

## Mornington Peninsula Swapcard Campaign & Referral Network

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Something that began life as an innovative, cost-effective method to internally market the attractions of the Mornington Peninsula has also developed into an excellent way of helping tourism and hospitality operators to be more involved in their industry and keeping them networked with each other.

The Mornington Peninsula 'Swap card' program has won Victorian Tourism Awards in both the Tourism Marketing and Destination Promotion categories, as well as playing a major role in securing Mornington Peninsula Tourism (MPT) the State award for General Tourism Services.

Financial members of MPT have the opportunity to either purchase swap cards promoting their businesses outright, or as 'run-ons' when they pay to advertise in print and electronic marketing campaigns. The adverts featured in the campaigns are designed in the swap card format, so that artwork costs are already absorbed.

Each participating business agrees to prominently display the swap cards of other businesses in their premises, therefore establishing strong cross-promotion and peer endorsement. The common format of the cards and their quality point-of-sale presentation ensures that a consistent marketing message is delivered to the public, as well as reinforcing key themes and underpinning the regional branding.

The campaign is particularly designed to change entrenched activity patterns among repeat visitors, and to reduce stereotype perceptions, in an effort to smooth-out seasonality. They show the depth of product available and cater for niche markets, who tend to spend more and stay longer, particularly mid season and mid week.



They allow the consumer to create their own special interest itinerary by linking products across the region.

All the participants are invited to attend monthly industry network functions, which average about 65 people. At these functions they are able to swap their own cards with other products they wish to feature in their racks. The participants fund a commercial distribution service to regularly top-up the racks at each business. At any time, participants can call into the central store at the visitor information centre to collect more copies of any card. Participants have the opportunity to reprint their own cards twice a year, which is done on a collective basis to minimise costs.

After ten years in the role, MPT's Executive Tourism Officer, Alva Hemming firmly believes that strong industry networks are the corner stone of successful marketing.

"The 'SwapCard' campaign has helped build a strong collaborative network with the tourism industry, which has underpinned the region's success. The campaign has created great synergies, making it easy to harness industry cooperative funds to direct into brand campaigns and other tactical underpinning initiatives".

Alva says that the campaign has helped to create strategic partnerships with industry sectors, strengthen professionalism, has built cohesive networks and enhanced product awareness among the membership.

"The Swap Card campaign has been instrumental in helping us to mobilise and enthuse our industry to understand the bigger picture and collaborate with other tourism operators in their neighbourhood".