

9. ELIGIBILITY FOR TOURIST SIGNING

9.1 General

The following criteria enable a Road Authority to determine whether a tourist attraction or establishment is eligible for tourist signing. Applications for signs are assessed for eligibility under the Road Management Act 2004. It should be noted that eligibility for tourist attraction signing does not determine entitlement to the placement of a sign on the road. The sign must be assessed against the following criteria which have road safety and road efficiency implications.

9.2 Criteria for Tourist Attraction Signing

9.2.1 Essential Criteria

In order to qualify for tourist attraction signing, as set out in sections 4.2 and 4.3,

A tourist attraction (other than a natural feature) must satisfy all of the following essential criteria.

The attraction must:

(a) Have tourism as a Core Business Activity (see Glossary of Terms—Appendix A)

(b) Provide a substantive tourism experience in addition to, or as part of, any commercial/retail activity (see Glossary of Terms—Appendix A);

(c) Have all relevant State and local government licences and approvals to operate as a tourist attraction, including health, planning and parking requirements;

(d) Be open to the public without prior booking during the attraction's normal opening hours;

(e) Be open on weekends and at least three other days of the week, plus public and school holidays;

(f) Be open for a minimum of 7 hours per day on the days the attraction is open;

(g) Be listed on the database of the nearest accredited Visitor Information Centre (with opening hours, admission prices, location and directions);

(h) Promote the location and clear directions to the attraction to visitors from outside the local area;

(i) Be appropriately signed within the property line so that it is easily identifiable by passing motorists;

(j) Have appropriately trained visitor contact staff; and

(k) Maintain a record of visitor numbers and comments.

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9.2.2 Desirable Criteria

It is also desirable that the attraction:

- be a member of a recognised Local, Regional or peak sector tourism organisation and/or be accredited under a scheme approved by the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria;
- provides parking for coaches and other large vehicles; and
- provides parking for disabled visitors

Specific Criteria

9.2.3 Nurseries and Garden Centres

To be eligible for tourist signing, nurseries and garden centres must:

- meet all of the essential criteria.

9.2.4 Art Galleries and Craft Outlets

To be eligible for tourist signing, art and craft outlets must:

- meet all of the essential criteria; and
- fulfil any two of the following specific criteria:
 - (a) Feature a resident artist/craftsperson;
 - (b) Display a production process, together with associated explanatory Information;
 - (c) Provide exhibition space of more than 50 square metres; and
 - (d) More than 30% of the art/craft works on permanent display are from local And/or regional artists/craftspeople.

9.2.5 Antique Galleries/Stores

To be eligible for tourist signing, antique galleries or stores must:

- meet all of the essential criteria.

9.2.6 Museums and Historic Properties

To be eligible for tourist signing, museums and historic properties must:

- meet all of the essential criteria except item (e);
- be open on weekends, public holidays and school holidays;
- provide supporting literature and interpretive materials for visitors.

Desirably, heritage properties should be registered with Heritage Victoria, and Museums should be accredited under Museums Australia (Victoria), Museums Accreditation Program.

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9.2.7 Primary and Secondary Industry Based Attractions

To be eligible for tourist signing, factories, manufacturing plants and agricultural operations must:

- meet all of the essential criteria except item (e);
- open during normal business hours 5 days per week, and preferably on weekends;
- provide guided tours to the general public at advertised times;
- display high quality interpretative material of the relevant agricultural or industrial process; and
- Where appropriate, provide sampling of the product available as part of the visitor experience.

9.2.8 Wineries

To be eligible for tourist signing, wineries must:

- meet all of the essential criteria;
- hold a Vignerons Licence or a licence which permits sales direct to the public; and
- have a purpose-built facility for wine tasting (cellar door).

Wineries meeting all requirements other than 9.2.1 (e) that are open on weekends, public and school holidays may apply for temporary signing in accordance with section 4.3.7.

