



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Tourism and Major Events

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VICTORIA'S BEST HONOURED AT NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS

Victorian tourism operators have been recognised for their outstanding quality and professionalism at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards which were held in Melbourne tonight.

The theme of the tourism industry's night of nights was 'The Big Event', to reflect Victoria's prestigious and diverse major events calendar.

Guests were treated to the sight of a Formula 1 Grand Prix car and a World Superbike in the foyer of the Palladium at Crown while mime artists gave them a taste of some of our State's other famous major events.

Performers from one of Melbourne's current smash-hit musicals *Wicked* opened the evening with a number from the show.

Minister for Tourism and Major Events Tim Holding said that the Victorian businesses at the Awards represented the very best of our State's tourism industry.

"These operators were selected and recognised for their commitment to excellence, innovation and professionalism.

"To be nominated for a national award, all of these tourism operators were first winners of their categories at the highly competitive Melbourne Airport Victorian Tourism Awards," Mr Holding said.

Victorian tourism operators took out the following categories at the National Awards:

- Heritage & Cultural Tourism - **Old Melbourne Gaol Crime & Justice Experience - National Trust of Australia**
- Festivals & Events - **Fun4Kids Festival**
- Tourism Wineries - **De Bortoli Winery and Restaurant**

Two of Victoria's premier tourism operators were also highly commended in their categories.

- Visitor Information Services – **Geelong Visitor Information Centres**
- New Tourism Development – **Novotel Forest Resort Creswick**

"in more exciting news for the Victorian tourism industry, the Fun4Kids Festival was tonight inducted into the national Hall of Fame, having topped their category for three years in a row," Mr Holding said.

"Tourism is one of the most important industries for towns and cities right across Victoria, helping to boost local economies and creating thousands of jobs in local areas.

"The industry is worth more than \$15 billion to the Victorian economy and employs 179,000 people," Mr Holding said.

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“The outstanding quality of the Victorian entrants in tonight’s awards make it clear why the industry is so strong and continues to deliver such significant economic benefits to our State,” he said.

Minister Holding also acknowledged the impact that the recent bushfires had had on the Victorian tourism industry.

“The Victorian Government is committed to rebuilding the devastated regions and the many destroyed and damaged homes and businesses.

“Restoring a strong tourism sector that delivers the wealth and jobs to grow regional Victoria will be one of our priorities and work has already started on reconstruction,” Mr Holding said.

Over 850 tourism operators and industry leaders from across Australia attended the Australian Tourism Awards, including 200 representatives from Victoria.

Background on Victoria’s winners:

Old Melbourne Gaol Crime & Justice Experience - National Trust of Australia

Step back in time and walk the road to the gallows in a 19th century prison, be arrested in a modern-day Police Station or put yourself on trial in court. A ticket to the Old Melbourne Gaol Crime & Justice Experience grants you visiting rights to the past, present and future of crime and justice in Australia. The Old Melbourne Gaol has been a Melbourne tourism landmark for over 30 years. It is managed by the National Trust of Australia (VIC), a not-for-profit, community funded organisation. The product was relaunched and re-branded in October 2007 as the Old Melbourne Gaol Crime & Justice Experience, to encompass the new inclusions of the attraction being the former City Watch House and former Magistrates Court.
www.oldmelbournegaol.com.au

Fun4Kids Festival

The Fun4Kids Festival is a key tourism initiative of Warrnambool City Council and provides significant branding and economic benefit to Warrnambool. The event showcases 8 days of high quality children's workshops, live entertainment and interactive exhibits in a 2.5 acre indoor village. It is 8 days of seriously good (school holiday) fun on the Great Ocean.
www.fun4kids.com.au

De Bortoli Winery and Restaurant

Set amidst landscaped gardens and extensive vineyards, De Bortoli Winery and Restaurant is only one hour’s drive from Melbourne. The friendly cellar door staff offer relaxed and informal wine tastings and the Cheese Shop run by cheesemaker Richard Thomas, stocks a range of world renowned cheeses for tasting and sale. The Restaurant offers superb views from every window and the atmosphere is stylish and inviting. The menu is Italian inspired 'Cucina Rustica'. The De Bortoli family philosophy is “Sharing good wine, good food and good times with family and friends”. With that in mind De Bortoli have an enviable reputation for a unique dining experience.
www.debortoli.com.au

Geelong Visitor Information Centres

The service was originally established in 1993 to answer ‘visitors’ travel enquiries, and consisted of three information booths located in the National Wool Museum, Market Square Shopping Centre (both in the CBD), and on the Princes Highway at Corio. Following Council amalgamation in 1997, the newly formed City of Greater Geelong (CoGG) assigned the region’s tourism organisation, Geelong Otway Tourism (GOT), with the responsibility for the management of its Visitor Information Centres. GOT replaced the Corio Booth with a spacious, purpose-built centre and upgraded both of the CBD Booths. In 2001, an additional Booth was opened at the redeveloped Waterfront Geelong. The centres now specialise in responding to requests for information on visitor services not only within Geelong and the Great Ocean Road region but to

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the Twelve Apostles and beyond. Each centre strategically caters to different markets at varying points in their trip cycle.

www.greatoceanroad.org

Novotel Forest Resort Creswick

Nestled in the heart of Victoria's celebrated Spa Country, only 80 minutes from Melbourne, the new Novotel Forest Resort Creswick offers guests a haven amidst the tranquility of the Creswick State Forest. The hotel is surrounded by a Robert Allenby designed, 18 hole golf course and features 144 luxurious rooms, an à la carte restaurant, bar and terrace, a boutique health spa, fitness centre, heated swimming pool and hot tub, as well as a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The conference facilities are state of the art and can cater for 10 to 1000 people.

www.novotel.forestresort.com.au