

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN



2009 – 2012

Tourism Victoria



MINISTER'S FOREWORD



The Victorian Government is taking the lead in environmentally sustainable tourism.

For Victoria's tourism industry, taking action on sustainability is not only environmentally necessary, it is also about enhancing the competitiveness of individual tourism businesses and promoting Victoria as a sustainable tourism destination.

I am pleased to present the *Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan 2009–2012* which outlines the benefits to our tourism industry of implementing environmentally sustainable business practices, while providing a framework to guide the future sustainability of Victoria's tourism industry.

The Plan is not only a step forward in assisting the tourism industry to mitigate the impacts of climate change, but will

assist businesses to transition toward environmentally responsible business practices.

I look forward to the continued growth of sustainable tourism offerings throughout our State.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Holding'.

TIM HOLDING MP
Minister for Tourism and Major Events

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|---|----------|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Executive summary | 1 | Leading the way | 16 |
| Introduction | 3 | Key performance indicators | 18 |
| Challenges and opportunities | 4 | Appendix | 20 |
| Tourism's Carbon Footprint | 4 | | |
| Consumer Demand | 6 | | |
| Business Performance | 8 | | |
| Partnerships & Frameworks | 10 | | |
| Minimising Resource Use And Waste Production | 12 | | |
| Assisting The Tourism Industry To Adapt To Climate Change | 15 | | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is one of Victoria's key industries, generating more than \$15 billion for the State's economy and employing approximately 180,000 people. The industry represents 6.1 per cent of Victoria's total Gross State Product (GSP) and 7.0 per cent of employment.

Sustainable tourism can be defined as tourism that delivers positive economic, social and environmental outcomes with consideration to the needs of the visitor, industry, community and environment.

Demand for sustainable tourism practices in Australia is rising as consumer demand grows and industry, Government and tourism operators recognise the advantages of meeting higher environmental standards.

The Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan has been developed by Tourism Victoria in consultation with State Government representatives and key tourism bodies.

It addresses the key challenges of implementing environmentally sustainable tourism practices in Victoria's tourism industry.

It also addresses issues associated with climate change and assisting the Victorian tourism industry to adapt to a range of national and international measures to mitigate its impacts.

This Strategic Plan encourages businesses to adopt more sustainable practices in order to reduce their environmental impact and achieve cost savings. It promotes the use of State and Federal Government programs such as 'CarbonDown' and 'Grow Me the Money' and urges the industry to develop partnership opportunities for the enhancement of environmentally sustainable tourism in Victoria.

Key challenges/opportunities as set out in this Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan are:

- Reducing the tourism industry's carbon footprint;
- Meeting growing consumer demand for sustainable practices;
- Improving business performance through sustainable tourism and marketing the Victorian tourism industry's environmental credentials;
- Developing partnerships and frameworks;
- Minimising resource use and the production of waste; and
- Assisting the tourism industry to adapt to climate change.

Businesses and the industry need to position themselves to meet these challenges and take advantage of new opportunities arising from changing consumer preferences as well as changing environmental and business practices.

High priority actions identified in this Strategic Plan to be undertaken in 2009–2012 are:

- Promoting businesses which demonstrate environmental credentials through accreditation programs;
- Developing and distributing a carbon footprint toolkit for use by businesses and destinations;
- Developing and implementing a responsible visitor communications plan, including a responsible travel section on visitvictoria.com;
- Working with the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry to ensure that tourism is an integral part of the 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' programs;
- Preparing guidance notes for event organisers on carbon footprint measurement and reduction strategies;
- Promoting and continuing to enhance the Sustainability in Tourism section of the Tourism Excellence program, in order to assist businesses to become more sustainable; and
- Providing advice to regional and metropolitan tourism organisations on engaging with tourism businesses on sustainability matters, including climate change.

The key measures of success of the Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan will be:

- Increased number of tourism businesses participating in carbon measurement, reduction and offset programs;
- Increased recognition of leading environmentally friendly tourism businesses;
- Increased number of industry professionals with expertise in sustainability issues;
- Increased number of consumers seeking sustainable experiences and acting in a more environmentally friendly manner;
- Increased number of businesses participating in environmental improvement programs; and
- Increased number of businesses with Tourism Victoria endorsed environmental accreditation.

Sustainability is about more than just looking after our natural environment. It is also about considering the social and economic impact of what we do.



INTRODUCTION

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The World Commission on Environment and Development outlines sustainability as: 'forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.'

Sustainability is about more than just looking after our natural environment. It is also about considering the social and economic impact of what we do.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization's definition of sustainable tourism brings the above concepts together and defines sustainable tourism as 'tourism that delivers positive economic, social and environmental outcomes with consideration to the needs of the visitor, industry, community and environment.'

For the purposes of this strategy the term 'sustainable tourism' is, in the most part, used in reference to the environmental impacts of tourism. In particular the need to encourage the tourism industry to minimise resource use, better meet consumer demand, achieve greater business performance and address the associated challenges posed by climate change.

Demand for sustainable tourism practices in Australia is rising as consumer demand grows and government and the tourism industry recognise the advantages of meeting higher environmental standards.

Sustainable tourism is important to all tourism stakeholders. It is essential that government bodies and the tourism industry work together to enhance future sustainability opportunities and reduce the adverse impacts of tourism.

OUR VISION

Tourism Victoria's vision is, that over the next decade, the Victorian tourism industry will:

- Form a group of leading 'green' businesses;
- Be positioned to rapidly take up sustainable practices in the future; and
- Better understand consumer demand for environmental performance.

WHY IS THIS PLAN IMPORTANT?

Unsustainable tourism practices can affect the future viability of the tourism industry; and the State Government, through Tourism Victoria, is taking a leadership role in addressing the challenges of this sector.

The scale of the tourism industry in Victoria and its growth forecasts mean that the environmental and social impacts of tourism can not be overlooked.

