

# TOURISM & LOCAL GOVT

## improving management practices

centre for  
REGIONAL TOURISM  
research

### **WHY DO THE RESEARCH?**

Local Government is a key agent in sustainable tourism management through its roles in: planning; economic development; marketing; regulation; land and facility management; service provision; industry assistance; and community relations. Local Government, especially in regional Australia, is the public sector agency most closely linked to sustainable tourism agents in industry and community. Interventions aimed at improving sustainable tourism management would be assisted by the capacity of Local Government to engage with these agents and perform these roles and responsibilities.

### **WHAT WAS DONE?**

A survey of all regional Local Governments in Victoria was conducted to investigate structures used to manage tourism. Investigation focussed on Local Government capacity to: integrate tourism related responsibilities within Council; conduct strategic planning; maintain relationships with external tourism stakeholders; implement tourism strategies; adequately resource tourism management; and maintain involvement with industry.

### **WHAT WERE THE RESULTS?**

The capacity of Local Government with regards to sustainable tourism management in Victoria may be hindered by issues of: isolation; access to resources; training and skills of key staff; internal conflicts; and the planning and governance of Local Government participation in tourism. Local Government tourism staff tend to have economic development or marketing backgrounds, and may not be in a position to engage industry or community in other aspects of sustainable tourism management. However, there were structures within those Local Governments perceived as well-performed tourism managers which might be exploited to increase the capacity to implement sustainable tourism objectives.

### **HOW CAN THE RESULTS BE USED?**

Findings of the survey indicated that many of the core structures to enhance management capacity were in place in most Local Governments, however, there was a lack of understanding of the breadth of sustainable management implications arising from tourism activity. There was also a clear perception that Local Government did not adequately encourage sustainable tourism development. Local Government education programs may be developed around the Tourism Orientation Framework and additional research to address these issues.

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