

State Budget Recognises Tourism Value

Considerable benefits for Victoria's regional tourism industry will flow from the \$66 million tourism investment announced in today's State budget, according to Tourism Alliance Victoria.

"Major events, regional tourism and natural attractions are winners," said Nicholas Hunt, CEO of Tourism Alliance Victoria.

"All in all, this budget is good news for tourism as the State Budget has picked up a number of key priorities that Tourism Alliance Victoria articulated in its 2006 Election Position Paper."

Tourism Alliance Victoria, which represents a network over 3,000 tourism businesses, is particularly pleased to see tourism initiatives focusing both on the supply and demand aspects of the industry announced in the budget.

"The focus of major events (\$34 million) and regional tourism (\$23 million) recognises the importance of these aspects of Victoria's tourism industry.

"Within these major areas the budget provides a combination of infrastructure, events and marketing, all of which help to address the supply and demand aspects of tourism," said Mr Hunt.

"This allows for professional practice within the industry to be improved, including support for customer service standards, continued growth of community tourism events and supporting business internet access."

He also welcomed the suite of activities focused on encouraging Victorians to get outdoors. Within the \$47 million package there are a number of initiatives which will focus on enhancing recreational fishing and growing Victoria's 4WD track network.

The \$95 million in improving Victoria's Parks including camping and recreational facilities, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne and infrastructure upgrades to piers and jetties within Port Philip and Westernport Bays will have good flow-on to the rest of regional Victoria.

Tourism Alliance is concerned about the \$5.5 million allocated to international marketing.

It is a good start but there has to be more invested in international marketing as research shows that 7 out of every 10 tourism growth dollars will come from international market by 2016."

"Regional business events also need leveraging to benefit Victoria beyond Melbourne. "

"Tourism Alliance Victoria will continue work in these areas and secure appropriate resources."

Tourism Alliance Victoria exists to lead and support a professional and sustainable tourism industry in Victoria.