



## Tourism Alliance Response to 10 Year Plan-Green Paper

Note this response was originally provided by Country Victoria Tourism Council. Country Victoria Tourism Council is now known as Tourism Alliance Victoria.



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## Tourism Alliance

### Response to 10 Year Plan Green Paper

#### Report to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

#### Background

Tourism Alliance is a peak industry body representing local and regional tourism organisations and tourism businesses across south eastern Australia. We also work with Local, State and Federal Government, accredited visitor information centres, other tourism related industry bodies and the media.

We aim to build cohesion and to continuously improve the professionalism and standards of the regional tourism industry. We also provide tourism industry advocacy, representation and leadership.

Tourism Alliance is a unique entity within Australia and is acknowledged as a best practice organisation for the delivery of services to regional and local tourism organisations.

Tourism Alliance supports the Vision and Goals as stated in the Green Paper. This response relates to the Green Paper's Strategic Directions and is provided in the context of Tourism Alliance's position and in particular the impacts of the Green Paper on, rural and regional tourism.

In providing a response to the Green Paper, Tourism Alliance draws the Department's attention to its response to the 10 Year Plan Discussion Paper which stressed (amongst other things) the need for: robust regional research; increased community awareness of the value of tourism, improved tourism industry professionalism and standards including Accreditation; and regional infrastructure.

#### Introduction

Revised domestic tourism forecasts demonstrate minimal growth in domestic tourism through to 2012. (Tourism Forecasting Council). However, Domestic Tourism constitutes 75% of Australia's tourism business and 92% of regional Victoria's tourism business. ABS figures show continuing strong growth in household consumption, however tourism's share of the growth is declining. Now more than ever a consolidated effort is required across all levels of government and the tourism industry to stimulate growth in domestic tourism. Failing to respond will result in the gap between the consumption of travel and the consumption of household goods continuing to grow, as tourism marketing budgets compete with marketing budgets of the likes of LG Electronics (\$23 million- advertising budget<sup>1</sup>) and Harvey Norman's (\$30 million- media budget<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> Business Review Weekly, 20 March 2003

<sup>2</sup> Financial Review 8 August 2003

## Green Paper Strategic Options

### Create Australian Tourism

#### Merging See Australia with the Australian Tourist Commission

There are obvious benefits of sharing ATC's intellectual property, knowledge and experience, gained through International Marketing, with those organisations responsible for undertaking domestic marketing. However, a number of existing organisations are charged with the core role of domestic marketing- namely State Tourism Organisations and Regional Tourism Organisations. Any direct involvement in domestic marketing by the ATC could create a significant duplication of effort while drawing the ATC away from its core and important role of international marketing.

Given the importance of the need to stimulate domestic tourism over the next 10 years, any involvement by the Federal Government in domestic tourism should be through an agreement with the States and through leveraging from existing strong tourism brands such as Victoria's jigsaw brand.

#### **Overall Response**

Not supported

#### **Priority**

Low

### Create Australian Tourism Events

Maximising opportunities to exploit high yield regional events through well-established international marketing resources provides the opportunity to elevate the status of regional events and improve their capability to offset seasonal fluctuations.

Through Tourism Alliance's Country Victoria Events Program (CVEP), 95 events have been funded (over a two year period) providing an estimated economic impact of \$25.6 million on regional Victoria.

A coordinated marketing effort is required to maximising the existing marketing programs for regional events. One of the key considerations in event promotion is the public liability issues and the need for professional development and strategic event planning at regional levels to improve event sustainability.

#### **Overall response**

Supported subject to inclusion of high yielding regional events

#### **Priority**

Medium

#### **Responsibility**

Federal Government with support from all departments, States, Territories and Bureaux involved with tourism events

**Develop Contingency Fund to Better Manage Risk**

The development of a contingency fund would improve the ability of the industry to respond to impacts through the provision of recovery funds. However, allotting contingency monies out of existing marketing allocations will reduce the ability of marketing programs to stimulate growth. Recognising the importance of stable, well managed and established Regional Tourism Organisations is an important component of managing risk as they provide a successful framework for dispersal of contingency funds.

**Overall response**

Supported

**Priority**

High

**Responsibility**

Federal Government, State, Territory Governments, peak industry bodies

**Redevelop and relaunch "Brand Australia"**

The redevelopment and relaunch of Brand Australia has the potential to encourage inter-governmental collaboration in favour of a consistent message into international markets. However, a homogenous brand is neither relevant nor necessary domestically.

**Overall Response**

Supported

**Priority**

Medium

**Timing**

Medium term

**Responsibility**

Federal Government with support from all departments, States and Territories involved with international markets.

