of all rural and regional Visitor Information Centres with a view to ensuring that these Centres are equipped to provide high quality services to local and international tourists notwithstanding their rural and regional location. This review should consider service delivery, regulations applying to centres and facility requirements.</p> <p>b. continued funding of the existing Boat Safety and Facilities Fund, for the development and maintenance of boat ramps, mooring facilities and boat service facilities in regional Victoria.</p> <p>c. provision of additional funding to Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment to improve infrastructure such as viewing facilities, camping areas, interpretation, information, walking trails, toilets, picnic areas, shelters and visitor services in National and State Parks.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Alliance Victoria (TAV), funded through a General Service Agreement from Tourism Victoria, will continue to support accredited visitor information centres to ensure high quality service. TAV is currently undertaking a review of the Visitor Information Centre Accreditation guidelines, to be completed in early 2009. This review will identify any gaps relating to the location of visitor centres across the State.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Marine Safety Victoria supports the ongoing funding of the Boating Safety and Facilities Program, in view of the program’s contribution to improving boating safety, amenity and accessibility for the boating public.</p> <p>Agree in Principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government supports the principle of ongoing funding to improve visitor infrastructure. An example of this is the Walking Trails Classification and Improvement Program. Funded under the Victorian Government’s Go For Your Life initiative, the program funds the upgrade of selected walking trails and related infrastructure in State Forests. Future funding for infrastructure will be subject to the normal budgetary processes.</p> |

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| <p>d. support for the establishment of infrastructure (such as short-term pull-in bays, dump points and information services) to attract the international motorhome and self-contained vehicles market to Victoria.</p> <p>e. completion by Tourism Victoria of its Accessible Tourism Action Plan as a strategy for addressing the needs of tourists with disabilities.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>VicRoads, municipal councils and the private sector also play roles in providing rest stops adjacent to roads. New rest areas have been recently constructed on the Calder Freeway between Faraday and Ravenswood; Goulburn Valley Hwy near Arcadia, and major commercial service centres on the Western Hwy at Ararat and Ballan, and on the Princes Highway East at Longwarry. These facilities are able to be used by caravans and motorhomes.</p> <p>Due to the difficulties of disposing of the waste, it is not proposed to provide dump points in rest areas or wayside stops. However, support for the provision of this infrastructure in towns by municipal councils and private providers will be evaluated to determine estimated demand and the most effective way to deliver these services.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria is working with the tourism industry and the disability sector to launch an Accessible Tourism Plan in early 2009.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 13: That the State Government, while recognising the benefit of high yield tourism, also acknowledges the importance and supports the provision of affordable holiday options for Victorian families.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government recognises the importance of affordable local holidays from both a tourism and social welfare perspective. Accordingly, the Regional Tourism Action Plan identifies several regions as family destinations.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 14: That the State Government continue to provide funding to extend and improve the existing network of cycle tracks, particularly rail trails and touring and walking tracks, in regional Victoria.</p> <p>The Government should consider development and support of the following as a priority:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Kanawinka Volcanoes Discovery Trail; b. Connection of the Gippsland Plains Rail Trail network and development of infrastructure on the trail; c. Establishment of cycle ways linking the Latrobe valley townships of Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill; d. A Latrobe Valley science trail, developed in conjunction with major industry partners; e. The mountain bike trails through Anglesea; f. 12 Apostles to Port Campbell; g. Linking of the coast to crater rail trail with the Great Ocean Walk; and h. Alpine mountain trails. | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government is providing \$12.6 million in funding assistance (over four years), through the Regional Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), and includes additional funding via the <i>Victorian Transport Plan</i>, for the development of pathways/trail networks to generate economic, social and recreational benefits. Funding is available across regional Victoria for infrastructure works to develop rail trails, pathways and walking track projects.</p> <p>To date, RIDF has supported four pathway projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Murray to the Mountain (Rutherglen to Wahgunyah link) \$495,000 - Port Fairy to Warrnambool Rail Trail \$850,000 - Mansfield to Mairdample Rail Trail (stage 1) of Goulburn River High Country Rail Trail \$650,000 - Great Ocean Walk from Moonlight Head to the Twelve Apostles visitor centre \$871,970 <p>In addition, RDV is working with local government and other state agencies to develop several walking/cycling pathways in regional Victoria, with a number nearing application stage.</p> <p>Under the Small Towns Development Fund (STDF), a further 26 pathway projects have been funded across regional Victoria, totalling \$2.2 million. Projects include Coast to Craters Stage 1, Bass Coast Rail Trail, Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail and Mallacoota/Metung Pathways.