

THE VALUE OF VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES TO THE VICTORIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY & THE LOCAL ECONOMY

August 2010



APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
INTRODUCTON	3
WHAT IS A VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE?	3
VALUE OF VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES TO THE VICTORIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY	5
<i>Welcome and showcasing the local area</i>	6
Growing the yield.....	6
Community engagement and development	7
<i>Industry development</i>	8
<i>Face or 'Lighthouse' of local tourism</i>	9
<i>Conversion of visitor interest to purchase</i>	9
<i>Visitor research</i>	10
Central communication hub for emergency information.....	10
VIC MODELS OF OPERATION.....	11
THE STATE-WIDE VIC REFERENCE GROUP	12
<i>Why the group was formed?</i>	13
RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY.....	13
RESEARCH OUTCOMES: THE CURRENT STATE OF VICs.....	14
SURVEY RESULTS	15
<i>Visitor profile</i>	15
<i>Motivations</i>	16
<i>Information sources</i>	16
<i>Influence</i>	17
<i>Return visit</i>	18
BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP WITH VISITOR CENTRES- WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?	19
CONCLUSION	21
APPENDIX 1	22
APPENDIX 2	23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to highlight the significant role that Visitor Information Centres (VICs) play within the Victorian tourism industry as a key disseminator of destination and state wide information to visitors and the community as well being a key contact point for the tourism industry.

This report grew out of discussions initiated at the 2009 VIC Summit held in Bendigo and the subsequent formation of the State-wide VIC Network group whose overarching objective is to raise the profile of visitor servicing within the state. The main work by the group to date was research carried out in December 2009/January 2010 by VICs across the state which looked at profiling the visitors to these centres.

The most significant findings drawn from this research identified the following:

- 76% of visitors surveyed indicated that their plans had been influenced by visiting a VIC. They indicated that they would spend from a few hours more in the location to two or more days, undertake additional activities than planned and spend more money than originally planned.
- 90% of those surveyed indicated they were more likely to return to the region as a result of their visit to the centre.

This report also aims to highlight the multitude of opportunities for the industry to partner with the VIC Network to enhance the service delivery and exposure of the VIC brand in order to increase the yield and visitor dispersal throughout the state.

The Victorian State-wide Reference Group is seeking an improved partnership with the Victorian Tourism industry in order to:

- ⊕ Increase brand exposure for accredited VICs
- ⊕ Increase marketing support to drive visitors through VICs
- ⊕ Elevate the VICs role in disseminating information to visitors and the community in emergency situations
- ⊕ Continue to benchmark the performance and value of VICs
- ⊕ Gain recognition within any future State Government tourism policies
- ⊕ Ensure VICs have a seat on key regional tourism boards
- ⊕ That there is VIC representation on each RTB/RCC or a formal communications structure is implemented whereby regional marketing campaigns are presented to the regional VIC network groups to maximise yield and dispersal.

INTRODUCTON

Within this report the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) Reference Group aims to highlight the significant role VIC's play in the Victorian tourism industry. It also seeks to examine the ways in which the Victoria tourism industry and Tourism Victoria can work together to further enhance the service delivery of these centres and to boost visitor satisfaction, yield and dispersion of visitors throughout the state.

WHAT IS A VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE?



Accredited VICs have been a part of the regional tourism landscape for over a decade. In 1997, the former Country Victoria Tourism Council (CVTC) in partnership with Tourism Victoria and representatives from the tourism industry developed an accreditation program for VICs in Victoria. The program ran for a period of one year and VIC's were required to renew their accreditation yearly.

In 1999, a number of tourism industry bodies including CVTC, Victorian Tourism Operators Association (VTOA), Hotel Motel and Accommodation Association (HMAA) and the Victorian Wineries Tourism Council (VWTC) came together to combine the existing separate accreditation programs into one. The collective became the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Panel which developed the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (BBTAP), now the Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP).

During this time a national accreditation body was formed (Australian Tourism Accreditation Authority – ATAA), which developed a set of national guidelines for tourism accreditation programs across the country. The BBTAP was developed in line with the national guidelines and in December 1999, the BBTAP was launched with VIC's being the first sector to be accredited under the new program.

