



City of Melbourne Tourism Plan 2007 - 2012

Helen Hardwick

Program Manager, Destination Management

City of Melbourne

Helen.hardwick@melbourne.vic.gov.au

The City of Melbourne is a major provider of visitor information, infrastructure and services for Melbourne and Victoria. During the last ten years, Council's tourism role has expanded from basic visitor information to leadership in destination marketing and destination management. In July 2007, the City of Melbourne launched the City of Melbourne Tourism Plan 2007-2012: Managing Melbourne as a tourist destination.

Most Tourism Development Plans (TDP) emphasise marketing and product development. The City of Melbourne's preparation of its first TDP began with recognition that Council's key role in tourism is destination management: ensuring the destination delivers on the 'promise' made by marketing campaigns. Campaigns promoting the city promise intending travellers 'You'll never want to leave' and that you can 'Lose Yourself in Melbourne'. Delivering on that promise - by providing quality experiences, product, information, services, signage and infrastructure - falls largely into industry's and local government's remit.

In the City of Melbourne's case, this involves most areas of Council's operation: strategic planning, sustainability, urban design, the planning and regulatory framework, arts and culture, parks and gardens, events, transport, engineering services, asset management, international and business development, tourism services and marketing. It is an important initial acknowledgement that the 'experience' enjoyed by a visitor to the municipality is influenced by myriad council policies and the day to day actions of its 1000 workforce and contractors.



The City of Melbourne's Tourism Plan takes a capital city view: it recognises that the Melbourne 'experience' for most visitors involves places, attractions, facilities and services across metropolitan Melbourne and beyond; not just those within the CBD. A starting point for the Plan's development was a recognition that visitors to Melbourne experience our city as a single destination. Therefore, linkages and working relationships with other metropolitan councils and destinations like the Yarra Valley, Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo are very important.

The third major feature of the Melbourne TDP planning process is the focus on partnership: development of shared goals; formation of strategic partnerships; and articulation of the unique roles and responsibilities each body brings to the agenda. This enables a coordinated, integrated approach, avoids duplication and enables council to focus on its value-adding role in this collaborative framework.

What emerged from the six month planning process is a document that clearly outlines Council's objectives for Melbourne's development as a sustainable tourist destination, the strategic direction the organization is taking, what needs to be done to get there, and with whom Council seeks to collaborate.



The Council's capital city role enables it to start with a 'One Melbourne' scenario. Key government policies – including the Federal Government's Tourism White Paper and the National Tourism Investment Strategy, the Victorian State Government's ten year Tourism and Events Strategy, and the four-Council Inner Melbourne Action Plan – were the starting point for determining where the City of Melbourne could add strategic value in tourism. An initial list of 14 themes derived from these national, state and industry agendas was then discussed with key government and industry bodies. This consultation process took the plan through several iterations. Robust debate with internal and external stakeholders enabled Council to pin-point its goals, clarify the agenda, and be clear about its role vis a vis other government and industry agencies.

From an initial 14 themes, then reduced to nine, the final version of the City of Melbourne Tourism Plan contains seven themes:

1. Boosting collaboration and partnerships
2. Improving research and planning
3. Advancing sustainable tourism
4. Creating 'One Melbourne'
5. Increasing Melbourne's profile
6. Building industry capacity
7. Becoming the gateway to southern Australia

Substantial consultation was undertaken with other branches and work areas within Council. This not only acknowledged the importance of those areas to tourism delivery, but also brought a fresh and wider perspective to issues, challenges and opportunities. For example, the National Tourism Investment Strategy highlights the projected increase of international visitors to Australia during the next decade, which in turn could mean a demand for more accommodation. Local government has a key role to play in this area: encouraging investment and employment, and ensuring appropriate development and land use.

The City of Melbourne's Program Manager of Destination Management, Helen Hardwick, said the distilling process enabled the organisation to articulate its goals for Melbourne, determine the benefits expected to accrue to the local community and economy, and clarify Council's strategic role in the industry.



Major opportunities that arose through the TDP process included the development of 'travel corridors' from the CBD to outlying destinations such as Chapel Street, South Yarra and the Heidi Museum in Bulleen. This concept was originally proposed in Tourism Victoria's Melbourne Metropolitan Tourism Analysis (Dec 2005) and has been incorporated within the City of Melbourne's Tourism Plan.

The need to research and evaluate the quality of the visitors' experience emerged from the process as important in determining whether the experience meets visitors' expectations generated by marketing campaigns. This research will enable the industry to gauge satisfaction, intention to return, and the nature of the word-of-mouth messages about Melbourne.

The benefit of integrated information channels for visitors across Melbourne and Victoria also became evident through this process.



The plan identifies opportunities and makes recommendations for medium term action.

Helen Hardwick says that compiling the plan was a challenge: Council wanted the plan to help set the tourism agenda for Melbourne.

“ The development process reinforced that tourism requires success in both destination marketing and destination management. Local government plays a vital role in this. It also reinforced the importance of collaboration and working out how we each add value.

“The plan is a starting point: it will evolve - and maybe even change direction in some areas - as we work on its implementation over the next five years. But hopefully, the plan gives the tourism industry a clear idea of what Council is thinking, what we believe some of the big opportunities and challenges to be, and where we see Council playing an important role. Most of all, the plan is a plan for collaboration: it has been built on the belief that if we work together, everything is possible”.



Key findings:

Determine where the organisation fits into the bigger picture. Recognise the roles / responsibilities of other agencies and where you can collaborate.

Be clear about your goals and role – determine what your organisation does, or can do, best and where it most adds value to the local industry.

People don't buy destinations, they buy experiences and the experiences need managing to ensure that visitors' expectations are met in terms of information, product, service and infrastructure.

Involve all key areas of a council in the tourism planning process – they're all vital to the planning, development and delivery of the city (or region) as a tourist destination.