Historically, Tourism Victoria has undertaken and supported a number of sustainable tourism activities however; it

is recognised that numerous challenges still exist. The Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan provides an opportunity to address those challenges and embrace future sustainable opportunities in a coordinated manner.

Tourism Victoria, through the Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan, will assist the tourism industry to change negative community perceptions of the industry and achieve economic benefits through sustainable practice.

This Strategic Plan encourages businesses to embrace sustainable tourism practices in order to meet consumer demand and to improve business performance.

In addition, the Federal Government is pursuing the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS) which will introduce a carbon trading scheme in Australia. This trading scheme will affect economic conditions and visitor travel patterns. Tourism Victoria's Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan is needed to assist in positioning the tourism industry to adapt to these changes.

Key challenges/opportunities as set out in this Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan are:

- Reducing the tourism industry's carbon footprint;
- Meeting growing consumer demand for sustainable practices;
- Improving business performance through sustainable tourism and marketing the Victorian tourism industry's environmental credentials;
- Developing partnerships and frameworks;
- Minimising resource use and the production of waste; and
- Assisting the tourism industry to adapt to climate change.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan is an integral part of the State Government's 10 Year Tourism and Events Strategy, which encourages the industry to perform at world class levels in critical areas such as sustainable tourism.

This importance is reinforced in Tourism Victoria's Business Plan 2007–2010, with sustainability an underlying principle that is embedded throughout the publication.

At the national level, the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) National Climate Change Adaptation Framework identifies tourism as one of many sectors vulnerable to climate change. The COAG Framework gave the Tourism Ministers' Council (TMC), which is made up of Federal, State, Territory and New Zealand Tourism Ministers, the responsibility for developing a two-year Action Plan. A Framework for Action was endorsed by TMC in July 2008. This Framework includes some of Tourism Victoria's actions under the Action Plan.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

TOURISM'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

Why is this issue important?

According to the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC), tourism is the seventh highest contributor to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions, producing approximately four per cent of the country's total carbon emissions. As these emissions are likely to increase with tourism sector growth, it is important that the Victorian tourism industry responds.

Tourism accommodation, transport, events and attractions consume significant amounts of fuel, energy and water and can impact the natural environment. Of these, air transport is by far the largest contributor to tourism emissions, accounting for 40 per cent of the sector's contribution to CO₂ emissions globally.

The introduction of low cost carrier airlines in Australia has improved accessibility to flights and opened new travel markets but in turn has increased energy consumption.

It is important to note that the aviation sector continues to implement measures to reduce aviation greenhouse gas emissions. Aircraft are 70 per cent more than they were 40 years ago through improvements in aircraft design, engine efficiency and operational practices. However, the demand for aviation is forecast to exceed these improvements and therefore poses a significant challenge.

Similarly, despite much technological advancement, motor vehicles also contribute a significant portion of the tourism industry's carbon footprint.

Recognising the economic importance of aircraft, motor vehicles and accommodation for Victorian tourism does not reduce the need to minimise the environmental impact of the industry.

Industry and governments need to better gauge the carbon footprint of tourism activity in order to improve performance. To address this, Tourism Victoria recently commissioned a study to develop a carbon footprinting toolkit. The toolkit will assist destination managers and tourism businesses to measure their environmental impact.

Tourism Victoria will play a leadership role in advocating 'green' tourism and promoting ways that tourism businesses can reduce resource use. This includes encouraging recognised carbon offset programs and educating both tourist operators and visitors to Victoria to make more informed choices regarding sustainability.

CASE STUDY: GO WEST TOURS

Go West Tours conduct more than 20 trips per week with a fleet of diesel fuel vehicles. With the environment's natural assets at the core of its business' success, tour proprietors have developed environmental practices which have resulted in a business boom.

Go West Tours contacted Greenfleet Australia to calculate its total fuel usage for 12 months and offset this usage. The company produced approximately 123 tons of Carbon Dioxide and planted 461 trees to offset these emissions.