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 15: That the Government, through Arts Victoria, conduct a state-wide review of recurrent and grant funding for museums with the strategic aim of establishing funding arrangements that place rural and regional museums on an equitable footing with those located in Melbourne.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Arts Victoria provides recurrent funding to five non-Government museums and these funding levels are reviewed annually. The largest of these grants is made to a regional museum—the Ballarat Gold Museum (annual funding: \$337,590 for 2008). Smaller grants are made to Koori Heritage Trust (\$102,300 in 2008), Living History Museum of the West (\$61,380 in 2008), Museum of Chinese Australian History (\$97,185 in 2008) and Jewish Museum of Australia (\$66,495 in 2008).</p> <p>Arts Victoria, in partnership with the Department of Planning and Community Development, is currently developing a community museum revitalisation strategy. The contribution museums make to regional and rural tourism is highlighted under ‘Cultural Tourism and Regional Development’—one of five strategic priorities that have been identified in the draft strategy. This strategy is being ‘road tested’ through a community museum pilot project in the Goldfields, including a number of demonstration projects and networks that highlight the contribution community museums make to cultural tourism.</p> <p>Funding is also provided for rural and regional arts infrastructure and programming through the Local Partnerships Program. This program provides Victorians with a network of quality art displays and cultural programs and facilities. Arts Victoria supports this program with recurrent funding (\$3 million per annum) and Regional Development Victoria provides capital works funding (\$30 million over four years).</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 16: That the State Government, in light of the current high level of unmet demand for caravan and camping sites in coastal regions (exacerbated by the sale of private caravan parks for redevelopment), facilitate the establishment of additional caravan parks on suitable areas of Crown land. The Committee recommends that the Government establish a task force whose express goal is to identify potential sites for expansion of existing parks and establishment of new parks.</p> <p>This would be in line with the recommendations of the Caucus Reference Group on Caravan and Camping Parks.</p> | <p>Disagree</p> <p>The facilitation or establishment of additional caravan parks on public land is not a State Government priority. The government priority is to ensure equity of access to caravan parks; to facilitate parks to become more environmentally sustainable, and to assist Committees of Management to improve management standards and business planning.</p> <p>These objectives are addressed through the Camping and Caravan Park Grants Program and the development of Best Practice Management Guidelines.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 17: That the Government in producing a <i>Nature-Based Tourism Strategy FINAL Plan 2007-2011</i>, for implementation, and in light of practice in other jurisdictions, consider increasing the duration of leases on Crown land in Victoria.</p> <p>This valuable Strategy should be finalised and implemented as a matter of urgency.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Legislation to amend the relevant Crown Land Acts to increase maximum lease terms to 65 years is currently being prepared for consideration by the Parliament. Relevant Acts include the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978, Forests Act 1958.</p> <p>This is a key action contained in Victoria’s Nature Based Tourism Strategy 2008 – 2012, launched by the Minister for Tourism and Major Events and the Minister for Environment and Climate Change on 10 September 2008. Implementation will be progressed by DSE, Tourism Victoria and Parks Victoria in conjunction with the Tourism Task Group.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 18: That the State Government increase training and education opportunities for the rural and regional tourism industry.</p> <p>This could be achieved through:</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> <p>a. further encouraging Vocational Education and Training (VET) in schools to provide pathways for young people who wish to enter the tourism industry.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>VET qualifications are nationally recognised and VET in Schools provides credit towards the Victorian senior secondary certificates, the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). The relevant training package for the Tourism industry is the Tourism, Hospitality and Events training package. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) has developed a VCE VET program in Hospitality with two employment pathways. Certificate II in Hospitality with selected units of competence from Certificate III in Hospitality provides a multiskilled employment outcome. Certificate II in Hospitality (Kitchen Operations) provides a foundation for employment in a commercial cookery environment</p> <p>Within the Tourism, Hospitality and Events training package, the Certificate II in Hospitality provides access to a range of entry level options in the industry including training in commercial cookery, front office management, housekeeping, food and beverage service, sales, and information and customer service. Hospitality is the largest VET in Schools program in Victoria with over 6,000 students enrolled.</p> <p>Students undertaking a range of other tourism-related qualifications may receive credit towards their VCE or VCAL through VET Block Credit Recognition.</p> <p>Advice on developing pathways for young people in the rural and regional tourism industry is available from government funded Local Learning & Employment Networks (LLENs). LLENs are able to broker partnerships between schools, registered training organisations and industry that meet regional needs.</p> |