Since the program was launched the network of VICs in Victoria has grown from 67 to currently 74 VICs. The overarching aim of an accredited VIC is to enrich the visitors experience and to encourage visitors to stay longer in a region. They inform the visitor of what to do and see and where to stay.

Although there is a dearth of research in the field of visitor servicing, those studies that have been undertaken as well as anecdotal evidence does suggest that as a result of a visit to a VIC, the visitor stays longer, undertakes additional activities and contributes to overall visitor yield.

Research undertaken in the United Kingdom in March 2007¹ by Tourism South West examined the role and impact of the 14 VICs within the region and concluded that they do have a positive impact on the visitor experience in terms of increasing visitor yield and dispersal. Some of the key findings were as follows:

- As a direct result of every £1 invested in the provision of VICs, £1.20 was generated through net income and offsite expenditure.
- As a consequence of visiting one of the region's VICs an additional £2.3 million worth of visitor expenditure was generated within the community.
- As a result of applying the multiplier effect, the total value of income generated by VIC in the region was approximately £7,678,500.
- As a result of visiting a VIC, one fifth of all visitors were influenced to change their travel plans for instance, additional visits to more or different attractions, spending money at a restaurant or cafe that was not planned beforehand and for a smaller number, amendments were made to accommodation and planned routes.
- VICs play a key role in information dissemination and the principal reason for visiting a centre was to gain information on arrival even amongst those visitors who had researched online prior to their visit.

Other research carried out by Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) in 2004 looked at developing a tool for assessing the management of knowledge within a VIC. Research found that VICs influence visitor yield, and revealed that customer service aspects within visitor centres influenced the behaviour of visitors to a region, with staff knowledge and friendliness being important contributors to promoting increased visitor activities, visitor expenditure and repeat visitation².

¹ TSE Research Services (2007). "A Regional Study of the Economic Impact of Tourist Information Centres", Hampshire.

² Carson, Adams, Deery, Jago & Daugherty (2004). "Improving the Yield of Tourism in Regional Areas: The role of Visitor Information Centres", Melbourne.

Furthermore, research carried out by Tourism New Zealand in early 2010 indicated the following:

- Of the approximately 900,000 international visitors that use VICs at least once during their holiday, they spend on average 45% more than visitors who don't use VICs.
- Almost 60% of domestic and international visitors they surveyed mentioned they would have missed out on a holiday highlight if they had not visited a VIC³.

VALUE OF VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRES TO THE VICTORIAN TOURISM INDUSTRY

The 74 accredited VICs across Victoria undertake a variety of roles and have adapted their business to respond to the needs of the visitors and local community opportunities.

- VICs are a key contact point for the industry, for operators, local tourism associations and regional tourism associations
- Key contact for visitors and the community for local, regional and state visitor information and a vital link in the dissemination of information in emergency situations

The core functions of a VIC are to:

- Welcome and showcase the local area
- Grow the yield (increasing both length of stay and spend)
- Community engagement and development
- Industry development
- The face or "lighthouse" of local tourism
- Conversion of visitor interest to purchase
- Visitor research
- Dissemination of emergency information

³ www.tourismnewzealand.com Accessed 12 August 2010

Welcome and showcasing the local area



VICs provide a local welcome and personal introduction to the visitor in the local area. The value of this personal connection is not to be underestimated with staff and volunteers at the local VIC able to customise and personalise travel plans depending on visitor time in the area and interests. Whilst the internet is used extensively to gain information and maps during the research phase, the intimate local knowledge and characters of a local community, which enrich a visitors travelling experience cannot be gained from the internet. VICs facilitate the connection of visitors and welcome and orientate them on behalf of the local destination. Research undertaken by the Victorian VICs in late 2009 early 2010 indicated that:

- 77% of visitors surveyed agreed that the local VIC influenced their travel plans
- 93% indicated that they are more likely to return to the local destination.

Growing the yield

VICs pride themselves on providing high quality and accurate visitor information and services that assists the visitors to gain the most from their visit. VICs showcase and have access to a diverse range of local information, brochures and maps, with staff and volunteers undertaking a number of familiarisation visits and attending customized training programs to offer the visitor comprehensive, specialised knowledge and advice about what to do and see in the local area.

