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7<sup>th</sup> May 2007

The Executive Officer  
Rural and Regional Committee  
Parliament House  
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Re: Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism

(1) the economic benefits of tourism in regional areas, including tracking the flow-on benefits through other regional businesses and industry;  
*We have no reason to doubt the flow on effects to other regional businesses and industry as tourism is a large part of the Bairnsdale and East Gippsland economy. However, it appears that many other businesses do not realize the benefits of encouraging visitors to our region*

(2) potential impediments to the sustained growth of regional tourism, economic activity and jobs.  
*Unfortunately the biggest impediment to growth of tourism in Bairnsdale appears to be lack of insight into the effects of negative labeling has on our time. With this I mean that Bairnsdale has been labeled a "commercial centre" therefore in the EG Tourism five year strategic plan we are by passed as far as development of the tourist industry here. All the focus is on Lakes Entrance as "the hub" where tourist are encouraged to go and stay and Bairnsdale is there as a day trip or visit on the way. Regionally the same lack of insight and blinkered approach has been taken. Many of the people adding to the rural and regional tourism in Gippsland start out as just visitors for other reasons eg local weddings, funerals, parties and visiting family. They return as traditional "tourists" at a later date. By not focusing strategies on these visitors at an earlier time in their visit to the region we are marketing in the wrong direction...but no one seems to be recognizing this...*

(3) the effectiveness, at a National, State and local level, of current programs to promote and enhance tourism in regional Victoria;  
*Support for small businesses is terrific...esp Work safe and Small Business Field Officer Program. As far as tourism specifically goes there seems to be plenty of advertising and paper promotions out there. The local Bairnsdale Tourist Information Centre does a great job*

(4) initiatives to increase both international and domestic visitor nights in regional Victoria;

*Sadly lacking as far as international visitors goes I would think, though I may be wrong. The only international people we see are those who visit our web site or those passing by who see our bill board. Im not aware of much in the way of regional initiatives other than web sites. Interstate and domestic visitors seem to be promoted well.*

(5) the efficacy of existing mechanisms at a National, State and local level to address the impact on regional tourism of natural events such as bushfires, floods and drought, and effective measures to drive long term economic recovery; and

*From what we have experienced with regard to the recent bush fires in East Gippsland the response and effectiveness of strategies appeared to be timely and well done.*

(6) opportunities to leverage private investment and commercial activity in regional tourism infrastructure, including ecotourism.

*Areas of eco tourism that have been overlooked in the region, such as the koala on Raymond Island...and others throughout the region...*

*We need to revisit the Gippsland Statagic five year plan to address problems first.*

*Eco tourism has a lot of potential benefits and is not being promoted much, just individual businesses really*

We hope this information is helpful

Yours Sincerely

Peter and Wendy Flahive

[www.travellersrestmotel.com.au](http://www.travellersrestmotel.com.au)