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canberra **arts**
marketing



CANBERRA
BUSINESS COUNCIL



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Meetings & Events Australia



Canberra Region Tourism
Operators Association



National Capital Attractions



Tourism Industry Council
ACT & Region Ltd

Canberra's tourism industry

Creating growth through tourism – towards 2013

Introduction

This paper represents the combined views of the industry's peak bodies including the ACT & Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Canberra Arts Marketing, Canberra Business Council, Canberra Convention Bureau, Canberra Region Tourism Operators Association, Meetings Events Australia (ACT), National Capital Attractions Association, National Capital Educational Tourism Project, and Tourism Industry Council (ACT & Region).

Canberra's leisure tourism and business events industry is united in its desire to secure the future sustainability of the local tourism sector and to ensure it is well positioned to grow and contribute to the region's future economic security.

In this paper we outline the current situation and a future vision for tourism in the ACT, developed to provide clear representation of the industry's position and to provide guidance on critical issues to government. Priorities have been identified by industry to ensure tourism can continue to grow and prosper following the structural and financial impacts arising from the 2006 budget.

The current situation

Following a major review of ACT Government departments and expenditure, the ACT Government tourism funding in 2006/2007 has been reduced and the Australian Capital Tourism Corporation (ACTC) has been restructured and merged into the Department of Territory and Municipal Services. This poses some challenges to the tourism industry in Canberra, including the industry's ability to maintain and increase visitation through marketing, as well as remaining economically strong in the new environment.

In detail, this new environment resulting from the ACT Government's 2006-07

Budget includes:

- Australian Capital Tourism's responsibilities merged into a division within a department which is also responsible for various other activities including the city's municipal functions;
- Australian Capital Tourism now interacts with 2 Ministers – the Minister for Tourism and the Minister for the Department of Territory & Municipal Services that it now sits within;
- Cuts in the research budget, potentially impact forecasting, planning, and making decisions, which may now rely more heavily on individual perceptions instead of independent research intelligence;
- A reduced number of industry and product development opportunities available which potentially impact on tourist experiences; and
- The cost savings made through budget cuts can also potentially impact the taxation revenue stream generated by tourism to the ACT Government and result in a cost neutral effect at best.

The vision

The government's economic white paper states that the government recognises the importance of the tourism sector to the ACT economy and that it will provide funding to support tourism marketing and development initiatives that maximise the return from domestic and international markets.

The Canberra Plan states that the ACT Government values:

- a city that is the dynamic centre of a thriving economy and region
- a highly productive and competitive economy
- a strong private sector economy
- a city that is regarded as the most small business friendly place in Australia, and
- strong industries that contribute positively to global sustainability.

The Centenary of Canberra Taskforce Report launched in March 2006 recognised that the Centenary of Canberra:

- “isn’t just a celebration for the locals”.
- will bring millions of additional tourism dollars into Canberra, and
- all Canberrans should feel the economic benefit from the expected increase in tourism in 2013.

The tourism industry agrees with these goals and adopts them as our vision for future economic growth resulting in income for both government and the community.

The way forward

As a destination, Canberra is in the fortunate position to have a range of national cultural institutions funded by the Australian Government on our doorstep. The role of one destination marketing message to promote these and other assets, to ensure the value these attractions bring to Canberra and to the city’s brand are capitalised upon for the whole community.

A strong government role is required to ensure continued prosperity through:

- a destination marketing unit that effectively continues to deliver the existing destination brand message of the “home of the Australian story”.
- a government that gives high priority to the industry’s growth and economic value, through the revenue potential through both taxes and economic impact it offers and demonstrating through its actions that the industry is supported and valued.

The following factors are critical to creating industry sustainability now and for growth towards 2013.

The development of a tourism growth strategy, encompassing a whole-of-government approach is essential to achieve economic success factors.

Specifically:

1 Invest in destination marketing:

- provide proportional and appropriate funding for tourism destination marketing through a dedicated commercially focused unit
- continue to invest in the development of a distinctive and appealing Canberra image which increases the city's status as the national capital and alters negative perception
- implement a strategic approach, with resources, to maximise opportunities provided by the 2013 Centenary of Canberra celebration plans through the growth of visitation, leaving a legacy of increased national profile and pride
- maintain the funding dedicated to educational tourism as this program meaningfully positions the National Capital for the future and assists with the growth of repeat visitation
- continue to seek opportunities to leverage off activities of other government agencies and units, which could potentially provide a catalyst for increased visitation.

2 Commit to growing the business tourism market:

- redevelop the National Convention Centre to protect Canberra's existing market share of the business events industry
- develop a new high quality convention facility to support the national capital status of Canberra and attract significant national and international events in the lead-up to, during and beyond 2013
- provide proportional and appropriate funding to the convention bureau, for business to business marketing, including maintenance of the business event sub brand position of "*Canberra: the Meeting Place of a Nation*".

3 Invest in people and places:

- revitalise Civic centre to ensure viability for those who live, work and visit Canberra

- **build, encourage and foster a partnership through arts, sport, environment and heritage which adds to the richness, texture, colour and social inclusion of Canberra and adds to the creative dimension which is the 'fabric' of the destination appeal**
- **achieve population targets to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors and secure future growth**
- **undertake better skills training and education to meet forecast industry demands and ensure the delivery of quality tourism experiences**
- **prepare a citywide program for planned investment in infrastructure and attractions to support and encourage growth**
- **streamline and coordinate government processes to ensure the industry's significance is recognised and processes streamlined to attract appropriate investment to the ACT.**

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