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2019-20 State Budget requires a long-term vision for Victoria

The Victoria Tourism Industry Council calls on the Victorian Government to use the 2019-20 State Budget to develop and implement a long-term strategic vision for the State. This needs to include sustained funding commitments to key agencies tasked with driving the demand for Victoria, significant investment in regional Victoria's tourism products, experiences and transport solutions, and the development of a dedicated Nature-Based Tourism Strategy to support promotion of our natural assets.

The Victoria Tourism Industry Council's 2019/20 State Budget recommendations include:

- Sustained and adequate funding over the four year forward estimates to ensure Visit Victoria, Melbourne Convention Bureau and Business Events Victoria are resourced to be effective in a highly competitive global market
- Significant investment to support major development of Tourism Infrastructure in Regional Victoria
- Redevelopment of the Bendigo Airport Terminal to accept more direct interstate services
- Upgrades to the Queenscliff and Sorrento Ferry Terminals to accommodate growing demand
- Use the *Victorian Regional Tourism Review* to develop a dedicated Nature-Based Tourism Strategy for Victoria
- Commit to funding Master Planning process for the Croajingolong National Park to finally complete the Four Iconic Walks of Victoria
- Forward estimate commitments to ensure the *Federation Square Review* will result in a detailed and costed Masterplan for the long-term vision and development of Federation Square and five-year funding support for the vision to expand Werribee Open Range Zoo as a cornerstone attraction for the burgeoning western Melbourne growth corridor.

To be attributed to Victoria Tourism Industry Council Chief Executive Felicia Mariani:

"In its Visitor Economy Strategy, the State Government sets ambitious targets of reaching \$36.5 billion in expenditure and 320,000 jobs by 2024/25. VTIC's 2019/2020 Budget Submission sets out the roadmap that will help us collectively exceed these targets and become a first-choice destination of travel in Australia."

The Tourism and Events sector is now worth more than \$28 billion to Victoria's economy and contributes over 215,000 jobs annually. "We have experienced solid year-on-year growth in both domestic and international visitor arrivals to our State, but we continue to lag behind the national average in our regional areas. For every \$1 spent by an international tourist in Victoria, only seven cents is spent throughout our regions; that same average nationally is 14.5 cents."

The Government's recent announcement of a Regional Tourism Review is applauded by VTIC. "We support this initiative to look at the supply side issues affecting our regional performance, but the outcome needs to be a serious game-changing commitment to policy and funding options that will drive private investment in regional Victoria's tourism infrastructure."

"VTIC's State Budget Submission outlines some key focus areas that can be the impetus to growing our State's visitor economy. We look forward to working with the Andrew's Government to ensure that our sector is well positioned to continue its critical role as a key economic pillar for Victoria."

To request a copy of the Submission or interview with Felicia Mariani, please contact:

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The Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC) is the peak body for Victoria's tourism and events industry, providing one united industry voice. Tourism and events are growth industries for Victoria and contribute more than \$28 billion to the state economy each year and employ more than 215,000 people.