

CORRECTED VERSION

RURAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Inquiry into rural and regional tourism

Melbourne—18 June 2007

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Mr N. White, Director, Advance Tourism.

The CHAIR—I extend a welcome to Mr Norm White, Director of Advance Tourism. This is an all-party parliamentary committee that is inquiring into rural and regional tourism and I would like to make it clear that all evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege provided by the Constitution Act 1975, the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003 and the Defamation Act 2005, although any evidence that is given outside of the parliament may not be covered by that parliamentary privilege. Could you state your full name and address before you start and, at the end of your presentation, try and leave some time for us to ask some questions. You will be able to view the evidence within a couple of weeks, when you will then be able to make some changes if typographical errors are present. Thank you for making yourself available.

Mr WHITE—Thank you, Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to be here and I think some of you know that I personally welcome this inquiry. It is extremely important to the future of tourism in this state and I wish you well in your deliberations.

The aim of this session for me is to in fact treat it as a benchmarking exercise. My two colleagues earlier really were providing some information about how successful destinations are running their tourism operations. The two of them had quite separate approaches and I think that was very pertinent. I am hoping to provide you, in my presentation this afternoon, with further information about what the best practices are and, in some cases, to compare it with my experience with the Victorian tourism industry. The Victorian tourism industry has got a way to go and hopefully we can make some progress.

Overheads shown.

Mr WHITE—I hope that each of you has been provided with a paper. As you can see, I have been in the industry for many years and I would like to put my comments into context, in that before starting Advance Tourism I was in a career that gave me the opportunity to understand the big picture of tourism. At one stage I was traffic manager for Victoria with TAA and I had over 200 staff in seven different sections, and we introduced computerised reservations at that stage. Later, I was state manager for Tasmania and, that being a tourism destination, I had again over 200 people in four different locations. My operating budgets in those days were about \$28 million which, in today's value, would be around \$80 million. I make that point only to say that that role in fact was a bigger role than Tourism Victoria.

From there I was promoted to general marketing manager, and I in fact had the responsibility for a \$1 billion dollar sales budget for Australia, plus international marketing into Australia. The airline industry tends to rely on the tourism industry as its vanguard in international marketing. I just draw to your attention that my background has given me the opportunity to make the comments that I will make today and also the submissions being prepared for you to consider later.

As I see it, tourism is a commercial industry first and foremost, and my colleagues earlier have in fact emphasised that point. If you look at agriculture, they produce products to be sold in the marketplace. If you look at retailing, they buy in products to sell to the consumer in the marketplace, and the same exists with tourism: they have products to sell to the consumer. The only difference between tourism and other industries as a rule is that the customers have to come to the destination to buy the product. By 'product', of course, I think we all understand that it is a combination of sightseeing, tours, restaurants et cetera.

In a paper that I have provided to you, there is a tourism food chain diagram. That diagram was produced to make a couple of points. The first is that tourism as a commercial industry does enjoy public funding from taxpayers and ratepayers, and the purpose of that money is to invest it at one end so that it comes out at the other end as a benefit for the community and, in

the case of regions, the regional communities. Like any industry, whether it be agriculture or tourism, along the way you have to manufacture the product but you also have to have the mechanisms in place to get the customers to buy it. What I am forecasting as you move around Victoria talking to the industry is that you will find that most of the people will want to talk to you about the supply factors. My forecast is that, when you come to talk to people about the marketing side of it or the demand side of it, there will be little interest, largely because we have not developed regional tourism to the point of understanding the importance of destination marketing being more than promotions. Even when you look at all three levels, there is not a priority for the need to be more professional in the marketplace.

In terms of private sector recognition, I was delighted to hear some of the comments from the committee this morning and this afternoon and also from my two previous colleagues referring to the importance of the private sector. I am quite disappointed that in Victoria I find frequently that the industry does not recognise the private sector as being that important. In fact, if you look at government documents, ministerial statements, the 10-year plan and other documents, you will find no reference to the private sector being an important part of the industry. When you go out into the regions and look at regional tourism plans, you will find that they do not have any emphasis on the private sector performance or the commercial performance of the industry. It is all product, product, product.

There is also a problem in the Victorian tourism industry that the needs of the businesses and the needs of the customers are, from a commercial viewpoint, not being fully considered. We have heard today from Greg and Andrew as to how they are concentrating on those issues, but I will be surprised if you find that same level of interest as you go around the regions.

