

## THE AUSTRALIAN TOURISM SYSTEM

“Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. By 2010 the global travel industry is expected to generate \$US10 trillion of economic activity and 328 million jobs. Competition for the hearts and minds (and dollars) of tourists is intense, with governments the world over investing in the development of tourism infrastructure and marketing destinations to potential travellers at home and overseas.

“In Australia tourism is big business. It accounts for \$32 billion or 4.5% of Australia’s Gross Domestic Product (2002-2003), more than agriculture, forestry and fishing, communication services, electricity, gas and water... It is important to recognise that the economic contribution of tourism is just part of the story. Tourism is also a significant contributor to social cohesion and environmental sustainability, particularly in regional areas.” (Source: Page 5, “A Guide to Tourism Victoria’s Services”)

Tourism organisations work to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits of this significant industry for the State or region they represent. There are many opportunities for wineries to be partners with these tourism organisations locally and at the State and National levels. As is the case with any partnership, with some well-informed investment of time, energy and dollars the rewards can be great.

### Tourism Australia

Tourism Australia is the Federal Government statutory authority responsible for international and domestic tourism marketing as well as the delivery of research and forecasts for the tourism sector.

Tourism Australia was ratified in the Australian Parliament on 18 June 2004 and officially commenced on 1 July 2004. The new organisation brought together the collective skills and knowledge of four separate organisations: the Australian Tourist Commission; See Australia; the Bureau of Tourism Research and the Tourism Forecasting Council.

The main objectives of Tourism Australia under the Tourism Australia Act 2004 are to:

- Influence people to travel to Australia, including for events;
- Influence people travelling to Australia to also travel throughout Australia;
- Influence Australians to travel throughout Australia, including for events;
- Help foster a sustainable tourism industry in Australia; and
- Help increase the economic benefits to Australia from tourism.

Tourism Australia markets Australia to consumers and the travel industry in more than 20 countries around the world from their Sydney and overseas offices in North America, Europe, Asia, Japan and New Zealand.

Tourism Australia conducts a range of consumer and trade marketing activities, working closely with industry partners and the State/Territory tourism authorities.

## Convention and Visitor Bureaux

Convention and Visitor Bureaux (CVBs) are membership based organisations responsible for securing meetings, incentive travel programs, conventions, exhibitions and corporate events for the destinations that they represent. Members of the Australian Association of Bureaux (AACB) include capital cities and a range of regional destinations.

CVBs aim to sell the benefits of their destination as a business tourism destination by marketing directly to organisations, associations and meeting planners through the development of sales materials and presentations, attending trade shows, generating PR and publicity and coordinating bids, site inspections and familiarisations.

Members can choose from a range of different cooperative marketing opportunities which may include access to sales leads and industry databases, calendars of upcoming meeting events, advertising in sales materials, networking opportunities and trade show participation.

### Easy steps to working with a CVB

- ❑ Make an appointment to meet with the membership services manager of your nearest CVB to discuss how the bureau may be able to assist you to reach your objectives
- ❑ If appropriate, become a member of the bureau and review its cooperative marketing and networking opportunities
- ❑ Provide a briefing on your product for all appropriate bureau staff
- ❑ Register for selected cooperative marketing programs
- ❑ Maintain an active role in bureau activities

## State Tourism Organisations (STOs)

The State and Territory Tourism Organisations (STOs) are involved in international and domestic tourism marketing and development, including regional tourism, and most are also involved in developing tourism facilities and infrastructure. STOs work with their industry partners and stakeholders to ensure that their State has the best possible tourism offer available to consumers and that the offer is well marketed so that international and domestic consumers are aware of it and are able to easily convert their desire to travel into a holiday or visit. They also compete with each other for market share and funding. Each State and Territory includes a number of regional tourism areas represented by an organisation or association. All of the STOs have a Tourism Plan, which can usually be accessed by the public on their websites, and are funded by the State Governments. Some STOs have specific wine and food tourism plans or strategies.

Within Australia, STOs have dedicated product or industry development units that can assist operators in developing their product for the international market. This may include marketing, consulting services, advisory services for new operators and training and accreditation schemes.

STOs are very focused on trade development strategies. They work with inbound operators, international wholesalers and retail agents to ensure their destination is included in the programs the trade is selling. This includes organising attendance at trade shows and trade missions, developing trade manuals and sales support materials, training programs and coordinating trade familiarisations.

STOs hold regular industry briefings to update operators on the latest market intelligence and research. Many also have regular industry email updates that remind operators of upcoming events and marketing opportunities.

STOs work closely with Tourism Australia and industry partners on consumer and trade marketing programs. These include the Visiting Journalist Program, PR programs, advertising campaigns and information dissemination via the web through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.