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| <p>b. providing incentives and encouragement strategies for the private sector to deliver accreditation and staff training programs.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The Victorian Government has announced <i>Securing Jobs For Your Future</i>, a \$316M package over four years to deliver significant changes to the VET sector commencing in 2009, including an injection of \$139M for additional funded training places. The package contains significant incentives for the private sector to deliver training.</p> <p>In the package is the new Victorian Training Guarantee, which provides a government subsidised place for all eligible individuals. The Guarantee will become available in stages over the next two years, and is expected to be fully operational for all courses in 2011. Government subsidised places will be available from public, private and community providers, subject to those providers meeting certain criteria.</p> <p><i>Skills for Growth: The Workforce Development Program</i>, a component of the <i>Securing Jobs For Your Future</i> policy, is a program to address the skill needs of existing workers. The program is funded for \$52M over the next four years 2009 – 2012. Skills for Growth will focus on SMEs and will assist 1,500 businesses per year across Victoria. This initiative will commence roll-out in April 2009.</p> <p>As a separate initiative, the <i>Tourism Excellence Program</i> delivers training and education initiatives for tourism businesses in Victoria and is especially aimed at achieving professionalism to lift the competitiveness of the tourism sector. The program consists of seven modules specifically to assist the industry to raise levels of service to a higher level to meet the needs of consumer preferences.</p> |

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| <p>c. encouraging older workers into the tourism industry by directing the Office of Training and Tertiary Education to allow for Recognition of Prior Learning in VET programs, and by supporting the design of VET courses specifically for older workers.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The Victorian Government has introduced Skills Stores as a way of making it easier for older workers to gain recognition for skills they already have. Skills Stores provide individual advice, free of charge, to clients about their skills and VET qualifications. They can provide a referral to a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or TAFE to have skills formally assessed as part of a qualification.</p> <p>Skills Stores are established in 13 locations across the state and are also available as a mobile service. Coverage in country Victoria is particularly strong with 9 of the 13 stores regionally-based.</p> <p>RTO and TAFE institutes also independently offer recognition of prior learning (RPL) which recognises skills gained through life and work experience, and recognition of current competency (RCC) if a client has previously successfully completed the requirements for a unit of competency or module.</p> <p>As VET courses are predominately offered within national training packages, Skills Stores can provide the support and guidance to assist older workers tailoring specific needs to their competencies.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 19: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria:</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> |

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| <p>a. extend the Tourism Excellence program by developing additional modules covering the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Risk management, including dealing with natural disasters and environmental threats; 2. Conservation and management of heritage places and objects; 3. Providing interpretation of natural and cultural environments and features; 4. Accreditation and compliance; and 5. Industrial relations. | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Tourism Excellence program incorporates information from several accreditation programs, particularly the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program, which provides details on risk management and industrial relations.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria promotes industry environmental standards and accreditation through Green Globe 21, the Eco-Certification and Better Business recognition programs. However, conservation management and interpretation of natural and cultural environments is a specialised field and beyond the broad scope of the Tourism Excellence program.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria is also actively involved in the development of a National Tourism Accreditation Framework which is expected to bolster the profile and take-up of accreditation by businesses.</p> |
| <p>b. extend the Tourism Excellence program by developing face-to-face programs linked to the online modules, and delivering these to operators in regional locations.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Workshops linked to the Tourism Excellence web site modules are planned in 2009 and 2010. These workshops form part of the \$650,000 Tourism Innovation Fund announced by the State Government in May 2008 as part of Moving Forward: Update: <i>The Next Two Years 2008-2010</i>.</p> |
| <p>c. provide capacity-building programs for council economic development and tourism staff, to build skills in identifying tourism opportunities and preparing investment proposals.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Investment Guidelines for Victoria were released by the State Government in September 2008, which will assist local governments to attract potential investors.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 20: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria provide additional, specific funding to support training and capacity building programs for Indigenous tourism operators.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria, in consultation with the peak industry body, Aboriginal Tourism Victoria (ATV), developed <i>Victoria's Aboriginal Tourism Development Plan 2006 - 2009</i>, which outlines the key objectives and priority actions required to grow Aboriginal tourism across the State.</p> <p>The plan was launched in April 2006 and received \$250,000 to establish cooperative marketing activities and boost the presence of Victorian Indigenous tourism operators and products in national and international trade shows and famils.