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31/5/07

Submission no.27
31/5/07

1: THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF TOURISM IN REGIONAL AREAS, INCLUDING FLOW-ON BENEFITS TO OTHER REGIONAL BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY.

The economic benefits of tourism in country areas for small and medium towns, (especially when there is no major industry), is greatly underestimated by both shire councils and state governments. By having day visitors or visitors who stay longer the local shops, eateries, service stations and accommodation establishments receive revenue from outside the town's resources. This in turn is spent on wages, goods and services to improve viability of businesses's which then helps support the towns population and growth with both employment and expansion. If there is no industry in the immediate area and no tourism there is nothing to keep or support the local population.

2: POTENTIAL IMPEDIMENTS TO THE SUSTAINED GROWTH OF REGIONAL TOURISM, ECONOMIC ACTIVITY AND JOBS.

In the twenty years in the motel trade in different parts of gippsland we have been through a lot of ups and downs, caused by many things.

Over saturation of the accommodation industry, as in most parts of Victoria the tourist industry is very seasonal, and very weather dependent, is one of the main problems, competition is healthy but in small country towns often there is a decrease in occupancy rates with each new business opening in direct competition, which takes many years to offset. The local councils are happy to approve these new businesses as they receive new income. If the local business's are profitable and growing the local economy benefits, too many competing business's profits are down and spending and employment decreases. With our small population and rising costs (lpg, petrol, water etc.) the regional tourism industry is fighting for business from a decreasing domestic Market which has increasing costs; mortgage rates, mobile phones, internet charges, Child care to name some, and less time to have holidays short or long. Now in most cases both parents have to work often on weekends to survive the Australian dream.

3: EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENHANCE TOURISM IN REGIONAL VICTORIA

The Victorian government tourism funding and promotion is very heavily tilted toward "the great ocean road" promotion in both overseas and domestic markets Which leaves the rest of Victoria comparatively unknown and floundering. Instead of speaking to local councils and information centers government departments should try to speak to operators of all tourism associated business's to obtain real views not views that are taken of statistics on people visiting the information centres.

In our experience any regional area that relies on tourism for a large percent of the local economy, has to cut through too much red tape, time delays and restrictions from local and state authorities, who are only interested in how much money they can make and complicate matters.

Any thing (pilot strike, gulf war, bushfires, floods, high interest rates, petrol prices, weather and more), effects regional tourism, as the media today brings disasters into ones home, people are reluctant to travel if the world is not safe and costs of living/traveling are not affordable. By spreading government funding evenly throughout the regional area, both in advertising, and projects there may be more equality in regional tourism in Victoria, which would mean more sustainable growth across the whole regional area, not just privileged areas.

We in the local tourism industry strive to be the best in our industry but without fair support from both local, state and federal governments, some areas will always suffer from any natural or man made disaster more than the more privileged or trendy areas.



Bryan Woods
Owner/Operator
Inverloch Motel
Inverloch Victoria
invmotel@nex.net.au
03 56743100