Research undertaken by the Victorian VICs in late 2009 early 2010 indicated that 76% would stay longer and do more, with in excess of 45% identifying that they would stay an extra 1-2 days. The overall economic impact is very significant at a local level, with a flow on effect felt by business hiring additional staff or increasing existing staffing hours, buying extra supplies from their local supplier and further marketing and developing their business. At a state level there is an opportunity to further increase visitor spend by leveraging the local knowledge and skills of the VIC Network.

Community engagement and development



VICs provide services and opportunities for the local community. There are a number of touch points that a VIC has with the local community and some of these include:

- Volunteers
- Information
- Tour guiding
- Ambassadors/Greeters
- Displays for local community groups
- Local suppliers of merchandise/retail items
- Dissemination of emergency information– local information hub
- Festivals and events

Local and state governments have identified and are implementing strategies to improve the health of communities. VICs through their volunteering and other unique community engagement programs provide meaningful opportunities to keep communities active and healthy. VICs provide an outlet whereby local residents can openly share their civic pride with visitors, which is a very powerful tool to engage with the visitor and encourage them to stay longer and spend more.

Whilst taking on the traditional role of visitor servicing, the Bendigo VIC for example has been repositioning its business looking at how it engages with its local community. As a result there

have been a number of new initiatives that have been successfully implemented to broaden the awareness and usage of the Bendigo VIC by the local community. Some of these initiatives include:

- Online booking service – community niche
- Ticketing local community events
- Wedding accommodation service
- Living arts space development
- Development of a Post Office Gallery – stories of the City
- Town Hall tours
- Retail – the hub for all things locally made
- Local book collection and merchandising with other not-for-profit sectors
- School holiday programs
- Local outlet for new residents packs
- Only distribution point for the local resident Bendigo Ambassador Passport

The Bendigo VIC has developed several innovative programs to engage the community and whilst they are in their infancy, initial reports indicate that the local community visitation is growing, volunteering opportunities are expanding, local artists and creators want their works showcased at the centre and overall awareness of the Bendigo VIC is increasing.

Industry development

VICs often form part of a larger strategic tourism and / or economic development plan, within a local government framework. Leading VICs often pilot new initiatives on behalf of the industry in the local destination and also offer training opportunities to the local tourism industry. VICs also provide support and guidance to newly established businesses and are utilised as a business knowledge source. VICs assist the local council/shire to drive tourism business by:

- Supporting tourism businesses to improve the visitor experience across in the local destination
- Supporting the improvement of business skills and developing the capacity of the tourism business

Overall, VICs play a very important role of nurturing, sustaining and growing the local tourism industry.

The Bendigo VIC embarked upon implementing an online booking service in 2006 with over 120 operators and took a whole of industry approach. Operators were audited regarding their current practices and procedures as well as identifying barriers to participate. The results were then collated with opportunities, resource tools and support networks established and an Implementation Plan engaged. The results were that all operators participated in the developing a web profile and 95% of the industry offered online bookable experiences. The turnover of the Bendigo VIC grew from \$600,000 to \$1.65million in 3 years. The commission earned from these sales is then re-invested back into the local tourism industry to further support marketing, industry development and visitor servicing.

Face or 'Lighthouse' of local tourism

VICs provide the 'window' or the 'face' of the local tourism industry – VIC's are the tangible or physical element that represents a very service based (intangible) industry. The VIC plays a vital role in connecting the visitor with local attractions, businesses / organisations, accommodation and events.



From a local tourism industry's perspective, VICs are looked to as the local industry reference point when there is a challenge or a problem, a change in trends or visitation. VICs are the 'glue' for the local tourism industry, bringing together a large number of key stakeholders including tourism operators, local businesses and the local community. The VIC's assist in supporting, further developing and advancing the industry, creating a stronger local tourism network.

Conversion of visitor interest to purchase



VICs are a hub of local knowledge and experiences and often provide very detailed websites on behalf of the local destination. Marketing initiatives undertaken by the local destination to generate awareness, promote the brand strengths and drive visitation to the region also have the opportunity of utilising the VIC as a call to action. VICs have the knowledge, experience and tools at their disposal to sell the destination and convert interest into purchase. By

working with the VICs, detailed marketing and sales information can be gained from the

prospective visitor, fed back and evaluated by the marketing team. This can provide a one stop, quick and up-to-date snapshot of how marketing initiatives and campaigns are tracking and enable adjustments to be made during the campaign.