### Easy steps to working with State Tourism Organisations

- ❑ Discuss your product and plans with the international and product development units in the State and Territory organisation's head office. These are generally two separate departments so make sure you contact both
- ❑ Ask for introductions to other key staff in their head office such as the family and media staff
- ❑ Sign up your product as part of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, and subscribe to the STO email database
- ❑ Review your STOs cooperative marketing prospectus for the most suitable opportunities for your organisation
- ❑ Provide briefings, train, educate and provide feedback to STO staff whenever possible in Australia and overseas

### Tourism Regions by State

New South Wales	16
Queensland	14
South Australia	12
Tasmania	3
Victoria	11
Western Australia	5
Australian Capital Territory	1
Northern Territory	4

The regions are mostly defined by local government boundaries and a few are defined by their geographical and/or tourism-related characteristics. Many also incorporate sub-regions that are also represented by local associations.

### Regional Tourism Organisations (RTOs)

A Board or Executive Committee usually heads up Regional Tourism Organisations on which there is representation from tourism operators and other businesses, local government, industry and sometimes academic institutions. There may be an Executive Officer or Marketing Manager, often supported by a marketing team.

The main role of the RTO is to promote the region. This is done by:

- ❑ Developing a regional promotional plan
- ❑ Preparation and distribution of brochures and guides
- ❑ Representation at trade shows
- ❑ Implementation of cooperative advertising
- ❑ Encouraging and coordinating product development
- ❑ Generating and delivering market information
- ❑ Developing and operating Visitor Information Centres
- ❑ Initiating cooperative activities with other regions

State and Territory governments, local governments, membership fees and grants fund RTOs. They usually have agreements with the STOs through which some funding may be channelled. They are primarily concerned with research that identifies the needs and expectations of visitors and seek to develop and refine performance measures such as visitor numbers, occupancy rates and satisfaction levels.

RTOs are a great first port of call for information on inbound and domestic tourism. RTOs are an association of local tourism associations and local tourism operators coordinated through a regional marketing authority. RTOs develop regional tourism marketing strategies, and work cooperatively with the STOs to promote the region. Not all RTOs are actively involved in the international market. Many, although not all, are membership based.

RTOs can provide detailed information on how many international tourists visit your region, where they are from, and the key destinations, experiences and opportunities within the region. RTOs generally work closely with product suppliers in their region to provide cohesive messages to international markets.

They can provide good advice on the travel distribution system, and often coordinate travel missions, and attendance at trade shows. Some also develop cooperative marketing programs targeting the trade or consumers.

## Local Tourism Associations (LTAs)

Local Tourism Associations (LTAs) are generally operated by local government and focus on servicing visitors once they are in the area or region. Generally the LTA will run the local Visitor Information Centre. The size, structure and scope of LTAs varies enormously; some cover a Shire or large community, others only a small village; some run only a Visitor Information Centre and others market their area aggressively both domestically and internationally; some are run solely by volunteers, while others have a large number of staff.

LTAs are concerned with maximising the visitors' experience once they are in the local area, working closely with operators to develop products and improve service standards. They work closely with their RTOs and STOs to develop strategies and campaigns to attract visitors to the area and can provide very specific information on international visitation to the area. LTAs may also provide the opportunity to get involved in STO and Tourism Australia's activities on a cooperative and cost effective basis.

Local operators who are members of the LTA are also great sources of information, and potential partners in regional tourism packages. New operators should take advantage of the networking opportunities their local LTA arranges.

Remember the first step is to sell your destination, then your product, so it is important to have a good relationship with your local tourism association!

### Easy steps to working with RTOs & LTAs

- ❑ Meet with your local tourism manager to discuss your product and plans in the international market
- ❑ If appropriate become a member
- ❑ Discuss cooperative marketing opportunities with the tourism manager and get involved in programs that are suitable for your business
- ❑ Provide staff with a briefing on your product and give them regular updates
- ❑ Become an active member of the organisation and attend networking functions and other events.

## Visitor Information Centres (VICs)

Increasingly, visitors are making decisions about their holiday activities, experiences and accommodation when they arrive in the destination. Visitor Information Centres (VICs) play a key role in connecting visitors with local experiences that match their interests. It is therefore critically important that staff in VICs know about your business and ideally, have first hand experience of your product. Recommendations from VICs and other local businesses can dramatically influence the number of visitors who come to your door.

While information provision is a primary role for Visitor Information Centres, in many instances they will also make bookings on behalf of visitors. Whatever the case, it is very important to keep your local experts at the VIC up-to-date with what is happening at your business. You should consider briefing staff on your product, inviting them to participate in familiarisation visits and keep in touch on new developments and events. So begin now and create a relationship!