</p> <p>New funding opportunities will be considered following the Plan's expiration.</p> <p>In addition, Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) has provided over \$174,000 in funding over the past two years to ATV through the Aboriginal Land and Economic Development Program (ADELP). The funding enabled ATV to employ an Executive Officer to facilitate business training opportunities for Indigenous operators.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 21: That the State Government through Tourism Victoria and Regional Development Victoria facilitate and jointly fund (with local government support and industry buy-in), the development of tourism leadership programs (along the lines of the Gippsland Tourism Industry Leadership Program) to all rural and regional campaign regions.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria is currently negotiating with the industry to roll out leadership programs in each of the campaign regions over a five year period. A leadership program is funded for the Grampians in 2009.</p> <p>Regional Development Victoria encourages the tourism sector to access the Provincial Leaders Development Program (PLDP), which provides funding to support local initiatives that recognise and assist business and community leaders who will drive the strategies needed for economic sustainability and community development.</p> <p>When launched as part of Moving Forward the PLDP had three streams, Regional leaders initiatives, Local leaders initiatives and Fellowships for young leaders. As part of the Moving Forward review a further two streams (Strengthening professional networks and Building business leadership skills) were incorporated.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 22: That the State Government, through the Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development and Tourism Victoria provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specialised counselling services to assist tourism operators affected by natural or environmental disasters such as bushfires, drought, and flood; • business counselling and advisory services to support operators affected by natural or environmental disasters. | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Department of Human Services provides telephone-based counselling services to people affected by natural disasters.</p> <p>The importance of counselling for communities and businesses recovering from major emergencies is highlighted in the Victorian Government's <i>Living With Fire: Victoria's Bushfire Strategy</i>, and has been demonstrated through counselling and business support services funded out of the Government's 2007 Gippsland flood recovery package and 2008 drought relief package.</p> <p>The strategy also focuses on prevention of bushfires through increased fuel reduction, burning programs and enhanced fire response through an increased fire fighting workforce.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Small Business Victoria provides business counselling services to businesses affected by natural or environmental disasters. In addition, a Crisis Management handbook for tourism operators is currently being developed by Tourism Victoria and will be released by June 2009. It will complement the Crisis Communication handbook developed for regional tourism managers in 2005.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 23: That, following natural disasters, the State Government</p> <p>a. provide additional funding for the replacement and repair of damaged government infrastructure such as roads, tracks, signs, and bridges as soon as practicable.</p> <p>b. through Parks Victoria and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, utilise the skills and experience of licensed tour operators in dealing with natural disasters, by employing them as a priority, as local experts, to work in recovery processes.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>In addition to funding provided for reopening of parks and forests both Parks Victoria and DSE do have appropriate levels of insurance for their built assets managed on public land such as roads, bridges, signage, and visitor and picnic facilities. Following any large bushfire or other natural disasters, both agencies work with their insurer to replace infrastructure as soon as practicable. Priority is given to replacing those assets critical for community access (i.e. to houses and properties), tourism activities, and fire fighting access.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Parks Victoria and DSE will seek to engage licensed tour operators whose businesses are impacted by natural disasters, in the recovery process. These operators provide valuable site valuation, on-ground work and communication expertise.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 24: That Tourism Victoria develop and implement a Communications Plan for dealing with bushfires and other natural disasters and threats. This plan is to include strategies for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equipping Visitor Information Centres (VIC) to distribute up-to-date, accurate and consistent information to visitors in the event of crises such as bushfires or floods; • training Visitor Information Centre staff in the provision of such information; | <p>See individual points below</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>A protocol has been developed between the emergency services organisations and Tourism Victoria to provide guidance on the roles of Visitor Information Centres in the event of a crisis. This was distributed to all VIC's in 2007.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Visitor centre managers have received training in crisis communications management, with plans for more extensive training in the future.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> offsetting negative and sensationalist media reports of natural disasters; | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria works closely with the Office of Emergency Services, DSE, CFA, Victorian SES, and Parks Victoria as the lead agencies for managing bushfires and other natural disasters, to ensure clear and accurate information to potential visitors and to minimise the impact of negative media reports.