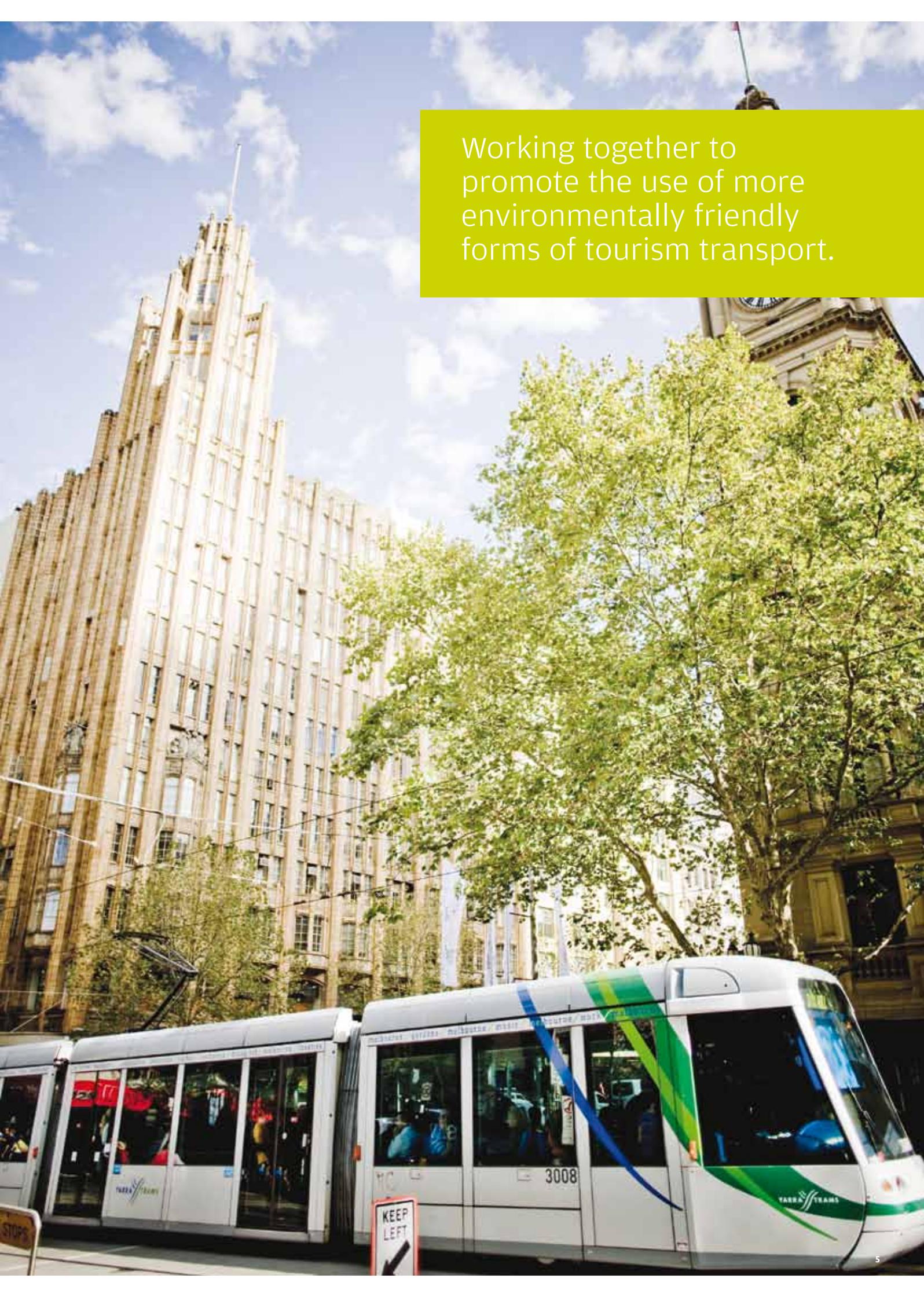
In addition, the business trained its drivers in fuel efficient driving techniques; converted to low energy light bulbs; recycled supplies; and monitored its head office's water and power use.

As a result Go West Tours have reduced the cost of fuel and vehicle repairs, reduced resource bills and enjoy near full capacity tours.

What will we do?

- Through increased consultation and development programs, Tourism Victoria will work in partnership with the tourism industry to measure and reduce the carbon footprint of tourism in Victoria.
- In addition to broader government initiatives, Tourism Victoria will conduct an audit of its own carbon footprint and aims to incorporate more energy saving and environmentally sustainable practices into its activities.
- There are limited opportunities for the Victorian tourism industry to directly reduce the environmental impact of tourism-related air travel. However, Tourism Victoria will work with the aviation industry to actively inform consumers about the impacts of tourism and encourage airlines to improve fuel efficiency.
- In terms of car travel, tourism planners and businesses should, where appropriate, work together to promote a modal shift towards the use of more environmentally friendly forms of transport for tourism (train, buses, bicycles, foot) both to and within tourist destinations.

Working together to promote the use of more environmentally friendly forms of tourism transport.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES cont.

CONSUMER DEMAND

Why is this issue important?

The last few years have seen a considerable increase in consumer awareness of sustainable tourism, partly fuelled by extensive media coverage. Consumers are increasingly seeking environmentally friendly products and have a greater understanding of the impacts of sustainability and climate change.

There is a low but growing number of consumers willing to change their actions in relation to these issues and businesses can target these consumers to gain a competitive advantage.

A range of studies, three of which are referenced below, have been undertaken to look at the correlation between the environmental impacts of tourism and changes in consumer demand/behaviour. Studies investigate the gap between what people say they might do and the number of people who have changed their behaviour or are willing to pay more for a more sustainable experience.

Tourists are increasingly demanding that the environments they visit are high quality and pollution-free as well as inherently interesting. Consumer awareness regarding sustainable tourism has also fuelled concern among some travellers and made them reluctant to undertake tourism activities including long haul travel to destinations such as Australia. This is a key concern for the Victorian tourism industry.

In May 2008, a joint Commonwealth and State study into consumer awareness found that although consumers feel that the environment is important, they have a tendency not to take responsibility for environmental issues. Many also feel that travel is a reward to be enjoyed and that if they are sustainable at home they need not worry about such issues whilst travelling.

The study notes that there is a difference between attitudes and behaviours for approximately 44 per cent of those surveyed. This is a challenge for Victoria as, if and when behaviours and awareness fall into line, businesses must be prepared to meet this consumer demand. Victorian tourism businesses need to take action now so that the State will remain at the forefront of tourism in Australia.

Supporting these findings, the 2007 Lonely Planet Travellers' Pulse Survey (24,500 respondents worldwide) found the following in relation to consumer demand:

- 84 per cent of respondents said they would consider offsetting their emissions in the future (3 per cent had done so in the past);

- 90 per cent of people said they would or might purposefully travel in a low impact way; and
- 93 per cent of people said they would or might purposefully partake in environmentally friendly travel in the future.

A Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) study also found that 70 per cent of tourists surveyed indicated that they would change their travel patterns or plans in the future to be more 'green'.

However, the Lonely Planet Pulse Survey results and STCRC study found that while consumers are aware of sustainability impacts, it seems that many are not willing to pay significantly higher rates or environmentally sustainable surcharges. When asked to specify how much extra they would be prepared to pay for 'green' accommodation, the STCRC study found that 25 per cent said they would pay a 5–10 per cent premium, and 12 per cent would pay a 10–20 per cent premium.

These results suggest that awareness of a tourism operator's efforts to function in an environmentally responsible manner may attract additional patronage and it would be beneficial for tourism businesses to focus on this market.

It is also important to note that the Federal Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme will bring about changes to the cost associated with sustainable tourism as the cost will, in the future, be priced in to everyday rates.

