



Canberra: a place to work, live and play

A submission by the tourism industry to the ACT Government

Introduction

Canberra is a vibrant and growing economy that meets the needs and aspirations of its people through a range of industry sectors. Tourism is one of these industries that is particularly well geared to contribute to the local economy by generating business opportunities, driving economic growth, producing employment and creating a environment that offers locals and visitors stimulating opportunities and experiences.

- Tourism provides a place to work and is a major employer of Canberra's young people and those from a non-English speaking background.
- Tourism provides a place to live, it enhances the pride in our city and inspires residents to invite friends and relatives to visit.
- Tourism provides a place to play, through infrastructure designed to appeal to locals and visitors alike, to add to the quality and enjoyment of life.

The industry's national capital brand is well established and has the ability to influence the vision the community has for the ACT. The brand can also help attract more residents to Canberra and help meet the government's objective to increase population growth and skilled migration.

The following recommendations represent the combined views of key industry bodies including the Australian Hotels Association (ACT Branch), Canberra Convention Bureau, the National Capital Attractions Association and the Tourism Industry Council (ACT & Region). They are designed to assist the ACT Government when considering the outcomes of its strategic and functional review of the ACT public sector and services.

Recommendations

Tourism portfolio

Structure

- That the tourism portfolio be aligned with other portfolios that have like goals and drivers including sport, business, art, environment and heritage. A similar model has been adapted in Tasmania with great success.

Function

- That tourism policy development be seen as separate function to tourism marketing and as such be aligned under the Tourism Minister

Australian Capital Tourism Corporation

Structure

- That ACTC remain an apolitical body with adequate funding to ensure that the momentum already established for destination marketing is maintained and that visitor numbers and yield continue to grow.
- That to help reduce expenditure, commercially focused representatives from all industry sectors be appointed as volunteers to the ACTC board.

Function

- That the ACT Government be credited for the increase in 2005 visitor numbers, and that this momentum be maintained to counter any downturns or cyclical industry performances. Tourism trends show a five to 10 year cycle and longevity of funding is paramount to continued success.

Canberra Convention Bureau

Structure

- That the bureau's current structure as a not-for-profit incorporated association, which allows the board to comprise unpaid volunteers representing broad industry interests, is maintained.

Function

- That as the tourism market sector with the highest current growth performance*, business events tourism should continue to receive government support at current or increased funding levels. This support is integral to underpin infrastructure development currently being undertaken including the National Convention Centre upgrade and the refurbishment and development of the accommodation sector.
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* The sector experienced a 27% increase in the June quarter of 2005 over the same quarter in 2004. By comparison, holiday and visiting friends and relatives visitation decreased by nearly 12% over the same period.

- That funding for the bureau should be increased to ensure the expected downturn in domestic leisure travel* can be offset by increasing the number of business tourism events to the ACT.

*Tourism Research Australia, October 2005

Events

Structure

- That the number and range of ACT Government events bodies be audited to reduce duplication and expenditure. The current situation involves a range of organisations managing different events and festivals in Canberra which is creating repetition in processes and procedures and unnecessary expense.
- That tourism events continue to sit within ACTC and that a stronger and more effective alliance be built between Australian Government and territory bodies responsible for organising events including the National Capital Authority and Chief Minister's Department.

Function

- That the national capital brand be further developed by providing broad marketing assistance to festivals and events, and that a bigger role is undertaken in marketing events of national significance including Australia Day and ANZAC Day. This will help ensure consistency in brand messages and will help continue to build brand value.
 - That the ACT government develop a permanent infrastructure for Floriade to help reduce costs of temporary infrastructure.
 - That events of cultural significance that are in keeping with the natural assets of the national capital continue to be attracted or developed.
 - That the arts, tourism and business portfolios are better aligned with the events sector to optimise mutual benefits and strategic alliances.
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