1st May 2014

Executive Officer
Rural and Regional Committee
Parliament House
East Melbourne VIC 3002
Please email submissions to rrc@parliament.vic.gov.au

The opportunities for increasing exports of goods and services from regional Victoria, and the Committee is asked to do this through an examination of:
(a) the identification and volume of Victorian agricultural, resource, manufacturing and service industry exports to overseas markets originating in regional Victoria;
(b) regional Victoria’s competitive advantages in meeting the demands of world markets;
(c) innovative approaches to exporting and lessons to be shared from successful exporters;
(d) impediments and barriers creating difficulties for regional exporters; and
(e) the current and future roles of government in supporting regional businesses in their export endeavours.

Dear Officer,

On behalf of the Regional Tourism Board of Phillip Island I would like to provide information referencing the above points in regards the potential to grow International Tourism to regional areas.

(a) the identification and volume of Victorian agricultural, resource, manufacturing and service industry exports to overseas markets originating in regional Victoria;

Phillip Island region attracted over 29,000 International Overnight visitors year ending September 2013 and over 380,000 international day visitors. International visitors make up close to 50% of the visitation to the Penguin Parade.

Phillip Island’s unique nature experiences within 90 minutes of Melbourne are a key motivation to Melbourne for international markets, providing the basis of many day trip journeys from Melbourne to regional areas including Yarra Valley/Dandenong Ranges, Mornington Peninsula and onto Phillip Island.

Phillip Island hosts key International world class events such as the Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix and World Superbike Championships, Tough Mudder which attract a world following to attend the event and provide economic contribution to regional areas as well extensive world exposure through their coverage throughout the world.
Latest Victorian research to December 2013 reports that -

International overnight expenditure increased year-on-year in Melbourne (+11.3% to $4.5 billion), as did visitors (+10.7% to 1.86 million) and nights (+7.3% to 42.8 million).

Expenditure in regional Victoria decreased (-10.5% to $306 million), despite an increase in visitors (+10.0% year-on-year to 346,000) and nights (+10.1% to 5.5 million), reflecting a decrease in yield per visitor and night.

There is opportunity to increase overnight stays in the regions and therefore increase economic spend with experiences to compliment Melbourne based experiences by developing increased public transport options, increased hosting of world class events in regional areas and in developing improved regional transport facilities to move international visitors around key experiences.

(b) regional Victoria’s competitive advantages in meeting the demands of world markets;

Regional Victoria has several advantages above other states to provide a unique and diverse touring experience within easy reach of the capitol city of Melbourne. Touring and exploring around the state of Victoria provides a range of unique and world class experiences for visitors from all over the world. Tasmania is a state that has quickly worked to provide friendly touring experiences to the domestic market and now their growing International market with world class accommodation venues.

(c) innovative approaches to exporting and lessons to be shared from successful exporters;

Innovation comes from providing international trade with easily accessed packaging options online with the support of innovative and progressive Inbound agencies. The industry must learn to adapt, price and bundle their products in an easily accessible option. Phillip Island attractions have worked together to support itinerary programs that will see full day touring on the Island with visitors ending at the Penguin Parade or staying overnight. Product partnerships are highly encouraged as well as co-operative participation in trade events.
Key impediments for accessing increased International visitation includes:

Access to the region from Melbourne via VLINE services and lack of on Island transport system for visitors to move around the attraction sites.

Cost of attending trade events and shows for local businesses are high and to prioritise spend in International markets is usually secondary to domestic markets – most tourism and accommodation businesses are small to medium sized and marketing budgets quite small.

Commitment to International markets is a long term proposition 2-5 years and for small enterprises this can be daunting and unrealistic.

Lack of planning support by local authorities to develop and establish accommodation, attractions and tourism experiences in regional areas.

Regulations state and local which restrict the development of farmgate and tourism enterprises on rural farms and land holdings.

(e) the current and future roles of government in supporting regional businesses in their export endeavours.

Supporting promotion of Regional Victoria through key tourism strategies set by Tourism Victoria and Regional Tourism Boards.

Support the promotion of tourism to the general population so regional areas embrace the opportunity to grow their visitation from international markets and understand it importance to their local community and the state.

Support state wide initiatives to recognise the opportunities that tourism infrastructure can provide to a regional economy and reduce red tape and processes so that investment is not lost to other states or other projects.

Support programs to train and make ready regional businesses and townships to service international visitors and understand/appreciate cultural differences.

Thank you for the opportunity, and we look forward to seeing positive outcomes from the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Kim Storey

General Manager
P.O. Box 683, Cowes Victoria 3922  www.visitphillipisland.com
Email dpi@visitphillipisland.com.au  Phone/Fax +61 3 5952 2729  Mobile 0409 250 895