Another concern that I bring to your attention is the lack of business focus. When you move out there and start to talk to many in the regions—and in the written submissions that you will get—I would encourage you to look for the business focus and the market focus. I find that in the state of Victoria it is certainly at a lower level than other parts of Australia. When it comes to the market focus in Victoria, there is a heavy reliance upon intrastate demand, which is a finite market, and the interest in interstate markets is not very great. We heard Andrew talking earlier about Melbourne being the major market for his region. My experience has been that there is not much interest in Victoria for going outside of the state with plans to tap into new business.

Awareness of the wider industry outside of Victoria is lacking. When I talk to people in regional Victoria about the competition that they are getting from New South Wales or the competition that they are up against in Adelaide or wherever it may be, there is a very low level of awareness of the competitive environment that exists in this day and age.

Producing results: both Andrew and Greg have emphasised the sorts of results that they are trying to achieve. I get discouraged at times when I find that the results at the end of what they are doing do not seem to be a priority with many of the people in the regions. I was very impressed with Greg's statement of a vision and his long-term strategies and they have paid off. It is not possible to succeed in tourism without having a clear vision as to where you want to go and how you are going to get there.

I get very disappointed when I read vision statements in reports and strategy plans which are not of a professional standard. In terms of strategic thinking, strategic planning and strategic business planning, I get very disappointed. We do not have in Victoria a consciousness that you have to have strategic business planning, strategic planning which is targeting, at the end of the food chain, customers for businesses and customers for the destination.

Another problem which I find is that business development is not a priority. Again, if you go through any of the strategic plans or any of the other plans that are produced in Victoria, there

is no focus that, at the end of the plan, you are going to be targeting particular business so that you have the visitors coming to support the plan. It was good to see that Greg highlighted some research he did for a particular market. We have a lot of room for improvement in Victoria in recognising the value of research.

In terms of marketing, another concern that I have is that, as you go around, you will encounter people talking about marketing when in fact they are talking about promotions, which are only a part of marketing. In terms of strategic marketing, as was indicated earlier by Andrew, unless you get a transaction at the end where people part with money and buy something, you are not really involved in marketing. You are only involved in promotions. The difference between promotions and marketing is that promotions are merely letting people know you exist. Marketing means getting a transaction at the end of the day and making a sale. The actual targeting of business does not seem to be a great priority from my experience in the Victorian arena.

Another big difference between Victoria and other states—and the two speakers ahead of me highlighted this; and if you are able to visit Queensland in due course you will see it very clearly up there—is that the successful competitors that Victoria faces are using integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing. I have not been able to find a term that describes it any more simply. Essentially what it means is that the marketing activities are integrated so that the resources reinforce one another. The second thing is that it is targeted on a particular market or market segment.

The Queenslanders are past masters at this, they really are. What they do is that they decide the market they want to hit—if it is, say, Mackay—then they pick the Sydney market and they have recently broadened that to include NSW regions. They plan their activities in such a way that they are targeting that market and they are bringing all of their resources to target on that particular market and maximise the exposure in that market. When it comes to cooperative marketing, that involves working with industry partners. Industry partners can be obviously the members of the destination.

Andrew touched on his campaign earlier where he expects to get \$500,000 out of the industry this year because he has put that prospectus out and people can see that, if they put their money into his program, they can expect to get business back in return, which you cannot necessarily see often in Victoria. The fact that they are targeting business means that you can get the cooperation out of the members to put in that sort of money, which is currently very difficult to do in Victoria.

The other point that I would like to highlight is that, if you look at the sorts of campaigns that Queensland does and Andrew does, you probably have Virgin Blue and/or Jetstar involved as an industry partner. The other industry partner which Queensland is very good at is linking in with the Harvey Worlds and the Flight Centres and these sorts of people who have the big distribution chains that can take the message out to the marketplace for you. Victoria is not structured to deliver anything of that kind. Whether it is Tourism Victoria or the regions, they do not have the skills and expertise to match what the competitors are doing interstate, like the guys behind me, or like Queensland, the Northern Territory or Broome and other places; and certainly New Zealand and other places.

What I am saying to you is that integrated, targeted, cooperative marketing is one of the major weak links that you will discover as you move around Victoria, because I know of no destination in Victoria that can match that activity. Bendigo I know gets involved in some cooperative promotional activities but I do not know of any cooperative marketing activities. There is a big difference between the two.