In order for there to be a reduction in the tourism industry's environmental impact, consumers need to be more responsible in their travel choice and behaviour. It can be expected that over time there will be some rebalancing of behaviour and expectations and it is important that businesses prepare for increasing demand for sustainable tourism products.

What will we do?

- In 2009–2010 Tourism Victoria will launch a 'responsible visitor' communications campaign. The campaign will highlight sustainable tourism operators and inform consumers about ways to reduce their impact on the environment.
- A responsible travel section will be developed on the Tourism Victoria website that will list 'green' accredited accommodation providers and events and market sustainable activities.
- Tourism Victoria will actively assist tourism businesses to better communicate their green credentials through marketing initiatives and will support research into changing consumer behaviour associated with environmental issues.

Awareness of a tourism operator's efforts to function in an environmentally responsible manner may attract additional patronage.



CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES cont.

BUSINESS PERFORMANCE

Why is this issue important?

Sustainable tourism is not only a matter of environmental and social stewardship; it is also an important element in enhancing the competitiveness of a destination and the profits of individual tourism businesses.

There is a connection between environmental and commercial sustainability as reducing energy consumption, minimising waste and conserving water can save money and so increase profits. Simple changes such as using high-efficiency light globes can result in significant cost reductions.

Adopting energy efficiency practices will also assist tourism businesses to adapt to a carbon constrained future. In addition, it will minimise the impact of increasing energy costs associated with the introduction of the proposed Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

Tourism Victoria's Tourism Investment Guidelines highlight that tourism accommodation businesses often have the greatest environmental impact of any commercial buildings; consuming energy, water and other resources year-round.

While more environmentally sustainable buildings can incur a small green premium above the costs of standard construction, they deliver a suite of financial and environmental benefits that conventional buildings do not. A life cycle savings evaluation, undertaken as part of the Tourism Investment Guidelines, documents that savings from investment in sustainable design and construction generally exceed any additional upfront costs.

Businesses which have acted to improve their environmental performance have also discovered a growing number of audiences keen to hear about it. Businesses have benefited from keeping their messages simple and accurate and by emphasising consumer benefits.

By creating greater linkages between sustainable tourism businesses and consumers, Tourism Victoria can assist in developing the competitiveness of Victoria's tourism industry.

The challenge is ensuring that Tourism Victoria and other industry stakeholders can confidently market tourism businesses that are genuinely 'green', especially in light of the ACCC guidelines on green marketing.

Tourism Victoria welcomes the broad range of business support and accreditation programs that have emerged in recent years to identify 'green' businesses. However, it should be noted that these programs have caused some confusion among both businesses and consumers as to common standards.

CASE STUDY: ALTO HOTEL

The Alto Hotel on Bourke Street, Melbourne opened in 2006. Its 'eco design' and sustainability principles have delivered both business advantages and recognition. The Hotel was the first Melbourne CBD Hotel to receive the coveted Green Globe Certification, and has been awarded several sustainability awards.

Through minimising resource use and including environmentally sustainable design into the building's structure owners, Suzanne and Ricardo Krauskopf have achieved savings of up to \$50,000 per year and increased recognition of the business, resulting in further profits.

"We're not fanatics. We're just genuinely interested in sustainability and can see that it delivers business advantages and minimises damage to future generations," said Mr Krauskopf.

"Sustainability can create amazing commercial opportunities and has increased our profits," he said.



Tourism Victoria recently completed a study to develop of relevant accreditation and certification programs, including industry participation, costs and the standards assessed.

As a result of this study, for firms to be identified and promoted as part of its planned responsible travel marketing activities, a tourism business or event must demonstrate that they meet the following criteria:

- Implementing initiatives to reduce energy consumption;
- Implementing initiatives to reduce water consumption;
- Implementing initiatives to reduce waste sent to landfill;
- Commitment to continual improvement through measuring and monitoring the impacts/effects of the initiatives implemented;
- Educating and communicating with consumers on the environmental practices implemented;
- Adhering to an environmental management plan or environmentally sustainable policy; and
- Independent assessment of the business' environmental practices by a qualified environmental consultant/assessor.

Tourism Victoria will devote resources to marketing businesses that adopt these criteria.

What will we do?

- The State Government has a number of programs that businesses can access to improve performance through sustainability. The 'CarbonDown' and 'Grow Me the Money' programs help businesses cut water use, energy use and waste in order to save money and reduce their environmental impact. Tourism Victoria will work with these programs to ensure that they include content relevant to tourism operators.
- Tourism Victoria will adopt the 'Identification and Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Businesses' policy and encourage businesses to adopt key 'green' criteria.
- Genuine 'green' tourism businesses and events will receive greater recognition through Tourism Victoria's website and other marketing activities.
- The Qantas Sustainable Tourism Award, introduced in 2008 to the Australian and Victorian Tourism Awards will continue to be developed and promoted.
- Through Tourism Victoria's professional development program, the organisation will provide advice to Regional Tourism Boards on sustainability matters, including climate change.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES cont.

PARTNERSHIPS & FRAMEWORKS

Why is this issue important?

| |
|--|
| <p>GOVERNMENTS Integrate environmental, social and economic objectives into tourism policies and plans and provide the 'enabling environment' for private sector.</p> |
| <p>CONSUMERS Voice the demand for sustainable business travel products and be a responsible 'holiday maker'.</p> |
| <p>INDUSTRY Promotes voluntary integration of environmental and social good practices in their business operations.</p> |

Achieving a more sustainable tourism industry in Victoria is fundamentally about a number of stakeholders working together – government, consumers and industry, as demonstrated above.

Only through the collaboration of these partnerships will the industry be able to achieve a more sustainable future. Tourism Victoria's role is to facilitate the integration of these stakeholders to achieve results for tourism throughout the State.

A growing global trend is the increased emphasis by governments on embedding sustainability across all mainstream strategic planning and policy. The tourism sector is no exception with a number of national and regional tourism agencies making headway in using sustainability as a framework for all activities.