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public relations and marketing campaigns to ensure the return of visitors to bushfire, flood and drought affected areas at the earliest possible time, taking into account safety issues; and | <p>Agree</p> <p>In the first instance, communication regarding access to affected areas will be coordinated by DSE. In recent years, public relations and marketing campaigns, including cooperative marketing, have been undertaken by Tourism Victoria to assist regions recover from the effect of natural disasters. For example, more than \$4 million was provided to assist the North East and Gippsland recover from bushfires in 2006-07.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision of funds in drought affected areas, for cooperative marketing with an emphasis on non-water related product. | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Victorian Government provided \$300,000 as part of the drought relief package announced in October 2007 to expand regional tourism brand and tactical marketing campaigns in drought affected regions such as the Murray region, the High Country, Goldfields, the Grampians, Daylesford and the Macedon Ranges</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 25: That the State Government encourage the Federal Government to extend drought related exceptional circumstances benefits to those tourism operators whose businesses are directly reliant on water resources.</p> | <p>Disagree</p> <p>The targeting of Exceptional Circumstances assistance is primarily a matter for the Federal Government. However, a review of national drought policy is currently underway, under the auspices of the Primary Industries Ministerial Council on which the Victorian Government is represented. Amongst other things, the review will look to ensure future drought policies focus on planning and preparing for the social, environmental and economic impacts of future droughts.</p> <p>The Victorian Government also provides assistance to drought affected small businesses through programs such as the Drought Apprentice Retention Bonus.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 26: That the State Government assist the caravan and camping sector of the tourism industry through encouraging relevant authorities to provide rent relief to caravan parks adversely affected by drought and the loss of water for recreational use.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The Government currently encourages relevant authorities, through their legislated or other powers, to give consideration to rent or rate relief to caravan parks adversely affected by drought and the loss of water for recreational use. Any decision on rent relief immediately following a natural disaster is the responsibility of the appropriate State or Local Government authority. Applications for rent relief would need to be negotiated and approved by the responsible authority on a case by case basis. Also, S.171 of the Local Government Act 1989 allows for the waiving of rates and related charges due to financial hardship. Applicants would need to provide information to substantiate their claim, which is subject to council approval. Similarly, in relation to land where DSE has a direct lease or where the lease is with a Committee of management, any applications for rent or rate relief are considered on a case by case basis.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 27: That the State Government develop a detailed Tourism Disaster Relief Strategy based on research into the economic impact of natural disasters on tourism in rural and regional Victoria.</p> <p>The Strategy should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) identify a formal process to drive the recovery period; (ii) be incorporated into destination management plans; (iii) incorporate an approach which is driven from the local level; (iv) allow for flexibility in approach; and (v) allow speedy access to disaster relief funds. <p>The Strategy is to work in tandem with the Government’s overall Disaster Relief Strategy and the Communications Plan suggested by the Committee in Recommendation 24 at paragraph 9.36.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The need for a disaster relief strategy is agreed. It is worth noting that there is already an extensive emergency management framework in place under both the Emergency Management legislation and associated arrangements which includes strategies for emergency management planning, response, and recovery at the state, regional, and local level.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has also developed a <i>Crisis Communication Handbook</i> for use by regions in responding to natural disasters.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria plays a key role in Government taskforces to address natural disasters to ensure tourism is factored into response and recovery programs. Tourism Victoria also assists in the establishment of regional tourism response and recovery groups to ensure that local needs are considered when developing a support package. The model for tourism response and recovery groups was developed by Tourism Victoria in the <i>Crisis Communications Handbook</i> in 2005.</p> <p>While the principles of crisis response and recovery are similar, a different strategy needs to be prepared for each individual crisis to enable consideration of the scope and nature of the impact and local factors.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 28: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria:</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> |