9.2.9 Seasonal Attractions

Attractions that close for part of the year may be eligible for tourist signing where they meet the following conditions:

- A significant tourism experience is provided to visitors, such as fruit picking, tours, etc;
- must be open for a minimum nine months of the year to gain permanent signing; however, such signing must include the period of closure, for example, Desert Trail Rides (closed Jan–March);
- Attractions operating for less than nine months but for more than three months of the year may make limited use of temporary signing. Examples of such signing are featured in section 4.3.7;
- Attractions open to the public for less than three months of the year are not eligible for tourist attraction signing; and
- The attraction communicates its location and opening hours to the nearest Visitor Information Centres, through brochures and local advertising.

Tourist Signing Guidelines

9.3 Criteria for Tourist Accommodation Signing

Wherever possible, signing to accommodation establishments will make use of the Australian Standard symbols (see Appendix C), either on their own or combined with word legends (for example, Motel, B&B).

Signing to accommodation establishments from freeways will only be permitted by way of symbols, which are often combined with direction signs.

Facilities located on declared arterial roads, with adequate sight distances for traffic and with the ability to erect property signs, will not be eligible for signing.

9.3.1 Tourist Accommodation Signing in Urban Areas

Signing to accommodation establishments within major urban areas or within the urban limits of rural towns is generally in the form of a street blade from the nearest declared arterial road, subject to the following conditions:

- The establishment must be located within two kilometres of the intersection;
- Reassurance signs will be considered only in cases of extreme directional hardship; and
- Special provisions may apply for establishments located off divided roads.

Accommodation establishments with an entrance directly from a declared arterial road are not eligible for signing. However, if the entrance is from a service road, a position sign may be required at the point at which vehicles leave the through carriageway.

9.3.2 Tourist Accommodation Signing in Rural Areas

Signing to accommodation establishments in rural areas is generally by way of chevron-ended signs, the size of which should be determined by the prevailing traffic speed (see Table 5.1).

Chevron-ended signs are normally positioned at the intersection or entrance to the property, but can be placed up to 100 metres in advance of the intersection to give adequate notice of the impending turn. When located well in advance of the intersection (180 to 320 m), square-ended advance signs should be used.

Facilities located more than 10 kilometres from a declared arterial road are not eligible for signing, except in remote areas of the State.

Tourist Signing Guidelines

9.3.3 Criteria for Tourist Accommodation Signing

To be eligible for tourist accommodation signing, accommodation facilities must:
Essential:

- (a) Hold all relevant State and Local Government licences and any other appropriate consents;
- (b) Be open daily;
- (c) Be available for casual accommodation (prior booking not required);
- (d) Be open to the general public (i.e. not exclusively for coach tours or other organised groups);
- (e) Be listed on the database of the nearest accredited Visitor Information Centre (with opening hours, admission prices, location and directions);
- (f) Promote the location and clear directions to the facility to visitors from outside the local area;
- (g) Be appropriately signed within the property line so that the facility is easily identifiable by passing motorists; and
- (h) Have appropriately trained visitor contact staff.

Desirable:

- (i) be a member of a recognised Local, Regional or peak sector tourism organisation and/or be accredited under a scheme approved by the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria.

9.3.4 Specific Criteria

In addition to the general criteria listed in 9.3.3, the following accommodation facilities must satisfy the criteria set out below.

Caravan Parks

Caravan parks must:

- provide a mixture of accommodation, powered caravan sites and camping sites; and
- be operated and maintained by an on-site manager 7 days per week.

Camping Areas

Camping areas must be serviced by fresh water for drinking purposes and toilets.

Bed and Breakfast Establishments

Bed and breakfast establishments:

- must provide on-site management;
- To avoid signing proliferation in areas featuring a high number of B&Bs, if two or more B&Bs are to be signed in the same direction; a generic sign should be used. This would comprise the bed symbol and 'B&Bs';
- B&B operators no longer operating or closing for more than three months must remove all signing to the property.

Farm stays/Host Farms

Farm stays and host farms must provide a legitimate farm experience for visitors.

