

TOURISM VICTORIA & THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ECOTOURISM 2002

Tourism Victoria recognised the opportunity that IYE2002 provided in showcasing Victoria's nature-based attractions and product to consumers and industry alike. To capitalise on this opportunity Tourism Victoria made an in-kind commitment to the IYE2002 Program and is acknowledged as a "participating partner" in all IYE2002 program activities.

IYE2002 conveniently coincided with the implementation of the *Nature Based Tourism: Directions and Opportunities for Victoria 2000-2003 (NBT)* program and many of the initiatives undertaken in 2002 incorporated high-profile reference to the IYE2002 program.

The key NBT initiatives undertaken during IYE2002 and in partnership with VTOA, Parks Victoria and the Department of Natural Resources, were:

- Launch and Implementation of the Adventure Tourism Action Plan;
- Production of high quality imagery of Victoria's icon attractions ;
- Production of high quality, interactive and interpretive nature-based tourism information and products on visitvictoria.com;
- Introduction of a regular nature-based tourism column in newsletters by Tourism Victoria, VTOA and Parks Victoria to keep operators and industry up to date on new product, policies and initiatives (branded under the banner of IYE2002);
- Investigation into the development of flagship walk/skywalk linked to roofed accommodation such as the Great Ocean Road and East Gippsland;
- Implementation of a comprehensive tracks and trails marketing campaign, focusing on bushwalking and cycling opportunities
- Encouraging increased industry participation in environmentally sustainable accreditation programs such as the Nature and Ecotourism Accreditation Program (NEAP).

In addition to these broader nature-based tourism initiatives, specific IYE2002 activities undertaken by Tourism Victoria for this year were predominantly PR focused. These activities included:

- Distribution of IYE2002 collateral (eg. posters) to regional visitor information centres via Country Victorian Tourism Council;
- IYE2002 branded stories on Victorian nature-based tourism product in "Pieces of Victoria", with preference given to NEAP accredited products;
- Inclusion of IYE2002 information on visitvictoria.com and hyperlinks to IYE2002 website;
- Provided funding support and promoted other Victorian IYE2002 initiatives such as the Southern Grampians Naturally Event and the regional model for sustainable tourism in the Geelong Otway Region.
- An IYE2002-dedicated journalist familiarisation tour of the Grampians

Overall the legacy of IYE2002 is a greater industry and consumer awareness of ecotourism and its principles, achieved through the various initiatives undertaken by both Ecotourism Australia and Tourism Victoria. The basic principles of IYE2002 will continue into the future with the on-going implementation of the *Nature-based Tourism: Directions and opportunities for Victoria 2000 – 2003*.