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| <p>a. conduct regionally focused market research, using consistent methodology, to provide local councils with accurate information about the tourism market and visitor segments at the regional level; and</p> <p>b. provide funding for research to examine specific factors that are affecting visitation in rural and regional Victoria</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Research Australia (TRA) has also produced a consistent suite of tourism reports for Local Government Areas (LGA) in regional Australia, primarily utilising International Visitor Survey and National Visitor Survey data. LGA data is also available through the Survey of Tourism Accommodation.</p> <p>The ability to provide analysis of data at an LGA level is determined by the sample sizes available, which is often limited.</p> <p>Agree in principle.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria provides funding through a representative body for regional Victoria, the Regional Research Reference Group (RRRG). This funding is used to conduct studies each year to examine specific factors affecting visitation in rural and regional Victoria. A Regional Awareness and Perceptions Study is undertaken every second year, with studies on other issues conducted in the alternate year.</p> <p>Additionally, through TRA, Destination Visitation Survey (DVS) funding is allocated to Tourism Victoria to assist destinations in undertaking surveys to aid tourism development at the local level.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 29: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria improve funding for rural and regional tourism by:</p> <p>a. increasing funding targeted specifically at the promotion and marketing of rural and regional destinations</p> | <p>See <i>individual points below</i>.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Government has provided funding for a number of initiatives for regional Victoria. The 2008-09 State Budget committed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13.3 million over four years to help Victoria’s 10 regional areas market their destinations and to facilitate the involvement of industry and local government in marketing campaigns. |

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| <p>b. conducting research to assess the effectiveness of differential rates, and reporting on their wider applicability.</p> <p>c. investigating ways to support fledgling events and tourism initiatives in smaller rural communities, either through funding or through other assistance.</p> | <p>In the 2007-08 State Budget the following multi-year initiatives relevant to Regional Victoria were announced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6.3 million for nature-based and car touring. • \$2.2 million to market fly-drive holidays to regional centres, and regional food and wine in interstate markets. • \$2 million to support regional community events. • \$1 million to expand the use of the internet by regional tourist operators. • \$1 million for programs to improve skills and service standards. <p>In addition to the above, \$11 million was provided as part of the <i>Provincial Victoria Statement 2005</i> for a comprehensive four-year tourism campaign for regional Victoria. A further \$650,000 was allocated for a Tourism Innovation Fund (Tourism Excellence Program) in <i>Moving Forward: Update 2008-2010</i>.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Differential rates or tourism levees are a local Government issue. The objective of these rates, to increase the amount available for tourism, is supported in-principle</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Government is also committed to support events in small rural communities through the Country Victoria Events Program. The 2007-08 State Budget allocated \$2 million to support regional community events.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 30: That Tourism Victoria increase the funding cycle for their Regional Marketing Program from two years to four years to give confidence and continuity to programs.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>One of the key recommendations of the Regional Tourism Action Plan is to introduce a revised Regional Marketing Program (RMP). This will be a three year program that will provide the regions greater flexibility in the delivery of marketing campaigns. Details of the new RMP will be released in 2009.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 31: That Tourism Victoria reinvigorate the Jigsaw campaign concept of ‘you’ll love every piece’, paying particular attention to those places in regional Victoria where tourism stakeholders currently feel disconnected from the Jigsaw campaign regions.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The Inquiry and its respondents generally regarded the Jigsaw campaign as a highly successful tourism marketing campaign. Tourism Victoria is constantly re-invigorating the Jigsaw campaign and the next phase of the campaign will have a regional focus. The Regional Tourism Action Plan acknowledges that some areas feel disconnected from the Jigsaw campaign. Tourism Victoria will work with these areas to see how they can better leverage Tourism Victoria’s marketing activities.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 32: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria, enhance the capacity of rural and regional Victoria to host major events. It should do so through:</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> <p>a. development of a strategy to encourage greater dispersal to regional areas of visitors coming to Melbourne for major events (for example, development of linked packages).</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Through the Major Events Strategy, Tourism Victoria maintains close liaison with relevant inbound travel operators if one is appointed for event.</p> |

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| <p>b. increased funding for regional events. For instance, support for regional centres to put forward bids for major national and international events.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria’s Events Program provides approximately 50% of its budget to support events in regional Victoria. Events supported in regional Victoria include Queenscliff Music Festival, Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix, Skandia Geelong Week, Jayco Herald Sun Cycling and the Australian Masters Games.</p> <p>The Country Victoria Events Program (formerly managed by Tourism Alliance Victoria) provides funding to assist with the development of events that do not meet the current assessment criteria for cooperative marketing assistance through Tourism Victoria’s Events Program. The Country Victoria Events Program recognises that some of these events have the potential to develop into significant regional events able to attract large numbers of intrastate and interstate visitors (and to some extent international visitors, although this is not essential).</p> |