There is also an opportunity to link the emerging 'green' travel consumer market with the Victorian tourism businesses who have adopted sustainable practices. This will potentially provide these businesses with a competitive advantage and encourage other operators to improve their environmental performance.

Tourism Victoria continues to build partnership frameworks for the tourism industry and in 2006 was instrumental in the formation of the Sustainable Tourism Partnership. This forum, composed of representatives of key government agencies, tourism industry and non-government agencies, aims to foster dialogue on key sustainable tourism issues and encourage sustainable practices.

What will we do?

- Tourism Victoria will actively utilise its partnerships across industry and government to ensure that tourism becomes a focus of policy and programs such as the Victorian Government's 'Our Environment Our Future' framework and the 'CarbonDown' and 'Grow Me the Money' programs.
- Tourism Victoria will work with relevant tourism agencies to identify ways to improve sustainable practices in each tourism region of Victoria.
- Tourism Victoria will conduct an environmental sustainability audit of its key programs. It will make tourism sustainability a key consideration when dealing with stakeholders and when generating General Service Agreements.
- Tourism Victoria will actively support the Sustainable Tourism Partnership. It will lead the group in its promotion of sustainable tourism and coordination of activities such as regular industry forums and the review of sustainable tourism policies and plans.



This Strategic Plan encourages businesses to adopt more sustainable practices in order to reduce their environmental impact and achieve cost savings.

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES cont.

MINIMISING RESOURCE USE & WASTE PRODUCTION

Why is this issue important?

Victoria's estimated 100,000 tourism-related enterprises and numerous events play a central role in fostering sustainable tourism. By minimising water use, energy use and waste production, businesses can reduce their impact on the environment and achieve cost savings.

Sustainability is often thought of as an expensive and complicated ideal, especially for small to medium sized business. Some of these businesses, which dominate Victoria's tourism industry, have not actively accessed State and Federal Government activities that encourage the adoption of sustainable practices.

A recent STCRC study found a number of barriers to implementing sustainable practices by Victorian tourism businesses including the costs of implementation, the labour intensity of becoming certified, a lack of government and industry support and the technical nature of information forums.

However, there are a wide range of activities that can be undertaken by businesses to improve environmental performance. Activities range from accreditation programs down to simple actions such as recycling or the use of energy efficient light globes. Every business can find somewhere in the spectrum of sustainable tourism practices to enhance their environmental credentials and reduce costs.

In terms of events, many organisers are now recognising that events do not have to have a significant environmental impact. Through sustainable tourism initiatives, organisers can take responsibility for the environmental impact of their event.

Environmental leadership demonstrated by major events such as the Australian Formula One Formula 1 ING Grand Prix and regional events including Falls Festival and the Castlemaine State Festival is helping to transform the event industry.

Despite the efforts of some key events there are still a number of organisers unsure of the steps required to reduce their environmental impact, including carbon footprint measurement and reduction.

From a business events perspective, the Melbourne Convention and Visitors Bureau was the first in Australia to conduct a comprehensive 'green audit' of the facilities and services used by delegates.

CASE STUDY: RACV INVERLOCH

As part of its commitment to environmental outcomes in the conduct of its business and to assist members to reduce their environmental impact, the RACV has developed and applied environmental design criteria to its building, construction and refurbishment projects.

RACV's holiday facility at Inverloch has been designed to maximise the site's natural attributes. The site is being revegetated with native grasses and trees – all indigenous species. The wetlands will provide habitat for birds and aquatic life while assisting with drainage and water quality management. Landscaping has been designed to minimise watering requirements.

CASE STUDY: THE AUSTRALIAN FORMULA 1 ING GRAND PRIX

The Australian Formula 1 ING Grand Prix, like many large events, must consider a range of environmental issues, and has made reducing its environmental impact a key part of managing the event.

In 2009, approximately 280,000 patrons attended Victoria's four-day Formula 1 ING Grand Prix event. The Australian Formula 1 ING Grand Prix Corporation (AGPC), which manages the event is committed to minimising the impact of the race on the environment. It undertakes specific activities to minimise impacts, particularly in regard to carbon reduction, water recycling and waste management.

To achieve its environmental objectives and targets, AGPC works with its environmental packaging and waste recycling partner, Cleanevent and has partnered with Greenfleet who plant native trees in Victoria to absorb the carbon dioxide generated by the event. Cleanevent coordinate the use of recycled water for track surrounds and collect sorted waste which is then, on-processed and made into reusable raw materials.

This audit led to the development of the 'Green Credentials Report' which identifies green initiatives undertaken by Melbourne's Business Events suppliers towards reducing their carbon footprint and highlights best practice.

In addition, the new Melbourne Convention Centre building, which was opened in June 2009, has been built to a six star environmental rating. The Centre is the first of its kind in the world and its environmental credentials are a major selling point in attracting international conferences.

What will we do?

