

ACT Budget Submission ***- ACT & Region Tourism Growth Strategy***

A submission by members of the Canberra attractions, tourism and business events industry

Australian Hotels Association ACT Branch
Canberra Convention Bureau
National Capital Attractions Association
Tourism Industry Council (ACT & Region)



Introduction

Within the ACT Budget submission process, the Canberra attractions, tourism and business events industry are united in the desire for the ACT & Region to have a comprehensive Tourism Strategy.

The opportunity lies for ACT government and industry to develop a broader Tourism Strategy, which cuts across all government departments, agencies and industry sectors. This strategy would encompass wider industry growth and sustainability issues.

Strategy objectives are to;

- Provide the vision and direction for the ACT region over the next ten years
- Provide the framework for a coordinated, holistic Government/tourism industry approach
- Identify key strategies and provide for the implementation of these strategies, inclusive of but not limited to: public and private infrastructure, planning, environment, training and education, economic development, and tourism branding and promotion.
- Lead to improved tourism outcomes for both industry and government, and
- Improve the performance, competitiveness and structural efficiency of the industry by delivering a range of long-term benefits

Suggested critical success factors for immediate consideration in a broad tourism strategy for Canberra.

1. Proportional and appropriate Tourism funding to achieve strategy objectives, including the support for tourism and city branding
2. National Convention Centre
 - 2.1. Redevelopment of existing facility
 - 2.2. Development of new facility
3. The revitalisation of Civic
4. The strengthening of Canberra's image and importance as the National Capital
5. The development of Public Private Partnership models to encourage the investment in new infrastructure and existing product renewal
6. Achievement of population growth targets
7. Workforce management with particular regard for skills training and education to meet forecast industry demands and ensure delivery of quality experiences

These factors are described in more detail in Appendix 1

Steering committee structure

The following bodies are suggested for consideration as potential steering committee participants to ensure full representation thus accommodating the broad scope of the strategy.

Government:

ACT:

ACTC
ACT Planning and Land Authority
Arts ACT
Chief Minister's Department
Cultural Facilities Corporation
Department of
 Economic Development
Department of Education
 and Training
Environment ACT
Sports ACT

Federal:

National Capital Authority
Prime Minister and Cabinet
Department of Transport
 and Regional Services
Department of Industry, Tourism
 and Resources

Associations/Industry

Organisations:

ACT Region Chamber of Commerce
Australian Hotels Association
Canberra Business Council
Canberra Convention Bureau
National Capital Attractions Association
National Capital Educational Tourism Project
Sustainable Tourism CRC
Tourism Industry Council (ACT & Region)

Call to action

The ACT attractions, tourism and business events industry call on the ACT Government to develop a comprehensive tourism policy which addresses the immediate critical success factors (refer appendix 1) and expands the current marketing approach to a broader whole of government and industry strategy.

Reference models

In Tasmania, this type of approach produced the *Strategic Plan for the Tasmanian Tourism Industry 2001/04* which resulted in the development of award winning tourism infrastructure and the achievement of 10 year growth targets within 7 years.

The Queensland Government, led by the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development is currently developing a new ten-year tourism strategy. The project summary states:

“The strategy will be jointly developed by Tourism Queensland (TQ) and the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (DTFTWID), with reference to a government/industry steering committee, the Tourism Queensland Board and the Employment, Economic Development and Infrastructure Committee.”

APPENDIX 1

Suggested critical success factors for immediate consideration in a broad tourism strategy for Canberra.

1.. Proportional and appropriate Tourism funding to achieve strategy objectives, including support for tourism and city branding

The tourism industry appreciates the efforts that the ACT Government has committed to tourism marketing, however, are concerned that the impact of the “5% Efficiency Dividend” on ACTC funding may have a negative effect on the gains made in destination branding. The tourism industry urges the ACT Government to maintain current funding levels for ACTC. It is reasonable to expect increased competition spurred by negative performances by other states coupled with increased costs (impact of fuel prices). It is essential the ACT must hold the awareness and market share it has won through the new branding campaign.