| <p>c. employment of dedicated staff to assist regions to professionally coordinate, manage and organise regional events.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>A number of regions and local councils have engaged staff to specifically co-ordinate, manage and organise events in their region. Training for these positions has been provided through workshops undertaken by VECCI with funding initiated by Tourism Victoria.</p> |
| <p>d. provision of capacity building in event management for council officers in regional Victoria.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The support provided for the staging of regional events has led to greater levels of on-the-job training. Career development for council officers employed for the staging of events in many regional Victorian locations is offered and it is expected that this will continue to occur as the number of regional events increases.</p> |
| <p>e. expansion of the mandate and renaming of Melbourne Major Events to specifically include rural and regional events.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The Melbourne Major Events was renamed the Victorian Major Events Company in 1999.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 33: That Tourism Victoria develop and improve its website by:</p> <p>a. creating a single integrated Internet booking system for the State in the context of a review of the Tourism Victoria website and its usefulness to the tourism industry and tourists themselves;</p> <p>b. linking existing regional destination websites to the Tourism Victoria website and booking system; and</p> <p>c. using regional website addresses on destination specific promotional material, rather than the generic Tourism Victoria web address.</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> <p>Agree</p> <p>The Victoria Government committed \$1 million over four years in the 2007/08 Budget to encourage more operators to get online and provide online booking for consumers. This initiative includes the development of industry guides, seminars and training sessions across the State.</p> <p>As part of this initiative online booking will be introduced into <i>visitvictoria.com</i> in 2008/2009 using the new “Tourism Exchange Australia” technology which allows operators to provide online booking inventory to a wide range of distributor websites using existing online booking systems, Visitor Information Centre systems and property management systems.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria will link to regional destination websites that are nominated and approved by the Regional Tourism Boards/ Campaign Committees. This will be subject to a precondition that operators and products listed on regional destination sites will also be listed on <i>visitvictoria.com</i>. This will allow for increasing integration of booking systems and more cost effective marketing and distribution of operators and products online.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria will allow the use of regional website addresses on promotional material where approved by the Regional Tourism Boards/ Campaign Committees. This will be subject to a precondition that products listed on web sites will also be listed on <i>visitvictoria.com</i>.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 34: That Tourism Victoria contribute to commercial outcomes for the tourism industry through</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> |

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| <p>a. a shift in focus from promotions to marketing, such as conversion of interest into bookings;</p> <p>b. production of sales focused rather than information focused brochures;</p> <p>c. provision of financial support to regions to underpin trade show representation with professional marketing personnel;</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has adopted a balanced approach to marketing regional Victorian destinations to include a range of marketing activities, such as brand marketing, information provision and sales conversion activities. Much of the success in marketing regional Victoria has been achieved through effective destination brand marketing. For example, visitation to the Yarra Valley has increased twofold following the implementation of the national 'Run Rabbit Run' brand campaign.</p> <p>b. + c. Agree</p> <p>Regions have the flexibility under the guidelines for the Regional Marketing Program to produce sales focussed brochures, or attend trade shows if they wish.</p> |
| <p>d. development of a more commercial focus within the organisation; and</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>Tourism Victoria will be expanding its support of commercial sales activity through the implementation of a new online booking system which will allow regional tourism operators to achieve sales conversion directly through the <i>visitvictoria.com</i> website.</p> |
| <p>e. ensuring that all accredited Visitor Information Centres across the State are connected via the Internet.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>In 2009 Tourism Victoria will be providing accredited Visitor Information Centres with the option to access an online booking capability linking them to other regional Victoria VIC online booking systems. This will allow VICs to cross sell accommodation in other regions of Victoria.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 35: That the State Government through Tourism Victoria develop rural and regional Victoria as a touring destination, through:</p> | <p>See individual points below.</p> |