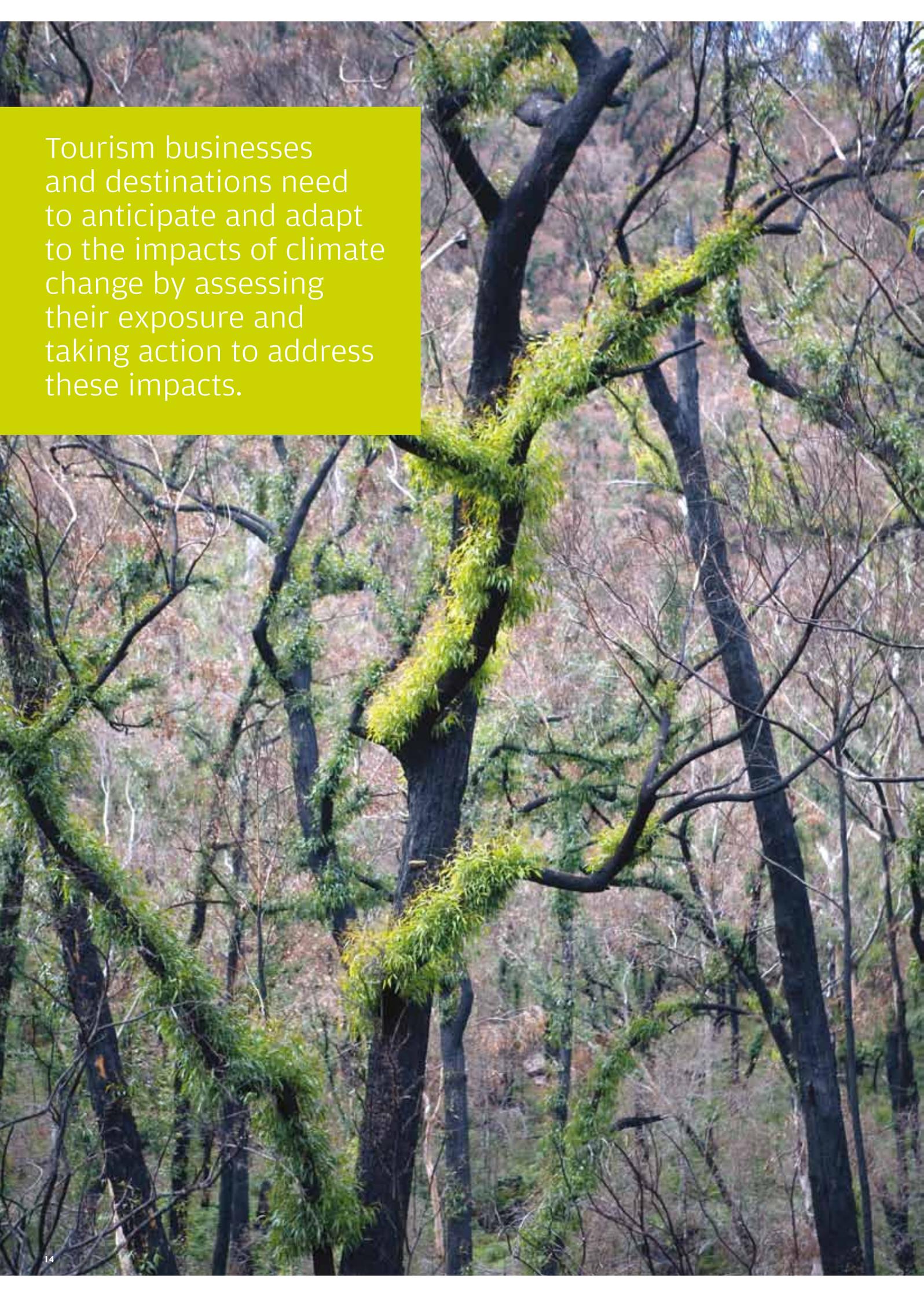
- Tourism Victoria will prepare and distribute guidance notes for event organisers on resource and water reduction

and ways that they can measure their carbon footprints. Events are also encouraged to be more sustainable by the incorporation of sustainability criteria in State Government funding applications.

- Tourism Victoria will encourage the 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' programs to incorporate information on environmentally sustainable tourism. This information will also be available to businesses through Tourism Victoria's Tourism Excellence Program.
- Sustainable tourism practices are expected to be featured as a part of the new national Tourism Accreditation Framework system that will be released in 2010.



Falls Festival, photography by Zak Kaczmarek



Tourism businesses and destinations need to anticipate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by assessing their exposure and taking action to address these impacts.

ASSISTING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Why is this issue important?

Governments at all levels are undertaking significant work on the challenge of climate change and the responses needed to mitigate its effects and adapt to its changes on the physical environment.

At the Commonwealth level, the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme White Paper was released on 15 December 2008 and work is currently underway for the commencement of the scheme on 1 July 2010. At the State level, the Victorian Government is currently undertaking work on the development of a Climate Change White Paper. Both of these initiatives include consideration of how to assist industry and business to adapt to climate change.

CSIRO projections indicate that by the year 2070 Victoria will be approximately 0.7–5.0 degrees warmer than it was in 1990. This may increase the frequency of severe weather throughout the State, which combined with decreased rainfall, may lead to weather conducive to bushfires, drought and other natural disasters.

Tourism businesses and destinations need to anticipate and adapt to the impacts of climate change by assessing their exposure and taking action to address these impacts.

Some challenges posed by climate change include:

- In some areas, the CSIRO projections indicate that there will be up to three times more hot days;
- Snow sports in Victoria will be at risk from shorter seasons and unreliable snow cover;
- Rainfall decreases are strongest in spring (down by 25 per cent in some areas) which may affect the natural beauty of destinations and could decrease visitation; and
- Weather conditions conducive to bushfires and drought could threaten tourist businesses and destinations.

Regional and local tourism organisations that have been created through public–private partnerships are in an excellent position to encourage businesses to plan for sustainable tourism and climate change issues.

Particular attention is required in regional areas which are most affected by climate change.

What will we do?

- Tourism Victoria will engage with the Commonwealth and its State and Territory counterparts to provide a consistent national approach to tourism industry mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Tourism Victoria will also work in partnership with State Government agencies to ensure that tourism industry issues are fully considered in the development of Victorian Government policies and responses to climate change.
- As part of the Government's broader communications on climate change, Tourism Victoria will include climate change issues in regular newsletter articles and create a dedicated climate change section on Tourism Victoria's corporate website.
- Tourism Victoria will continue to provide advice to regional and local tourism managers on crisis preparedness and will release an Emergency Management Toolkit in October 2009 to assist tourism businesses to plan for, respond to, and recover from crisis events both man–made and natural.
- Tourism Victoria will continue to support Victoria University's Climate Change and Tourism Adaptation Research Project in the Great Ocean Road region to help develop knowledge of the impacts of climate change on the tourism industry.