With that handout that was circulated a few minutes ago you will find, on page 7 I think it is,

that there is a diagram of marketing levels. That was a chart we produced to try to describe the difference between the various levels of marketing in tourism at the destination marketing level. You will find that both Northern Tasmania and Wollongong are in the level 1 or 2 category. You will find that nowhere in Victoria meets the level 1 or 2 category. They were all level 3 or level 4. The subtle difference is that the levels 1 and 2 are out there to target business. Levels 3 and 4 are just spending taxpayers' money on promotional activities, without guaranteeing a return.

In terms of business operations, I would like to make the point that, to be successful in tourism, you have to be an ideas factory or be innovative or entrepreneurial. You have seen that. The two guys earlier demonstrated how they fit that description. I wonder how many, after you have done your field interviews, will fit that description as far as Victoria is concerned. Greg talked about the 'wow' factor that he pursues in Wollongong. I wonder how many destinations in Victoria are going to talk to you about their 'wow' factor.

Greg talked about the koalas going up to Stanmore Park. It costs nothing to take them up to the Stanmore Park lookout, but how many people do we have in Victoria that have got that kind of entrepreneurial flair; it costs nothing but produces a great impact. How many of the promotional plans or the marketing plans that you will see as you go around Victoria fit the description of being 'entrepreneurial' and can match either what Wollongong or Northern Tasmania is doing?

How many people will say to you, 'We're eager for the business'? I think the two previous speakers today have highlighted to you that they are eager for the business. I do not want to sound as if I am knocking Victoria, because I am a Victorian, lived here all my life, but the reality is that our tourism industry has not kept up with the best practice. I am saying to you today that, ladies and gentlemen, when you go out into the regions, just see whether I am right or not. One of the difficulties that you are going to find is that there are a lot of people out there who are very much wrapped up in the status quo. They will compare what they are doing now with what they did last year but they will not be comparing it with the competition. They are happy with what they are doing, and that is the way that they want to keep it.

I come now to leadership and management. Greg talked about the 'tracking of results', the overnight stays and the daytripper considerations. When you move around the regions, it will be interesting to see how many people have that sort of approach to managing their destination. There are some, but I wonder how many there are. Part of the problem is that the Victorian tourism industry is about 95, 98 per cent managed by the public sector. They are either public sector people or have come from the public sector. That environment does not give you the kinds of people you need to have this entrepreneurial flair. There are some fantastic people in Victorian tourism but they do not have any benchmarks to make them be a little more entrepreneurial because they are all of a similar level and a similar background. Until we can inject more private sector people in to provide a comparison to these people, then I think that we will just go on much as we are.

I think you will find also that most destinations are activities driven. They will tell you about all the things that they are doing, but if you ask them, 'What are the results that you're achieving?' they might find it a bit hard to give you the answer that you are looking for. One of the reasons why our regions are what they are is that Victoria is saddled with this campaign committee structure. I do not know what you know about the campaign committees at the moment, but they are purely a mechanism to allow Melbourne to control the regions. They are a mechanism for sucking money out of the regions to support state strategies. You will find that it is very hard to get private sector people to serve on those campaign committees because they get frustrated that Melbourne can overrule; Melbourne can interfere. As a result of that, the people that you need to drive those committees are not there.

I was very interested to hear what Greg and Andrew said earlier about the RTO situation. We are paying a huge price in this state because there is no-one out there driving the bus for the private sector. There is no-one saying, 'We've got to get out of the state and get more customers to come here. Let's develop a program for this market, that market or some other market.' Everything that a campaign committee does is within the constraints of Tourism Victoria's policies. They were brought in in 1992; they are still in place. No other state has adopted them because at the end of the day the campaign committees cannot produce the private sector support that Andrew is getting with his \$500,000 or Greg gets with his campaigns, because the campaign committees do not have private sector support. Any initiative and entrepreneurial flair that the private sector will bring forward is killed off by the bureaucracy. I will not dwell on that. That point is covered in the submission that we supplied earlier.