VICs can provide up to date intelligence on marketing initiatives and be used as one of the measurement tools, which overall can facilitate a greater return on investment.

Visitor research

As part of becoming an accredited VIC, visitor research is carried out at each individual VIC or jointly as part of a broader visitor servicing research program.

Visitor research collection at VICs is immediate and collated generally on a monthly basis. The VICs are often one of the barometers in the local tourism industry to gauge what is currently occurring at the destination. This grass roots intelligence is powerful and assists in building an overall picture for the destination, region and state tourism perspective.

Central communication hub for emergency information

VICs play a central role in dissemination of emergency information to the visiting public, the local community and the tourism industry. The network is extensive, covering main gateways to key destinations across the state, including those that have been deemed to be in high bushfire prone areas. They are open seven days a week and open from 9am to 5pm offering a reliable and consistent service.

The important role that VICs play in communicating information should not be underestimated. VICs have the capacity to display information to visitors during business hours and after hours, during emergency situations and to also educate and inform them of the potential dangers and the appropriate course of action to take if a situation were to arise. VICs also maintain up to date and localised information about park and road closures and where the main incidents may have taken place.

VIC MODELS OF OPERATION



Whilst the accredited “i” symbol brands and unifies the VIC network, every VIC operates differently and has their own local unique opportunities that they need to respond to. Each VIC works with a combination of the following elements:

Visitor Servicing Models

- Paid staff
- Volunteers

Location Models

- Stand alone dedicated building
- Co-located with other community facilities
- Co-located with an attraction
- Co-located with privately run facilities

Funding Models

- Local Government operated
- Regional Tourism Organisation or Local Tourism Organisation run via membership
- Private Investment

Most VICs will never be in a position to deliver a profit because of the free information services and programs that they deliver. However, it is important to recognise and protect the revenue

opportunities, as a failure to do so could result in a reduction of services and programs, with the overall VIC network integrity and service delivery compromised. VIC revenue opportunities include:

- Online bookings
- Retail
- Advertising
- Ticketing
- Tours
- Event Management
- Fundraising
- Sponsorships/Partnerships
- Grants
- Leasing Space or Sub-letting Services

THE STATE-WIDE VIC REFERENCE GROUP

The VIC Reference group is a state elected body representing all accredited VICs in the state. The group comprises a representative from each of Tourism Victoria defined marketing regions including a representative from Tourism Alliance Victoria and from ATAP Victoria.

The group comprises the following representatives:

- Tim Booth, Ballarat VIC
- Viv Collins, Bendigo VIC
- Chris Crawford, Cobram Barooga VIC
- Faith Damm, Corryong Visitor Information Centre
- Erin Doyle, Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP), Victoria
- Fiona Dunn, Tourism Alliance Victoria
- Alva Hemming, Mornington Peninsula Tourism
- Anne Lacey, Tourism Melbourne
- John Munns, East Gippsland Shire
- Norman Prueter, Beaufort VIC
- Virginia Smedley, Sunbury VIC
- Leon Walker, Lorne VIC

Why the group was formed?

Following discussions held at the VIC Summit in Bendigo in August 2009, the group was formed with the aim of advancing the professionalism of visitor servicing in the state and to raise the awareness of VICs within the tourism industry and amongst consumers (See Appendix 1 for Terms of Reference).

Progress to Date

- Formation of VIC Reference Group representing all regions in the state including representatives from Tourism Alliance Victoria and ATAP Victoria.
- Gathered information from all VICs in the state which examined staffing levels, volunteer numbers and visitation in order to create a picture of the state wide network.
- Created and distributed a visitor survey to all accredited centres across the state to assist in more clearly articulating the value of visitor servicing. Survey results are being used to help identify opportunities to work more closely with the Victorian tourism industry.

RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

One of the first actions of the VIC Reference Group following its formation in September 2009 was to undertake state wide research with the aim of profiling the visitors to the state's VICs. Specifically, the research objectives were to:

- Profile the visitor and their travel characteristics
- Gauge the influence VICs have on the decision making process during their visit to the town/region

74 accredited VICs in Victoria were invited to participate in the survey. 45 VICs, representing 60% of the total number of VICs, chose to participate with 2950 surveys being carried out in late December 2009 and in early January 2010.