LEADING THE WAY

As the State Government's tourism agency, Tourism Victoria will continue to develop and promote sustainable tourism practices. Already, Tourism Victoria has undertaken or supported a number of key sustainable tourism activities including:

- Commissioning the STCRC to undertake studies to assess the environmental attitudes and behaviour of Victorian tourism enterprises and the consumer perceptions of sustainable practices;
- Partnering with the City of Melbourne on 'Savings in the City', its innovative environmental program to help city hotels cut energy, water and waste consumption;
- Coordinating and launching the sustainability module of the Tourism Excellence program;
- Incorporating a sustainability section into the new Tourism Investment Guidelines;
- Forming and supporting the Sustainable Tourism Partnership;
- Commissioning a Tourism Destination Carbon Footprint study;
- Developing the Crisis Communications Handbook for Regional and Local Tourism and associated pocket guide and workshops;
- Incorporating sustainability criteria into Tourism Victoria's Events Funding Program;
- Embedding sustainability as an underlying principle of Tourism Victoria's Business Plan 2007–2010; and
- Undertaking a study into identifying sustainable tourism businesses and promotion of these to consumers seeking this type of experience/product.

The execution of this Plan in 2009–2012 builds on Tourism Victoria's work in this area.

High priority actions identified in this Strategic Plan to be undertaken in 2009–2012 are:

- Promoting businesses which demonstrate environmental credentials through accreditation programs;
- Developing and distributing a carbon footprint toolkit for use by businesses and destinations;
- Developing and implementing a responsible visitor communications plan, including a responsible travel section on visitvictoria.com;
- Working with the Victorian Employers' Chamber of Commerce and Industry to ensure that tourism is an integral part of the 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' programs;
- Preparing guidance notes for event organisers on carbon footprint measurement and reduction strategies;
- Promoting and continuing to enhance the Sustainability in Tourism section of the Tourism Excellence program, in order to assist businesses to become more sustainable; and
- Providing advice to regional and metropolitan tourism organisations on engaging with tourism businesses on sustainability matters, including climate change.

A close-up photograph of a plant, likely a species of grass or sedge. The central focus is a thick, brown, textured stem or inflorescence that tapers towards the top. Below this stem, numerous long, thin, yellow-green leaves or bracts radiate outwards, creating a fan-like appearance. The background is blurred, showing hints of other plants and a reddish-brown structure. A bright yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image, containing white text.

Tourism Victoria will continue to develop and promote sustainable tourism practices.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES | DESIRED OUTCOMES | KEY DIRECTIONS | MEASURES OF SUCCESS | KEY ACTIONS |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Reducing the tourism industry's carbon footprint | Decreased per capita carbon output from tourism activity | Promote awareness of carbon footprints to businesses and regions | Increase in number of regional tourism managers and businesses using the carbon footprinting toolkit | Finalise and distribute toolkit |
| | | Encourage business and regional uptake of carbon reduction opportunities | Increase in number of tourism businesses participating in carbon measurement, reduction and offset programs | Promote 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' and other key State Government initiatives. Promote appropriate opportunities for lower emissions transport |
| | | Provide a leadership role | Tourism Victoria will audit its carbon footprint and implement a carbon reduction program | Develop and implement Tourism Victoria carbon reduction strategy Work with transport stakeholders to support carbon reduction initiatives |
| Meeting growing consumer demand for sustainable practices | Sufficient Victorian tourism industry product to meet consumer demand for sustainable tourism | Increase in the number of businesses with credible environmentally friendly business practices | Increase in number of tourism businesses participating in carbon measurement, reduction and offset programs Increase in recognition of leading environmentally friendly tourism businesses | Promote 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' and other key State Government initiatives Actively promote tourism firms with endorsed environmental accreditation |
| | | Increase skills relating to environmentally friendly practices across Victorian tourism bodies | Increase in number of industry professionals with expertise in sustainability issues | Include sustainability issues in professional development programs |
| | | Increase in consumer awareness of sustainability issues | Increase in number of consumers seeking sustainable experiences and acting in a more environmentally friendly manner | Establish 'responsible traveller' section of website Develop and implement 'responsible traveller' campaign Develop 'responsible traveller' resources for businesses |
| Improving business performance through sustainable tourism and marketing the Victorian tourism industry's environmental credentials | Increased opportunities for consumers to link with environmentally friendly businesses | Increased consumer awareness of environmentally friendly businesses | Increase in presence of environmentally friendly tourism businesses in Tourism Victoria promotional material | Enhance environmentally friendly business presence on website and in other promotional material |

The above chart identifies: the key challenges and opportunities addressed by the *Environmentally Sustainable Tourism Strategic Plan 2009–2012*; the desired outcomes which will improve the tourism industry's performance in these areas; and the key strategies by which the Plan will

encourage those outcomes. These strategies recognise that Tourism Victoria has a greater capacity to influence outcomes in some areas relative to others and that other local, State and Federal Government agencies, consumers and industry itself also have a critical role to play.

| CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES | DESIRED OUTCOMES | KEY DIRECTIONS | MEASURES OF SUCCESS | KEY ACTIONS |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| Developing partnerships and frameworks | A coordinated approach to tourism sustainability issues across the Victorian Government and industry | Tourism sustainability issues are fully considered in broader Government activities | Held quarterly meetings with the Sustainable Tourism Partnership | Work with other agencies Support the Sustainable Tourism Partnership |
| | | Tourism sustainability activities are coordinated with industry | Open communication with the industry on sustainability issues | Support the Sustainable Tourism Partnership |
| Minimising resource use and the production of waste | Decreased per capita resource use from tourism activity | Increase in the number of tourism businesses with credible environmentally friendly business practices | Increase in the number of tourism businesses participating in environmental improvement programs Increase in number of tourism businesses with Tourism Victoria endorsed environmental accreditation | Promote 'Grow Me the Money' and 'CarbonDown' and other key State Government initiatives Develop and publish a policy on endorsement of environmental accreditation programs |
| | | Environmentally friendly tourism business practices included in accreditation programs | Increase in number of accreditation programs with sustainability modules, and quality of modules | Work with accreditation programs to increase the focus on environmental sustainability |
| Assisting the tourism industry to adapt to climate change | Victorian tourism industry is positioned to meet physical and economic challenges arising from climate change | Tourism industry issues considered in State and Commonwealth climate change strategies | Tourism industry recognised in relevant Commonwealth and State strategies | Engage with State and Commonwealth counterparts |
| | | Increase business and industry awareness of climate change challenges and issues | Number of businesses actively seeking advice on adaptation to climate change issues | Communication activities Disseminate Emergency Management Toolkit |