The other issue that I need to draw attention to is the question of tourism managers. A high percentage of them are in fact council employed—and as you move around the state and in the written submissions, I am sure that you will find this—and we have a problem. The councils appoint a tourism manager on the criteria that they choose; the tourism manager is employed by council, so therefore is responsible to council, and they develop programs that do not line up with the private sector. The private sector says, 'Well, I'm not going to support you if what you're doing doesn't suit us,' and then when they do not support them they get into trouble. There is a gulf in those places where you have a council-employed tourism manager—not in every instance, but in most instances unfortunately—and the private sector not in sync. The north-east is a classic example of that. Andrew's comments about the importance of working with the industry are very relevant in this situation.

I have taken a fraction longer than I expected to, but I did want to make the point that we must have a look at how we drive the destination marketing bus across Victoria.

The CHAIR—Thanks very much, Norm. You have set the scene very well for us and a lot of what you have said will be either borne out or not borne out when we do our regional visits. John, do you want to ask any questions?

Mr VOGELS—Norm, I agree with you about marketing. Private enterprise is not going to get involved unless they have a transaction at the end. You are also saying that most of the tourism dollars come from rates and taxes and that is not marketing, so how do we get the people who actually benefit at the end of the day to put in levies; how do we leverage funds out of them to help promote and market at the end of it, because it is very difficult? Mildura has a levy—I do not know if they still have it—on businesses. Some liked it, some did not, but they were all levied and they got a fund together. We were going to try it at Corangamite one day but got done over roundly! So we are not paying levies. How do you leverage money out of private equity or private businesses, who are going to benefit at the end, so that everybody wins? Then rates, taxes and business funds work together for a region.

Mr WHITE—Firstly, I do not think any community that wants to rely on the tourism dollar can escape contributing to destination marketing, because at the end of the day, if you take a quick sum of the number of businesses in a district covered by that council, there is no way that those people who are front-line tourism people can meet all the costs associated with it. As the community does get some other benefits out of tourism that perhaps other industries do not provide, it is fair in my view for the ratepayers or the taxpayers to contribute to an overall picture. But where I think the answer to your question lies is the way in which the industry operates. Andrew said that he will get \$500,000 out of his membership base because he is delivering what that membership base wants: opportunities to get business.

If you look at the majority of Victorian situations, the councils are saying, 'The private sector should put in more.' But the councils do not understand. We have a classic case right now

where the CEO at Indigo Shire recently criticised the businesses for not putting in for a brochure for that part of Victoria. He has gone to the press and criticised them. What that says is that he does not understand that a business will only come forward with money if they can see something in it, at the end of the day, for their bottom line. One of the reasons why they are not supporting campaign committees is that they do not see the campaign committees as concentrating on the bottom line results.

There is no doubt, if you look at Echuca Moama, one of the great success stories of this state for nearly 20 years now, that they have been private sector driven, although they have had contributions from the City of Echuca, now the Shire of Campaspe, and the Shire of Murray on the other side. The amount of money they get out of the industry to maintain their destination market is probably the best of the Murray Rim in Victoria because their whole operation is run by the private sector and concentrates on, 'These are results for the members.' And they get the money and they have done it very well, as I say, for 20 years. If you go out to the other parts of Victoria, for example, the Shipwreck Coast area—

Mr VOGELS—Flagstaff Hill. The figures are going 'whoosh'.

Mr WHITE—I am not sure why that is the case for Flagstaff Hill but if you look at the Shipwreck Coast area, you have the Shipwreck Coast RTO over here but they have no control over what is important to them—and that is, the visitor information centres—so that they can physically deliver a measurable result. Shipwreck Coast tourism will forever be in a position where they cannot demonstrate what they are achieving. That means the councils get unhappy, the industry gets unhappy and Corangamite, Warrnambool and Moyne need to realise that they have to hand over the infrastructure to a centrally controlled operation and put in a quality person to run the whole thing. It has been like a revolving door at Shipwreck Coast for some time, only because the people who do go in there are (a) underpaid and (b) they could get a better job elsewhere. They get frustrated because they are spending so much time keeping local people happy that they are not getting out into the wide blue yonder finding customers.

The CHAIR—Okay. Russell?

Mr NORTHE—Conscious of time, I have a couple of questions in relation to being involved in the aviation industry in a previous life. Can you see, or is it feasible to have, a regional aviation tourism market? I use as an example that I am in the Latrobe Valley and I want to take my family for a week down to John's neck of the woods; but I am conscious that interstate airfares and even international airfares are so cheap at the moment. Could you see that as a possible market? And, if so, how would it be structured?

