



Submission no. 83

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24th May 2007

Damian Drum
Rural and Regional Committee
Parliament House
Melbourne VIC 3002

Dear Damian

Thank you for your letter dated 19th April 2007

Please find attached a submission response for the Parliamentary Inquiry into Rural and Regional Tourism.

The opportunity has enabled our committee to review and report Tastes of the Goulburn activities and assess the regional impact of our event.

Yours sincerely

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RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO RURAL AND REGIONAL TOURISM

Submission presented by Tastes of the Goulburn

1 The economic benefits of tourism in regional areas, including tracking the flow-on benefits through other regional businesses and industry;

The following is an outline to economic benefits as seen by our event Tastes of the Goulburn and the groups that participate / assist us.

The historic Seymour Railway Station at Tastes of the Goulburn provides a platform to showcase solely regional businesses with wines, food and produce whilst also enabling Tourism, Community and Art Groups to participate and promote our region's varied attributes.

Groups participating alongside of commercial groups are:

- Seymour Railway Heritage – providing access for the public to heritage trains and rolling stock
- Goulburn River & Ranges Food and Wine Network – display and information
- Mitchell Tourism Development Group – photographic display
- Seymour Chamber of Commerce & Tourism – brochures & display area
- Seymour and District Art Society – display and sales
- Seymour District Woodworkers Group – information, demonstrations & children's interactive workshops
- Seymour Primary and Seymour East Primary Schools Display and activities
- Mitchell Shire Concert Band

Other Groups participating during the weekend are

- Seymour Technical High School – Festival of Spirit
- Anglican Church Seymour – Family entertainment & Fete

Volunteer groups participating

- Seymour Agriculture & Pastoral Society
- Seymour Rotary Club
- Seymour Apex Club
- Lions Clubs – Seymour & Seymour-Goulburn

The commercial business groups participating are regional based and are given the platform to promote their Wines, Produce (olives, fudge, pastas, preserves etc) and regional restaurants serve meals and promote their individual styles. We find these businesses keep returning each year to participate and by promoting their business in a group setting are also promoting our region as a whole and strengthening our branding to regional products.

The economic values placed on this day of events can be measured not only in dollar value but also in the community's social values. The importance of communities working together promoting their group or network to the local and visiting public is just as beneficial to the social matrix structure of our community, as is the increase in direct economic dollar benefits. Community pride is increased with positive social and community activities. We have seen this by residents asking when our event is, so that they can invite family and friends to visit from near and far.

Benefits for increasing visitors from metropolitan and other regional areas can increase the awareness of what our area has to offer. In turn this increased understanding could bring re settlement of these visitors to our area, bringing both residents and even their businesses to invest in our area.

Tastes of the Goulburn has obtained visitor statistics & economic impact data by use of the Arts Victoria Encore Event Evaluation Kit.

The results from this survey show that for 2005 with 3255 visitor numbers there was an economic return of \$230,000 (\$160,000 from new income and \$70,000 retained local income)

The Visitor numbers are made up of:

1. Local 48%
2. Melbourne 31%
3. Regional areas 17%
4. Interstate 4%

2006 with 1200 visitor numbers there was an economic return of \$70,000 (\$45,000 from new income and \$25,000 retained local income). Visitation down due to arctic weather conditions

1. Local 50%
2. Melbourne 23%
3. Regional areas 24%
4. Interstate 2%

This economic return is direct to our local area as all participants/exhibitors are regional businesses, thus this event has a great profitable outcome especially as it is a low cost event, for all participants – the visitor, exhibitor participants and the organising committee.

Example quotes from exhibitors (participating businesses)

- Tahbilk Winery
 - Increased visitation the following day and weeks later at cellar door
 - Participates in Tastes of the Goulburn as is an awareness raising event and increases profile
- Brave Goose Vineyard
 - Tourism event like Tastes of the Goulburn has given a flow on of stock orders from individuals, businesses and restaurants.
 - Increase business awareness through participation at Tastes of the Goulburn to potential customers and also networking with other regional commercial wineries
 - Even with lower visitation in 2006 due to poor weather doubled the single bottle sales, and has found this event to have a good commercial outcome

With increased government funding through Local, State or even Federal it would enable better promotion of this event and could lead to expected higher economic outcomes.

Funding received in 2006

Country Victorian Events Program – Tourism Alliance	\$4000
Mitchell Shire Council Events sponsorship	\$5000

2 Potential impediments to the sustained growth of regional tourism, economic activity and jobs;

a) Events in our region are run by dedicated enthusiastic volunteers (including community service clubs & groups) without the assistance of employed personnel. If funding for employing staff was available, increases in benefits would be seen both on a social and economic level, as more dedicated time can be placed on promotion, positioning and expanding our event and other regional events. If existing funding programs could be broadened, assistance with human resources could be provided.

b) Low availability of bed numbers can be a potential impediment to event growth, although Seymour is in a fortunate position to be a reasonable one hour's drive from most metropolitan and some large regional centres making Seymour a commutable event destination

c) Destination description as Melbourne and Surrounds – Daylesford Spa Country as a description for the Seymour Region is an impediment and an incorrect description. What connection is there to the visitor to lump Daylesford and to our Seymour area together? Correct descriptions should be used that link reasonable proximity. Our region could or should be called Melbourne and Surrounds – Goulburn River and Ranges, we are one hour north, not west, of Melbourne.

3 The effectiveness, at a National, State and local level, of current programs to promote and enhance tourism in regional Victoria;

Seymour is in a region that has an identity crisis – we are situated one hour north of Melbourne but have been included in the Melbourne and Surrounds – Daylesford Spa Country. Seymour and our Goulburn River and Ranges are two hours east of Daylesford and have very different visitor experiences.

We need increased promotion and enhancement of our northern corridor from Melbourne to facilitate improved awareness and visitor participation to the Goulburn River and Ranges area.

4 Initiatives to increase both international and domestic visitor nights in regional Victoria;

Tastes of the Goulburn was started in 2002 to a view to increasing overnight stays. We have found with single event days that Seymour is also a reasonable day destination and feel that economic benefits can also be measured in participation from a Day visit just as much as visitor nights.

Government funding should not just be based on visitor night potential but also the event economic value to the region as a whole. Looking at only visitor nights could also directly disadvantage Seymour as our region is a commutable day destination both by car and public transport.

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;

Seymour is situated in a region that hasn't benefited from tourism following natural events. We have missed out on programs focused on increasing visitation after such an event.

By focusing on increasing tourism to affected areas it should be noted that other areas can then suffer exclusion, and loss of potential visitors.

6 Opportunities to leverage private investment and commercial activity in regional tourism infrastructure, including ecotourism;

Regional wine and food events find opportunities to gain private sponsorship difficult, and pushing local businesses to increase their sponsorship in dollar value ultimately leads to lowering their individual outcome.

As an affordable event we value participation where economic value is directed to the participating regional businesses, thus we look to gain event investment from outside those businesses so that every business benefits.