

Lake Bolac Development Association Inc.^{RegNo.}

A0039966L

The Executive Officer
Rural & Regional Committee
Parliament House
MELBOURNE 3002

May 30, 2007

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism

Submission by Lake Bolac Development Association Inc.

Background

The Lake Bolac Development Association is a non-profit completely voluntary organisation administered by community members for the benefit of the local community.

Lake Bolac is a small rural town with a district population base of approximately 600 people and is located on the Glenelg Highway, 213km west of Melbourne.

In 2004 the LBDA built a Rural Transaction Centre with federal funding from the Dept of Transport and Regional Services (DoTARS). This community facility contains the local community bank branch (returning banking services to our community after an absence of ten years). Our centre is known as the Lake Bolac Information and Business Centre (**LBiBC**) and along with the community bank contains: visitor information, public internet access computers (currently running the State Government PIAP program administered by the State Library of Victoria), Centrelink and Medicare claims booths, office rental for visiting professionals, meeting room for hire, gift shop selling products sourced from 56 local craftspeople, display and archives (fireproof room) of the Lake Bolac and District Historical Society, secretarial services including photocopying, fax, email, desktop publishing, colour printing, laminating, binding, and digital photography.

...cont.....

LBiBC is open 7 days a week and employs a Permanent Part Time Manager and Cleaner. The centre is staffed by volunteers. The LBiBC Inc. voluntary Committee of Management administer the operation of the Centre. The bank employs a Manager and three customer service officers.

Submission Request

Lake Bolac is a proactive small regional and rural town who take responsibility for planning for our own future by innovative projects such as the LBiBC. We work in partnership with local council and state and federal government, catchment and other non-government organisations to manage our community resources.

Our request to the submission is to be allowed and encouraged to promote our tourist information centre for the benefit of international and domestic travellers and the local economy.

There is currently a level of restriction from Tourism Victoria in the way in which information centres can be promoted and signposted. This is supported by Vicroads and ultimately local councils who are bound by Vicroads rules.

If a rural information centre doesn't meet the substantial list of criteria for Tourism Victoria accreditation then they do not qualify for signposting, inclusion in publications, and other worthwhile benefits.

This discriminates against the smaller information centres in rural areas who may be no less skilled or equipped to provide an information service as the larger centres that can afford to subscribe and receive priority as a result.

We would encourage and support any moves to make Tourism Victoria assistance and accreditation more inclusive in rural areas.

Yours faithfully,

Karen McIntyre

President – Lake Bolac Development Association