Mr WHITE—In terms of air transport being an asset to this state, there are three areas where I believe we are in need of some forward thinking. One is Mildura. Virgin Blue are getting some new aircraft that will have the capability of having smaller loads to do Sydney-Mildura. We should be looking at how we open up that route because there is already a base market which travels between Mildura and Sydney via Melbourne because they have no option. The second one is Sydney into Albury, which is a potential that needs to be explored. The third one is Sydney to Sale, which will not happen now but let us take a long view and it is quite possible that, if you pick up the Victorian tourism performance, that could become an attractive route to an airline that would be prepared to come in on a low frequency initially and if the demand is growing, it will grow. Air transport, from that point of view and providing you go about it the right way, does have a potential. But, say, Melbourne to Warrnambool or Melbourne to Portland for the tourism business? Too close together and it is better to do it by car.

Mr NORTHE—Norm, I am interested in your thoughts about the number of

different tourism bodies and organisations throughout the state of Victoria—Tourism Victoria, Tourism Alliance, yourselves Advance Tourism, Vic Tourism Industry Council and a number of regional tourism boards. Do we have the structure right in your opinion? And do you have any comments further to that?

Mr WHITE—In terms of the structure, the role of Tourism Victoria, the Victorian Tourism Industry Council and Tourism Alliance, that is good. When you go beyond that into the regions, we have an absolute mess. Essentially, what has happened in the past is that we have had regional structures put on the ground to suit the bureaucracy. I do not believe that they have been put on the ground to suit the business needs of the particular regions. One of the regions we call Victorian High Country is the north-east and the Hume Highway is part of High Country. There is nothing high about the Hume Highway, but it happens to be a high-volume route which should be getting a lot more customers for the little towns and villages along the road.

In my submission that I will hand to you shortly, I am recommending for your consideration that the High Country—Bright, Mansfield and that area—be known as High Country, but hive off the other part of that region into a new region which is aligned to the commercial needs of that area and would be easily sold to the consumer. In that way, we will get better tourism penetration into the Benallas, Nagambies, Strathbogie Ranges, Beechworth and what have you. This is the sort of restructuring that we need. We do not look sufficiently at what we are trying to achieve commercially when we put a region together. We have put the Goldfields region in and you can have an argument that that is a good or bad arrangement and perhaps that is a special case; but there are other areas where, bracketing groups of people together, you can get a better commercial result.

Ms DARVENIZA—You talked about recognition of the private sector and that there needs to be more recognition of the importance of the private sector both by the government—that is, Tourism Victoria—and the councils and regional tourism organisations. You also talked about the lack of business focus. So on the one hand you are saying that we need to recognise the private sector, and by the private sector you mean, I assume, those people who actually have the businesses and are running them and providing the services. You talk about the lack of business focus in regions and say that businesses need to be better recognised and given a greater priority; but at the same time, that businesses in the regions are not particularly well focused.

My understanding from what you are saying is that our regions in regional Victoria, when you compare them to other regional areas in other states, are falling behind and that we lack some of the push that other regional places have in other states. What do you think business needs to do in order to be able to focus itself better in regional areas and therefore perhaps be given more recognition as the private sector? Are there, say, three things that you think they should be doing or could be doing?

Mr WHITE—If you look at Echuca Moama, which is a good model, that has always been private sector driven, managed, leadership, and they have always done well. That is the first requirement for all regions in Victoria. If you look at the Queensland model, going back into history when Joh Bjelke-Petersen set that up, he set out to take the public sector out of the whole operation. He set up Tourism Queensland to be outside the Public Service and it always has been. He set up the regional tourism organisations to be free of councils, and councils should support the industry, not the other way around as we have in Victoria.

The other thing that Tourism Queensland or the Queensland government has always done is to make sure that the support they give their regions is of a high order. Today, the best RTOs in Australia are all in Queensland, with a couple of exceptions, and that is because the Bjelke-Petersen government set it up in the way it should be set up in every state. We have

not done that in Victoria and the net result is that the public sector dominates the situation, and it does not have a business ethos. It does not understand business, as a rule; therefore, until you put a regional tourism organisation on the ground, with the right leadership and the right resources, you will go on forever and a day saying, 'Why won't business support tourism?' It is, quite simply, that business will not support public sector organisations. It will not put its money into public sector organisations. It will put money into private sector organisations that are catering for its needs as business, with initiatives that will deliver customers to its door.