Continuing financial commitment from the ACT Government for tourism marketing and infrastructure development is an investment into the ACT economy as shown in Tourism Research Australia’s “*Travel Expenditure By Domestic And International Visitors In Australia’s Regions Year Ended 30 June 2005*” which identified that overnight visitors to the ACT spent \$745 million in 2004/2005.

The government’s financial support needs to be within the long-term commitment framework, and the tourism industry provides multiple examples of the time frames required to develop awareness, grow and hold a market share, and limit product substitution, particularly within the context of a highly competitive environment.

The industry also supports a greater emphasis on funding which capitalises on the opportunities/growth in business events tourism. This will lead to increased certainty by building the tourism base and supporting investment in infrastructure.

2. National Convention Centre

2.1 Redevelopment of existing facility

The proficient management of the scope of work and program, for the allocated capital works funds of \$30m, to achieve the earliest and most effective outcome to protect Canberra’s existing market share of the business events industry.

2.2 Development of new facility

The planning and development of a new high quality convention centre to support the national capital status of Canberra as outlined in the industry position paper "*Investing in Canberra's conference infrastructure*" in August 2005.

Support the Centenary of Canberra 2013 strategy by establishing a world-class facility to assist in attracting a greater number of significant international and national events in the lead up to, during and beyond 2013 to enhance Canberra's standing in the wider global community.

3. The revitalisation of Civic

In recognition that Canberra needs an injection of charisma and vitality to create an active social city domain that attracts both visitors and locals. The tourism strategy would support the development of a revitalised city plan, which has as its basis strong local participation, which will ensure viability for those who live here, as well as for those who visit.

As outlined in "*Canberra city: a redevelopment vision statement - a paper by members of the Canberra tourism and business events industry*" which was released in July 2005 the tourism industry would contribute to broad planning issues associated with the redevelopment of the city centre.

Adjacent to the city, the City West Arts precinct and the development of Childers St as an arts hub further strengthens the ties between the Australian National University and the City Centre. The plans for this precinct call for a closer arts, business, tourism and education nexus, in early stage planning to fully optimise the project's potential.

4. The strengthening of Canberra's image and importance as the National Capital

There is no doubt that Canberra does not have the recognition it deserves as the National Capital and suffers from negative perception issues. As the Chief Minister advised in the Canberra Times in July 2005, during visits overseas there is a constant need for him to explain that Canberra is the National Capital and there was 'enormous indifference' toward Canberra.

Continuing support of the planning to celebrate the 2013 Centenary of Canberra will continue to position Canberra as the capital of Australia.

The opportunities that lie in the improvement of Canberra's image as the National Capital are not only in tourism, but also in broader economic growth terms.

5. The development of Public Private Partnership models to encourage the investment in new infrastructure and existing product renewal

The industry urges the ACT Government to take a lead role in the development of an innovative approach to the management and implementation of infrastructure development partnerships between the public and private sectors, informed by the world-wide trends in this investment mechanism..

It is considered that this will be a useful investment mechanism to support some of the infrastructure demands of the ACT region tourism industry.

6. Achievement of population growth targets

As quality of life issues form an important part of the governments population growth policy the tourism strategy would contribute to enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors by working with the appropriate authorities in this area.

7. Workforce management with particular regard for skills training and education to meet forecast industry demands and ensure delivery of quality experiences

In the ACT Government's vision for Canberra Building Our Community – The Canberra Social Plan values the opportunity of investing in the people of Canberra to build a stronger community. The Economic White Paper also recognises the importance of a quality skills base and a secure jobs base for the ACT economy.

National issues of skills shortages impact severely with Canberra due to smaller workforce and demand for international service delivery capabilities in tourism and hospitality, which is exacerbated by the out-migration trend of Canberra's population aged 18-25, who traditionally provide a majority of the workers in the tourism industry.

The tourism industry calls on the ACT government to develop a workforce planning policy for the tourism industry, which includes education, training, job creation, skills shortages, recruitment and retention.