The approach used was face-to-face interviews that were guided by a VIC staff member or volunteer. The visitors were randomly selected as they walked in the VIC.

The research focused on the following (see Appendix 2):

- Visitor demographics
- Main purpose for visiting the town or region

- Length of stay
- Main information services utilised by the visitor prior to travelling
- How they found out about the VIC
- Whether or not the VIC influenced plans to stay longer, spend more and undertake additional activities

RESEARCH OUTCOMES: THE CURRENT STATE OF VICs

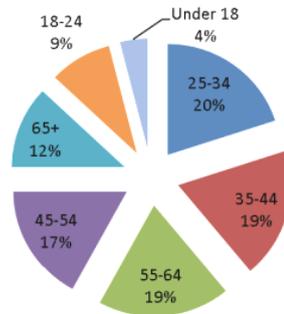
Prior to undertaking this research, the VIC network gathered key statistics about the VICs around the state to provide more context of the scope of the network. Below is the current VIC network profile:

How many accredited centres are there in Victoria?	74
Across how many local government areas in Victoria?	55
Number of paid employees	300
Total Paid Staff Hours per annum (fulltime, part-time & casual)	310,000
Number of Volunteers	1,950
Total Volunteer Hours per annum	275,000
Total Number of walk-in visitors during 2008/09 financial year	5,713,469

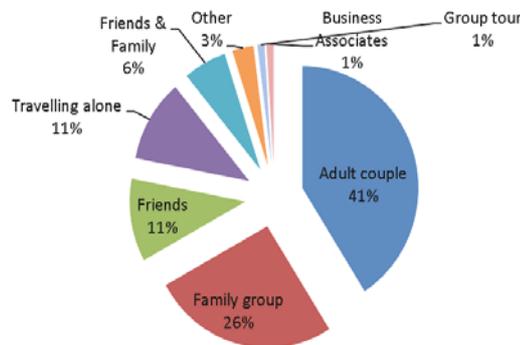
SURVEY RESULTS

Visitor profile

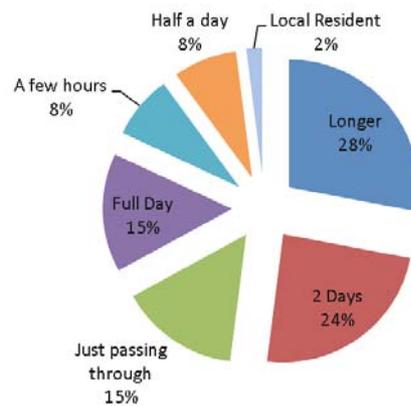
- The most common age group to visit a VIC was 25 to 34 (20%), closely followed by the 35 to 44 year olds (19%) and 55 to 64 year olds (19%).



- Most people that visited a VIC were classified as travelling as an Adult Couple (41%).

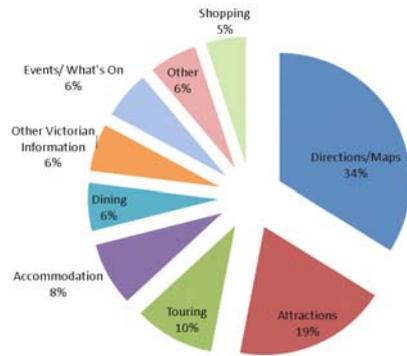


- 28% of people surveyed were staying longer than two days in the location where the VIC was situated, followed by 24% who were staying for two days.



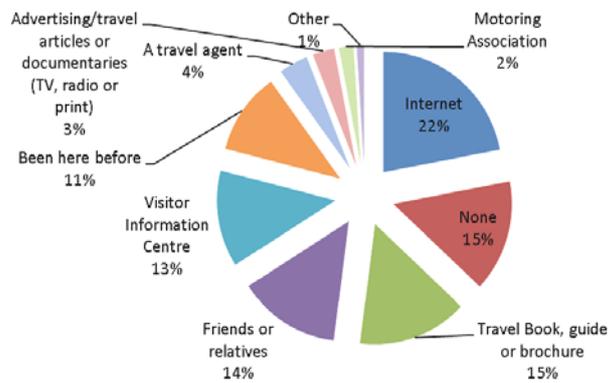
Motivations

- 34% of people visiting a VIC were seeking directions or maps.