I just put a PS on that. There are actually two levels of tourism businesses. There is the accommodation, the sightseeing attractions, restaurants and what have you, but there is also the second level of tourism businesses out there. They are the people who operate the laundries for the motels; they are the people who mow the lawns for the motels; they are the people who do the signwriting; they are the people who do a lot of other things for tourism; and if the tourists are not going in there, as the pilot strikes have demonstrated a couple of times, then they suffer as well. So when I think in terms of the businesses out there in tourism, I do not limit my thinking to the motels and the attractions; I think of all of the businesses in the district who rely on the tourist dollar.

The CHAIR—Thanks. Gayle?

Ms DARVENIZA—No, Norm has covered off in his presentation and answers to other questions.

The CHAIR—Wendy?

Ms TIERNEY—Norm, you talked about Victoria being very reliant on the Public Service, and other RTOs working differently, and certainly that is what I hear out in the regions—that they are sick of the top-down approach in Victoria and they want more bottom-up stuff—but at the same time they are reluctant to let go of the apron strings. Their funding is coming from Tourism Victoria. How are we going to change the mindset in Victoria?

Mr WHITE—A serious problem we have with the industry is that they are reluctant to speak out because they are fearful that the major contributing source will take offence and deprive them of the resources they need. I am sorry to keep talking about Queensland, but they are a proven successful model and I will just continue to talk about them: in Queensland the RTOs talk to Tourism Queensland as equals. It is not a master/subordinate relationship. Along the way from time to time, Tourism Queensland might be thinking of doing something, and the RTOs up there meet every quarter and discuss issues that they might want to take up with Tourism Queensland. They will work on an equal basis. There are things they have been doing in Queensland, or that Tourism Queensland have wanted to do, and they have had to change their mind because the RTOs have said, 'No, we won't have it.'

There is another factor in Queensland which contributes to this strength of the private sector, and that is the Queensland Tourism Industry Council. It is by far the best-performing state tourism industry council in Australia, by a country mile, and the reason why it is a much better operation is that it is totally free of funding from the government. Every RTO membership has a component in it which goes to the QTIC. It means that every private sector membership based tourism organisation—and I do not know what the figure is; I could find out—will pay a fee to keep QTIC going. In addition to that, the big league, like the theme parks and the big hotel groups, pay big sums.

Ms TIERNEY—So you are saying that you think that, in order to have the private sector be more involved and the businesses to be more focused, there needs to be less

government funding?

Mr WHITE—No, I am not saying that. We were talking about the influence—this particular problem that Wendy brought up. The Queensland Tourism Industry Council is free of government financial dependency, unlike most state tourism industry councils. It means that if the RTOs in Queensland and the Queensland Tourism Industry Council say to government, 'We don't like that idea,' government tends to back off. There is no clout of that kind in Victoria. Even VTIC, I believe, is always cautious not to press their luck too much, and Tourism Alliance is the same, because they cannot be sure that the private sector is going to be backing them up if they do press a particular issue that might be controversial in the industry. They are not likely to speak out because they know, too often, that the public sector can penalise people if they have a view contrary to the public sector.

Ms TIERNEY—The private sector puts in a lot more money than the state government? The private sector drives it; it is really driving it in terms of the money? It is not having to rely on government funding?

Mr WHITE—Only as far as Queensland Tourism Industry Council is concerned. That is totally independent. But in terms of the RTOs—

Ms TIERNEY—So they don't get any government funding at all?

Ms LOVELL—No, the RTOs get it.

Mr WHITE—The RTOs get it, and the RTOs get it in two ways. They get a prescribed annual sum of money which they use as they want to use it, but also, if they get into any major integrated targeted cooperative marketing campaigns, Tourism Queensland will come in as a partner to their plan and give them additional funding, which helps them to come up with their \$1.4 million campaign, because in Queensland the emphasis of marketing is to promote the regions first and the state second. In Queensland, you do not have Brisbane having a higher priority than any other area, unlike in Victoria, where there is no doubt that the present state government and Tourism Victoria is very Melbourne-centric, which is the opinion of most people I talk to in the regions. And the other states are the same—Perth, Adelaide and so on. But, at the end of the day, Queensland has structured its state to make sure it has got strong regions. We have not done that in Victoria.

The CHAIR—Thanks, Norm, for your time and your evidence.

Witness withdrew.