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| <p>a. production of marketing material tailored specifically for the motor home and self-contained vehicle market, and sporting and interest group markets (e.g. rock climbing, cycling, golf, country racing and cultural heritage); and</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria supports the development of regional Victoria as a touring destination through financial grants to support Touring Route marketing. Significant amounts of marketing material and detailed information on <i>visitvictoria.com</i> is produced to encourage touring of regional Victoria in campervans, motor homes and hire cars.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria supports the marketing of rock climbing, cycling, golf and cultural heritage through the provision of information on <i>visitvictoria.com</i> and through the production of the Cultural Tourism guide, the Adventure brochure and the Golfing in Victoria brochure.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria funds Country Racing Victoria to support the tourism marketing of country racing events. Tourism Victoria and Racing Victoria Limited developed a cooperative marketing campaign to promote the 2008 Spring Racing Carnival interstate. Tourism Victoria contributed almost \$300,000 to this campaign. Tourism Victoria, Racing Victoria Limited and Country Racing Victoria are liaising regarding a secondment from Racing Victoria Limited / Country Racing Victoria to Tourism Victoria to further develop opportunities to enhance the tourism impact of country racing in Victoria.</p> |
| <p>b. promotion and marketing of Victoria as a destination for caravans and camping through attendance and displays at Victorian and interstate Caravan and Camping shows.</p> | <p>Disagree.</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has reviewed the value for money of a range of marketing approaches. As a consequence Tourism Victoria does not fund the attendance at holiday or caravan and camping shows.</p> <p>With the emergence of the internet as a very cost effective marketing and information distribution tool, Tourism Victoria has shifted its resources towards online marketing and away from the more expensive and less cost effective trade shows.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 36: That the State Government provide funding to develop marketing strategies to tap expanding tourist markets in China and India and attract them to rural and regional destinations.</p> | <p>Agree</p> <p>The Victorian Government allocated \$8 million over four years for international marketing in the 2008-09 State Budget, which builds on the 2007-08 allocation of \$5.5 million over four years to market Victoria to international tourists.</p> <p>Melbourne will also host the Australian Tourism Exchange in 2009 which will present regional tourism product to global travel representatives including China and India. Tourism Victoria also works with regions to target their products at emerging markets utilising trade fairs and familiarisations held in country.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 37: That the State Government contribute to the ongoing environmental sustainability of the rural and regional tourist sector. This could be achieved through:</p> <p>Recommendation Action Points:</p> <p>a. continuing the Crown Land Caravan and Camping Parks Improvement Program beyond 2008 and increasing funding for the program;</p> | <p><i>See individual points below</i></p> <p>Agree in Principle</p> <p>DSE will continually review and promote the most appropriate mechanisms to achieve environmental sustainability on public land including the viability of programs such as the Crown Land Caravan and Camping Parks Improvement Program. All initiatives and programs are assessed within competing priorities and available funding and are subject to normal budgetary processes.</p> |

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| <p>b. providing financial incentives for tourism businesses (including privately owned caravan parks) to adopt environmentally sustainable policies and practices including water and energy saving, improved waste management, and offering carbon offsets to visitors; and</p> <p>c. funding a subsidy scheme to assist (small) tourism businesses to install solar hot water systems, and water and energy saving devices.</p> | <p>b. + c. Agree in Principle</p> <p>The Carbon Down program, run by VECI and Sustainability Victoria specifically targets energy efficiencies in the SME business sector. Tourism operators are recognised as a key market in this program. The Tourism Excellence Program includes a module educating small businesses on environmentally sustainable practices.</p> <p>Sustainability Victoria’s energy and waste infolines provide expert advice to all Victorians, including tourism businesses on the best ways they can adopt sustainable practices.</p> <p>While the current rebate programs administered by Sustainability Victoria are available to business, they are predominantly focused on the residential sector.</p> |
| <p>Recommendation 38: That the State Government, as a priority, fund research into:</p> <p>a. the environmental sustainability of tourism ventures before embarking on increased marketing or product development in those areas; and</p> <p>b. the development of long term strategies to deal with the impacts of climate change on tourism.</p> | <p>See individual points below</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria has commissioned the Sustainable Tourism CRC to undertake research on the environmental attitudes and practices of Victorian tourism enterprises and consumers.</p> <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>Tourism Victoria also participated in the development of the Commonwealth <i>Tourism and Climate Change: A Framework for Action</i> and is working with other agencies to provide input to the Victorian Government’s development of a climate change policy statement.</p> |

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| <p>Recommendation 39: That the State Government, through Tourism Victoria encourage and fund the development of Destination Management and Destination Planning based on partnerships between State and local governments, to facilitate communication and mutual support between the tourist industry and local communities in rural and regional Victoria.</p> | <p>Agree in principle</p> <p>The State Government supports sustainable destination management and effective engagement of the local community. A number of pilot projects below a regional level have been undertaken over the last few years to develop and test appropriate methodologies for developing destination plans. The longer term intention is that the State Government will fund regional peak tourism bodies, with funding at a sub-regional level to be determined by the peak tourism body in consultation with Tourism Victoria.</p> |