Resorts

The terminology 'resort' will only be used on services signs when the following conditions are met:

- A variety of accommodation options is provided;
- Dining or self contained cooking facilities are provided;
- Essential guest services are provided on-site;
- A reception area is staffed for a minimum of 14 hours per day;
- A range of recreational facilities is provided; and
- A range of activities conducted by suitably experienced staff is provided in order to enhance the holiday experience.

Holiday Houses

Tourist signing is not permitted to provide direction to holiday homes, even if they are used for commercial purposes.

Self-Contained Accommodation

Self-contained accommodation facilities must be operated and maintained by an on-site manager 7 days a week.

9.4 Criteria for Restaurants

To be eligible for signing, restaurants must:

- be located outside the built up area;
- meet essential criteria (a) & (d) of section 9.3.3;
- provide full table service;
- be open at least 6 days per week; and
- offer regional and/or local produce as part of the visitor experience.

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

Arterial Road

A road which is declared to be an arterial road under Section 14 of the Road Management Act 2004.

‘M’ Roads

‘M’ Roads (duplicated roadways) are the primary road links and connect Melbourne and other capital cities and major provincial centres. They link major centres and production and manufacturing with Victoria’s ports.

‘A’ Roads

‘A’ roads serve the same role as ‘M’ roads but carry less traffic. These roads are primary road links with single carriageways.

‘B’ Roads

‘B’ roads are the primary links between significant tourist regions and major regions not served by ‘A’ roads.

‘C’ Roads

‘C’ roads are the more important links between other centres and between these centres and primary road networks.

Australian Standards (AS)

Australian Standards are prepared by committees made up of experts from industry, governments, user groups and other sectors. The requirements or recommendations contained in published Standards are the consensus of the views of representative interests and also take account of comments received from other sources. They reflect latest scientific and industry experience. Australian Standards are kept under continuous review after publication and are updated regularly to take account of changing technology.

Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program

The Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (BBTAP) is a generic accreditation program that caters to Victorian accommodation providers, tour operators, attractions, visitor information centres, wineries, restaurants, transport operators, retail outlets, booking services and tourism associations. BBTAP establishes industry standards for operating a tourism business and provides a framework for the continuous improvement of tourism businesses.

Built-up Area

An area with substantial development, generally defined by the limits of a speed limit other than the relevant open road limit (100 or 110 km/h), except where such a limit may be imposed for road safety reasons other than abutting development.

Community Facilities

Facilities which are essentially community-based and operated, even though they

may be used by visitors and, in some cases, may attract visitors in their own right. These include public golf courses, swimming pools and aerodromes.

Coordinating Road Authority

The coordinating road authority in relation to a road means the road authority which has coordination function as determined in accordance with Section 36 of the Road Management Act 2004. This is:

- (a) if the road is a freeway or arterial road, VicRoads;
- (b) if the road is a non-arterial State road, the relevant responsible road authority;
- (c) if the road is a municipal road, the municipal council of the municipal district in which the road or part of the road is situated.

Core Business Activity (Tourism)

Refers to a business operation where the principal motivation, or one of the major motivations, is the provision of an experience and/or service to meet the needs of tourists (i.e. the business earns more than 50% of its annual revenue from tourism activities). A demonstrated commitment to high standards of customer service should be central to the business philosophy. Membership of, and active participation in, the marketing programs of local and regional tourism organisations may also be taken into consideration when assessing the 'core' business of a tourism operation in order to determine its eligibility for tourist signing.

Declared Road

An arterial road or freeway.

Freeway

A road declared to be a freeway under Section 14 of the Road Management Act 2004.

Information Bay

A facility provided for the free use of travellers and containing tourist information on display boards provided and maintained by the council or local tourism association

Interpretative Centre/Shelter

A purpose built building, shelter or display board generally located on tourist routes/drives of significant cultural, geographic or heritage appeal which succinctly explains and/or interprets pertinent information about the site or vista.