**Create Australian Tourism Research**

The Green Paper's suggestion of amalgamating the Bureau of Tourism Research and the Tourism Forecasting Council is supported subject to the merger resulting in improvements in timeliness of statistics and forecasts at regional levels and addressing research gaps at regional levels including the reinstatement of the Tourist Accommodation data set for establishments with less than 15 rooms. It is also important that "Australian Tourism Research" attend to the issue of improving communication to regional areas on the existence and availability of current research.

Dissemination of information on regional tourism research may be a valuable role for the Area Consultative Committees in consultation with Australian Tourism Research and the CRC Sustainable Tourism.

Tourism Alliance also supports the concept of having an Advisory Board for Australian Tourism Research that includes industry representation.

Tourism Alliance would like to reiterate the comments pertaining to research that were made in our response to the 10 Year Plan Discussion paper. They included:

- the need to develop a national standard for calculating the economic, social, cultural and environmental value of sustainable tourism to local communities
- the need to conduct research into existing awareness levels of the economic, social, cultural and environmental value of sustainable tourism to local communities

### **Overall Response**

Supported

### **Priority**

High

### **Timing**

Short Term

### **Responsibility**

Department of Industry Tourism and Resources, Bureau of Tourism Research, Tourism Forecasting Council, Area Consultative Committees, CRC Sustainable Tourism.

### **Priority**

High

### **Infrastructure- Regional Tourism Reform**

Local Tourism Associations (LTA) and Regional Tourism Organisations (RTO) are fundamentally community owned bodies. They play a key role in providing strength to a collective of community based individuals and/or organisations with a common interest in maximising their community's potential to benefit from tourism. They understand the issues affecting their local communities, identify locally acceptable solutions and participate in positive outcomes. They form partnerships with local government, state government and their industry bodies to influence tourism marketing and industry development activity within their regions. The levels of local ownership, leadership and drive displayed by RTO's and LTA's is a sign of successful communities taking a direct role in determining their destiny. It needs to be recognised that this is usually the desirable outcome of most Government funded community development programs.

The Green Paper suggests a "rationalisation of existing [regional tourism] structures... through implementing a reformed regional tourism framework...in consultation with the network of 56 Area Consultative Committees." It further states that "consistent application of ...[a] framework across

Australia would assist the effective delivery of governmental programs including planning, promotion and industry development.”

Such a suggestion of reform by the Federal Government calls for clarification on the roles and responsibilities of Federal, State and Local Government, Regional and Local Tourism Organisations and Industry Associations in regional tourism marketing and development.

Any proposed “rationalisation, reform or consolidation” of existing structures by the Federal Government would suggest a misunderstanding of the nature of regional tourism and the roles and responsibilities of Government and industry and in particular the disadvantages of such high levels of intervention at community levels.

The regional Victorian tourism framework has undergone considerable reform lead by Tourism Victoria in partnership with Local Government and the industry. Any further reform is not deemed necessary at this stage.

Area Consultative Committees currently provide a supportive role in providing much needed funds for strategic and business planning for tourism which is not usually provided through other programs. The continuation of this level of support by Area Consultative Committees is encouraged.

Tourism Alliance provided additional comments pertaining to Regional Tourism Organisations in its response to the 10 Year Plan Discussion Paper. We would like to reiterate the importance of these comments which are summarised as:

- provision of funding to develop and implement a national standard for Best Practice Principles of Local and Regional Tourism Organisation administration and management

### **Overall response**

Future reform would only be supported on the basis that it was agreed to by regional communities and it resulted in Local and Regional Tourism Organisations that were better resourced, more effective and efficient.

### **Responsibility**

Equal partnerships between States, Territories and Local Government and the tourism industry.

### **Improving the Quality of Tourism Product**

Tourism Alliance is a member of the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria Inc and is associated with the Australian Tourism Accreditation Association. Tourism Alliance developed and manages the Visitor Information Centre Accreditation Program for Victoria and recognises the extreme importance and value of accreditation to a professional sustainable tourism industry, which by definition delivers quality customers experiences. Tourism Alliance supports the option of “improving quality and business standards ...through increase[d] awareness within industry of the need for improvement in these areas... through the development of an education campaign.”

Tourism Alliance provided additional comments pertaining to the Quality of Tourism Product in its response to the 10 Year Plan Discussion Paper. We would like to reiterate the importance of these comments which are summarised as:

- Provision of funding for the preparation of guidelines for tourism development in rural and regional areas for inclusion in land use planning frameworks
- Provision of funding to increase community capacity in the development of local strategic tourism plans
- Provide incentives for the preparation of local strategic tourism plans through linking government funding programs to projects identified within the Local Plans.

**Overall Response**

Supported

**Priority**

High

**Timing**

Medium to long Term

**Responsibility**

Federal Government in partnership with States, Territories and industry.