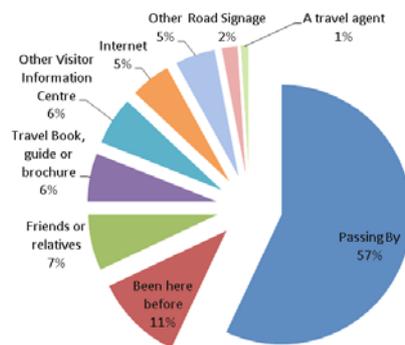


Information sources

- 22% of visitors utilised the Internet as their main source of information before leaving home.

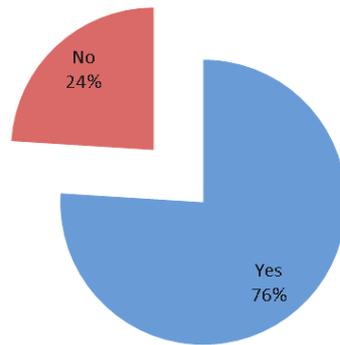


- 57% of visitors found out about the VIC when Passing By.

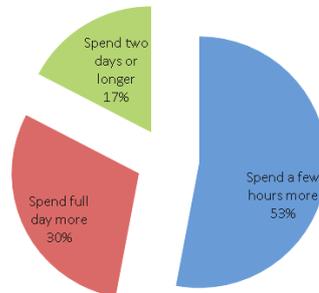


Influence

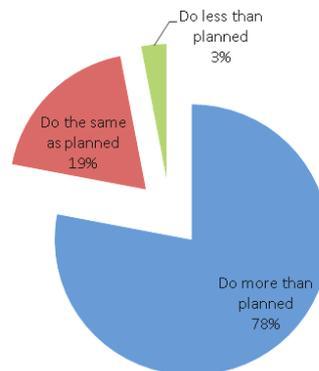
- 76% of visitors had their plans influenced by their visit to the VIC



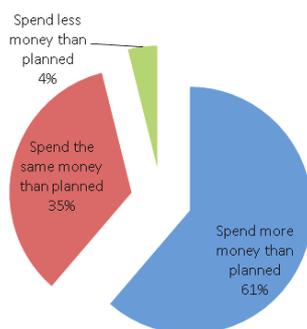
- Of those visitors who highlighted that the VIC had influenced plans for the visit, 53% would spend a few more hours in the location, 30% would spend a full day more and 17% said they would spend two days or longer.



- 78% would do more than planned, 19% would do the same as planned and 3% would do less than planned

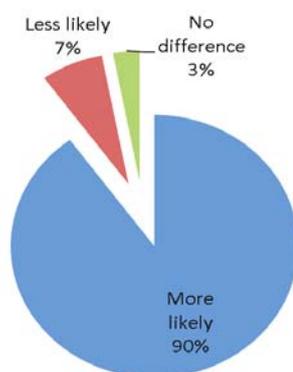


- 61% would spend more money than planned, 35% would spend the same money as planned and 4% would spend less money than planned.



Return visit

- 90% of those surveyed said they were more likely to return to the region as a result of their visit to the VIC.



This research has identified several powerful statistics in regards to the role that VICs have in influencing travel patterns.

The most significant findings drawn from this research are as follows:

- 76% of visitors surveyed mentioned their plans had been influenced by visiting the VIC with many indicating they would spend from a few hours more in the location to two or more days extra, do more activities than planned and spend more money than originally planned.
- 90% of those surveyed indicated they were more likely to return to the region as a result of their visit to the centre.

Despite these results, there are still several key challenges currently facing the VIC network which does affect the ability of the centres to be utilised to their full potential.

Lack of “i” brand awareness both amongst consumers and the tourism industry of the services offered by a VIC and the role they hold in positively influencing the travel patterns and behaviour of visitors. Significant opportunities exist to broaden the profile of VIC’s, through strengthening industry partnerships, to continue to develop and drive the tourism industry forward.