Marketing/Promotional Material

Any material, including maps, guides and promotional brochures, which provides visitor information in relation to tourist attractions and facilities on a state, regional, local or individual basis.

Municipal road

means a road under the care and management of a municipal council, - ie a road other than a freeway, declared arterial road or a road under the responsibility of a state authority.

Natural Feature

A geographic or other natural feature of interest to the tourist, for example, lookouts, waterfalls, lakes, wetlands, waterways, national and State parks.

Planning Scheme

A statutory document provided for by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 (Clause 36.04 Road Zone & Clause 52.05 Advertising signs) which sets out policies and provisions for the use, development, protection or conservation of any land in an area.

Roadside Establishment

A commercially operated facility catering for travellers in terms of meals, refreshments, fuel, toilets or accommodation.

Roadside and Public Facilities

Facilities other than roadside establishments, including rest areas or truck stop areas and associated facilities (picnic, fire place, toilets, etc), or other facilities such as telephone or emergency medical services.

Remote Area

An area of Victoria where the distance from the nearest M or A class road is more than 100 km.

Services Sign

A sign of the type described in section 4.4 of the Guidelines and covered by the services sign provisions of AS 1742.6. Services signs can be used to sign visitor information centres, information bays, roadside establishments and roadside and public facilities in accordance with the guidelines.

Signing Officer

A person employed by a Council or by VicRoads who has the role of ensuring high standards of sign design, manufacture and installation throughout the region, including the management of applications from businesses. VicRoads employs a signing officer in each of its seven regions throughout Victoria. Councils may combine the role of signing officer with other tasks. Typically, a Council may nominate a member of its traffic engineering, statutory planning, economic development or tourism departments to provide the initial point of contact for tourist signing applications.

Substantive Tourism Experience

In some cases it may be difficult to decide whether a particular establishment is primarily a tourist attraction or a retail outlet (for example, craft workshops and potteries). Consideration is given to the following:

- the experience must be for the purpose of education, or demonstration of the manufacture of goods, or demonstration of crafts, as distinct from retail sales or other major use of the premises (e.g. if the public can watch a demonstration or display without necessarily making any purchases of the products or goods on offer);
- the experience must be available on a regular basis so as to enable advertising of the experience on brochures without risk of disappointment to visitors; and

- the experience must be available during school holidays, public holidays and weekends.

Statewide Route Numbering Scheme (SRNS)

Victoria's route numbering system for rural arterial roads. Each road is given a letter (M, A, B or C) to reflect the quality and function of the route and an identifying number (M31, B500, etc). This allows drivers to anticipate the driving conditions they are likely to encounter and to plan their trip in advance.

Tourism Manager/Officer

A professional officer typically employed by a Council or Regional Tourism Association to co-ordinate tourism planning and marketing for a Council or region.

Tourism Victoria

The organisation through which the State Government seeks to be an active participant in the tourism and travel sectors to optimise the economic benefit to Victoria.

Tourist Attraction Sign

A sign of the type described in section 4.2 of the Guidelines and covered by the tourist sign provisions of AS 1742.6. Tourist Attraction signs can be used to sign tourist regions and areas, tourist attractions, natural attractions, tourist routes and tourist drives in accordance with the guidelines.

Tourist Attraction

A commercial or non-commercial attraction or establishment, or an attraction which is actively managed by a government agency or committee of management, catering primarily for tourists and for which a charge may or may not be made (criteria in section 9.2 also apply).

Tourist Drive

A tourist drive may be:

- geographically based;
- tourist attraction based, for example, 'Family Fun Trail';
- theme based, for example, 'Wine Trail'; or
- a combination of geographic and thematic.

VicRoads Traffic Engineering Manual Vol. 2

A source document which provides detailed treatment of technical aspects associated with road signs and markings. A copy of this manual is available on VicRoads website.

Visitor Information Centre

An information centre for visitors carrying a level of accreditation from the Better Business Tourism Accreditation Program (BBTAP).