APPENDIX

The following is a list of certification programs, rebates and funding opportunities and support programs.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Green Globe

Green Globe is a global benchmarking and certification system assisting the international travel and tourism industry to attain sustainability. Green Globe promotes responsible tourism through the management of environmental impacts around climate change, water and waste management.

www.ec3global.com

Tel (07) 3238 1900

Ecocertification

The Eco Certification Program identifies genuine ecotourism and nature tourism operators across Australia and provides industry, protected area managers, local communities and travellers with an assurance that a certified product is backed by a commitment to best practice ecological sustainability, natural area management and the provision of quality ecotourism experiences.

www.ecotourism.org.au

Tel (07) 3252 1530

Climate Action Certification Program

The Climate Action Certification Program is dedicated to ranking efforts to reduce carbon emissions. It is designed for all sectors of the tourism industry, regardless of size and level of carbon reduction already undertaken. It includes the tourism hotels, attractions, tours, transport, restaurants, travel agents, tourism commissions and industry bodies.

This certification scheme is a user-friendly, online questionnaire with on line instant help desk, and automatic filtering so businesses only deal with relevant questions.

www.sustainabletourismaustralia.com

Tel (07) 3252 1530

Australian Tourism

Accreditation Program (ATAP)

Whilst not primarily an 'environmental' accreditation program, ATAP offers useful tips and information on holistic business development including environmental and cultural sustainable practices.

www.tourismaccreditationvic.com.au

Tel (03) 9620 4199

REBATES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Smart Water Fund

The Smart Water Fund provides funding for innovative projects in water recycling, water conservation and bio-solids management in metropolitan and regional urban Victoria.

www.smartwater.com.au

Tel 1800 882 432

Sustainability Fund

The Sustainability Fund is designed to support projects that foster sustainable resource use and have economic and social benefits for Victorians. Projects supported by the fund are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from dairy farms, establish recycling systems in high-rise apartments, create parklands from old landfill sites, conduct research into solar powered rail, deliver sustainability workshops for small business and reduce energy use from domestic water heating and air-conditioning.

The Fund also supports sustainability projects in Neighbourhood Renewal Areas, projects outlined in the Environmental Sustainability Action Statement (ESAS) and projects in partnership with local councils through the Sustainability Accord.

sustainabilityfund@sustainability.vic.gov.au

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Grow Me The Money

This program is designed for small to medium sized businesses, operating in regional or metropolitan areas.

Many businesses are conscious of their environmental footprint and are eager to begin implementing environmentally friendly practices but aren't sure where to start. Grow Me The Money guides small to medium sized businesses through the steps necessary to become more sustainable and benefit from their efforts.

Grow Me The Money is best suited to businesses that have access to their energy and water bills and have been operating for at least 12 months.

www.growmethemoney.com.au

VIC1000

VIC 1000 is a pilot sustainable business management program working with 1000 small to medium size enterprises in five regions throughout Victoria. Through better understanding of their business operations, participating businesses are empowered to reduce their level of environmental impact, while at the same time saving significant amounts on their operating costs. Working with local councils and trader groups to develop communal strategies, the program brings benefits to both the businesses and residents of local communities.

www.villagegreen.com.au

Waste Wise

The Waste Wise Business program provides resources and support for businesses to improve their waste management practices and reduce the volume of landfill waste. Businesses can apply for Waste Wise certification which is a great way of demonstrating achievements to guests and staff. Certified organisations also have opportunities for publicity through workshops, forums, newsletters, website and published case studies.

The program is managed by Sustainability Victoria and delivered by experienced facilitators from within Sustainability Victoria and Regional Waste Management Groups around Victoria.

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Tel (03) 8626 8700

Gumnut Awards

The Gumnut Awards is a progressive rating scheme for holiday, tourist and residential parks that recognise a commitment to environmental sustainability and social responsibility. Parks are granted a Gold, Silver or Bronze Award based on their level of achievement in environmental management.

www.gumnutawards.com.au

Keep Winter Cool

The Keep Winter Cool initiative aims to raise community awareness of the potential effects of climate change on alpine environments and snow sports and demonstrate a commitment by alpine area managers and snow sport industries to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions.

www.keepwintercool.com.au

Victorian Tourism Awards'

Qantas Award for Excellence in Sustainable Tourism

This category is open to tourism operators that exemplify a strong commitment to sustainable and innovative business practices. The award recognises and showcases successful tourism businesses that set out to minimise their environmental impact, conserve natural resources, respect local cultures and benefit local communities.

www.victoriantourismawards.com.au

Carbon Innovators

EPA Victoria has been approached by a number of businesses for support and advice on climate change. In response, EPA has established the Carbon Innovators Network – a network for business leaders and climate change experts.

EPA will help organisations strategically and practically address their carbon emissions, and in doing so transform climate change from a business cost to a business opportunity. We want to stimulate debate and innovation in carbon management and provide the support and tools businesses require to develop appropriate carbon management strategies.

www.epa.vic.gov.au

Resource Smart Business

Sustainability Victoria is helping to assist Victorian businesses identify, design and implement sustainable energy solutions. For more information on these initiatives visit Sustainability Victoria.

www.sustainability.vic.gov.au

Tourism Victoria



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