

Tourist Signing Guidelines Information for Tourism Businesses



Road Signs in use for tourist attractions and facilities

There are four major types of road signs used by visitors to find tourist attractions and services in Victoria:

1. Directional Signs (white on a green background)

Green signs provide directions to towns and cities, facilitating traffic movement in the safest and most direct way. Most include reference to the M, A, B, C route number, which makes it easier for visitors to navigate to destinations and attractions. Direction signs are provided by the relevant road authority (VicRoads or Municipal Councils).



2. Tourist Attraction Signs (white on a brown background)

These indicate features and attractions (commercial and non-commercial) of significant recreation and cultural interest to the visitor according to criteria established by Tourism Victoria and VicRoads. They may also incorporate Australian Standards services symbols and approved tourist attraction symbols. Tourist Attraction signs are paid for by the applicant.



3. Services Signs (white on a blue background)

These signs direct motorists to facilities and services which may benefit them. They may use words, approved Australian Standards symbols, or sometimes both. The road authority often pays for generic signing to tourist services (eg. rest areas, toilets, etc), but signs to accommodation and other commercial service businesses are paid for by the applicant.



4. Community Facility Signs (white on a blue background)

These are a subset of services signs, and direct motorists to community-based facilities including schools, churches, parks and sporting facilities. They are generally smaller than services signs.



Preamble

The purpose of this brochure is to explain the principles for providing signs to individual tourist attractions and accommodation establishments. The brochure supplements the *Tourist Signing Guidelines* which provide further detail and can be accessed through the VicRoads or Tourism Victoria websites.

1.0 What is the role of Tourist and Services Signs?

The prime purpose of tourist signing is to give visitors direction or guidance to tourist attractions and accommodation. Although standard tourist signs provide some promotional benefits to tourism businesses, this is not their primary role.

It is important to remember that applications for signing will be considered by the road authorities on the basis of assisting efficient traffic management, navigation and motorist safety, not the advertising or promotion of your business.

Roadside signing should not be expected to compensate for a poorly located business. Choosing a suitable location which will achieve visibility and capture trade for a tourism business should be a primary consideration at the time of initial business planning.

2.0 How to apply for a sign permit?

Applicants seeking approval to place tourist or services signs within a road reserve should lodge an application with the officer in charge of tourist signing at the relevant Municipal Council.

Application forms for tourist attractions and accommodations are available on the VicRoads website (www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)

The Municipal Council will initially assess the application based on the eligibility criteria as outlined on pages 5 and 6. The application is forwarded to VicRoads for approval if the signs are on a declared arterial road. However, applications for signs on municipal roads are approved by Council.

Councils may charge an administration fee for an application. VicRoads does not charge a fee for sign approval.

The road authority will, within 14 days, notify the applicant whether:

- the application has been approved;
- the application has been rejected;
- the application has been referred to other authorities for consideration;
- additional information is required or a cooperative signing scheme should be considered.

Approval will be in the form of a sign permit which will include a number of conditions. This permit is valid for 5 years.

3.0 How many signs can I have?

If a tourist attraction or service is eligible for signing, the signs will be permitted from the nearest declared arterial road, except for major attractions of National or State significance where the extent of signing will be determined by VicRoads and Tourism Victoria.

If the entrance to the attraction is abutting a declared arterial road, signs are permitted for both left and right turns into the entrance, unless the signs within the property would not make the entrance obvious to the drivers.

If the attraction is on a side road, signs are permitted for both left and right turn into the side road, and any subsequent turns on the municipal road network, by the most desirable route until the entrance is reached.

Signing from the nearest arterial road is only permitted if the attraction/establishment is less than 10km from the turnoff in rural areas and is less than 2km in built-up areas.

An attraction may also be signed from two declared arterial roads if it is equally accessible from both arterial roads. All turns on municipal road must be signed until the entrance of the facility is reached.

The number of tourist attractions or services listed on signs facing a motorist approaching an intersection from one direction is limited to three. If an eligible attraction applies for a sign which would exceed this limit, rationalisation will be required.

4.0 How to maximise the effectiveness of a sign?

A high standard of design in road signing is essential to effectively communicate with the motorist, as well as to meet important safety, aesthetic and environmental considerations. In most cases, motorists have only a few seconds to read and comprehend the sign's message and therefore signs must be clear and concise.

Extensive research by road authorities has determined optimum lettering size, spacing, and the number of words and lines on a sign to suit various traffic speeds, locational considerations and to optimise motorist comprehension. The size, style and wording of your sign will be determined by these factors.

Using Australian Standard Symbols is an effective way of communicating with drivers and in many cases these standard symbols are used instead of words. Signing officers employed by Councils and VicRoads know and understand these requirements.

5.0 Who pays for signs and maintain them?

The financial responsibility for all tourist attraction and services signs including installation and maintenance are borne by the applicant. Signing of road authority assets such as rest areas are funded by the relevant road authority.

6.0 How to get more information?

Further information about tourist attraction and services signing in Victoria, including sign application forms, is available at website <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au>

- Details of eligibility criteria;
- Application forms for attractions and accommodations; and
- Application and approval process flowchart.

Eligibility for Tourist Signing

The following criteria enable a road authority to determine whether a tourist attraction or establishment is eligible for tourist signing. It should be noted that eligibility for tourist attraction signing does not determine entitlement to the placement of a sign on the road.

Criteria for Tourist Attraction Signing

Essential:

In order to qualify for tourist attraction signing, 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.
- (b) provide a substantive tourism experience in addition to, or as part of, any commercial/retail activity;
- (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.

Desirable:

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.

Criteria for Tourist Accommodation Signing

Essential:

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

- (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:

It is also desirable that the establishment is a member of a recognised Local, Regional or peak sector tourism organisation and/or is accredited under a scheme approved by the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria.

Additional criteria apply to the following specific types of attractions and accommodation:

- Wineries;
- Art galleries and craft outlets;
- Museums and historic properties;
- Seasonal attractions;
- Industry based attractions;
- Caravan parks and camping areas;
- Bed and Breakfast establishments;
- Restaurant;
- Farmstays/host farms; and
- Resorts

Specific criteria can be viewed at the VicRoads website or in discussion with relevant municipal council or VicRoads regional signing officers.

For further information: Please visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au. Telephone: 13 11 71