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP WITH VISITOR CENTRES- WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

To further promote the services provided by Victorian VICs across the state so they can continue to enhance the visitor experience and build visitor yield and dispersal across the state, the VIC Reference Group recommends the following:

CFA= Country Fire Authority

DSE= Department of Sustainability & Environment

LG= Local Government

PV= Parks Victoria

RCC= Regional Campaign Committee

RTB= Regional Tourism Board

TAV= Tourism Alliance Victoria

TV= Tourism Victoria

	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Key Partners</i>	<i>Priority (High, Medium, Low)</i>
Brand Exposure	⊕ Develop a full page VIC template for insertion on the inside front cover of all Official Visitor Guides (OVGs) which refers to the "i" brand attributes and directs people to VICs in the region. This should be mandatory in all Victorian OVGs.	TV, RCC/RTB	High
	⊕ Enhanced "i" brand exposure and recognition of the service delivered by VICs on Tourism Victoria's consumer website www.visitvictoria.com . There needs to be easy access and links to each region including a state wide map which could then be downloaded easily by the consumer.	TV	High
Marketing Support to Drive Visitors to VICs	⊕ Develop an interactive consumer initiative which seeks to actively drive visitation to VICs as well as traffic to the www.visitvictoria.com website (e.g. similar to the Tourism Queensland and the Queensland Information Centre Association passport campaign: www.queenslandholidays.com.au/travel-info/visitor-information-centres/passport-competition.cfm).	TV, TAV, VICs	Medium
	⊕ Greater linkages to be developed between Tourism Victoria's marketing campaigns and the VICs. For example, using the VIC as a campaign call to action.	TV, RCC/RTB, VICs	High

Emergency Management Communications	<p>⊕ That the state's accredited VICs are recognised and utilised as key communication dispersal hubs within emergency communications strategies.</p>	<p><i>TV, CFA, PV, DSE, VicRoads, LG, VICs</i></p>	<p>High</p>
Benchmarking the value of VICs across Victoria	<p>⊕ Build upon existing research programs to create a greater understanding of the visitors utilising VIC's and the yield generated for local and state economies.</p>	<p><i>LG, TAV, VICs</i></p>	<p>High</p>
Recognition of VICs in State Government tourism policy documents	<p><i>At present there is little to no mention within the following key State Government tourism policies of the value of VICs and their importance within the tourism industry.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>10-Year Tourism and Events Strategy</i> • <i>Tourism Victoria's Business Plan 2008- 2011</i> • <i>Regional Tourism Action Plan</i> <p><i>One of the key objectives outlined in all of these strategies is the importance of developing visitor dispersal and increasing visitor yield. VICs must be a key industry partner in striving to achieve these objectives.</i></p> <p>⊕ Ensure that VICs are recognised within any future tourism strategies as a vital industry network which is actively enhancing the visitor experience and contributing to visitor yield and dispersal.</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p>Medium</p>

VIC Representation	⊕ That there is VIC representation on each RTB/RCC or a formal communications structure is implemented whereby regional marketing campaigns are presented to the regional VIC network groups to maximise yield and dispersal.	<i>TV, RTB/RCC, VIC Network</i>	<i>Medium</i>
	⊕ That a Tourism Victoria representative be appointed to sit on the State-Wide VIC Reference Group.	<i>TV</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Communications Channels	⊕ That the VIC Network is included and recognised as a key communications channel	<i>TV</i>	<i>High</i>

CONCLUSION

The Victorian VIC network is an integral and untapped sector of the tourism industry, with the capacity and opportunity to deliver increased visitor dispersal and influence length of stay, activities undertaken and repeat visitation. VICs not only provide a welcoming and orientating point for visitors, but also fulfil a meaningful community engagement role and an important industry engagement and development role.

VICs are the conduit connecting visitors, the local community and local tourism industry.

The Victorian VIC network is committed to increasing the exposure of VICs; advocating the value and importance of the role that VICs play; and driving partnerships and opportunities to advance the network.

THE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE REFERENCE GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE 2009/10

1. Vision

The State-wide Visitor Information Centre (VIC) Reference Group is recognised as the united voice representing the Victorian VIC sector. It offers VICs the opportunity to discuss key issues and concerns of the network and develop effective solutions to further promote the significant role VICs play within the Victorian tourism industry.

2. Mission

To provide an open environment that encourages the sharing of ideas and the development of joint projects and initiatives.

The role of the members of the State VIC Reference Group is to work together to achieve common goals. Development of new initiatives is the responsibility of the group members and their respective regional networking group. The State VIC Reference Group will identify key priorities for the group with realistic and achievable goals and objectives that will derive real benefits for group members. Tourism Alliance Victoria will support the group to implement initiatives and will facilitate communication.

3. Participants

Each Tourism Victoria defined marketing region is represented within the group by one manager.

Each representative will report back to their regional network group on a regular basis and ensure that any relevant tasks are actioned. The workload will be shared amongst members of this group to ensure the group has greater ownership of projects and the timely completion of specific projects is achieved.

Each representative will be required to present back to the VIC Reference Group at the following meeting.

Visitor Information Survey December 2009 & January 2010

In order to help us make your stay more enjoyable, we would greatly appreciate if you could please spare a moment of your time to complete this survey.

1. What is your postcode (if in Australia) _____

If you are an overseas visitor, what region are you from?

- New Zealand / Pacific
- Asia
- Middle East
- UK / Europe
- Africa
- North America
- Central / South America

2. Are you a Local resident?

- Yes
- No

3. What age group are you in?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

4. Which one of the following best describes the group in which you are travelling?

- Adult couple
- Family group (Adults & children)
- Friends
- Friends & family
- Travelling alone
- Group tour
- Business associates
- School group
- Other – Please specify _____

5. Have you visited this region before?

- Yes - If so, how many times? _____
- No

6. What is the main purpose for visiting **XXXX**?

- Visiting friends & relatives
- Holiday / leisure
- Entertainment / attending special event

- Sport (participation and/or spectator)
- Work or business
- Conference/exhibitions/conventions
- Weddings
- Other (Please specify) _____

7. How long are you staying in XXXX?

- Just passing through
- A few hours
- Half a day
- Full day
- 2 Days+

8. Before leaving home, which of the following information sources did you utilise? (Please tick as many boxes as apply)

- None
- A travel agent
- Travel book, guide or brochure
- Motoring association
- Advertising/travel articles or documentaries (TV, Radio or Print)
- Friends or relatives
- Been here before
- Internet
- Visitor Information Centre
- Other (Please specify) _____

9. Have you visited this Visitor Information Centre before?

- Yes
- No

10. How did you find out about the Visitor Information Centre? (Please choose ONE only)

- Passing by
- A travel agent
- Travel book, guide or brochure
- Motoring association
- Friends or relatives
- Been here before
- Internet
- Other Visitor Information Centre
- Other (Please specify) _____

11. Has your visit to the Visitor Information Centre influenced your plans for this visit?

- Yes
- No

12. If yes, will you –

- Do the same as planned
- Do more than planned
- Do less than planned

- Spend a few hours more
- Spend full day or more
- Spend an additional two days or longer

- Spend more money than planned
- Spend the same money as planned
- Spend less money than planned

13. As a result of your visit to the Visitor Centre, how likely are you to return to XXXX?

- More likely
- Less likely

14. On a scale of one to five, please rate this VIC in regards to the following (One = Poor, Five = Excellent)

Location	1	2	3	4	5
Ability to find centre	1	2	3	4	5
Staff knowledge	1	2	3	4	5
Customer service	1	2	3	4	5

15. What type of information were you seeking today? (Please tick as many boxes as apply)

- Directions / maps
- Accommodation
- Attractions
- Dining
- Touring
- Other Victorian information
- Shopping
- Events / What's on
- Other (Please specify)_____

16. Can you estimate how much money your travel party will spend in total, whilst visiting XXXX for the following items (Please circle)

Travel/Transport	<\$50	\$50-\$100	\$100-\$200	\$200-\$300	\$300-\$400	\$400-\$500	\$500+	Unsure
Accommodation	<\$50	\$50-\$100	\$100-\$200	\$200-\$300	\$300-\$400	\$400-\$500	\$500+	Unsure
Shopping	<\$50	\$50-\$100	\$100-\$200	\$200-\$300	\$300-\$400	\$400-\$500	\$500+	Unsure
Food & Drink	<\$50	\$50-\$100	\$100-\$200	\$200-\$300	\$300-\$400	\$400-\$500	\$500+	Unsure
Entertainment/Attraction	<\$50	\$50-\$100	\$100-\$200	\$200-\$300	\$300-\$400	\$400-\$500	\$500+	Unsure