

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

ACT AND REGION TOURISM

REPORT

BY

THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND ACT PROMOTION

JUNE 1993

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

On 27 April 1992 the committee resolved to inquire into and report on:-

1. the contribution made by tourism to the ACT economy including
 - tourist expenditure patterns
 - investment in tourist related infrastructure
 - tourism related employment
2. the potential for expanding tourism and related activities in the ACT in the short and long term with particular reference to
 - the role of the tourism industry and the Government in marketing and promoting the ACT and the region as a tourist destination
 - the scope for minimising cyclical aspects of tourism and maintaining a continuous demand for tourist related facilities through coordination of cultural activities, festivals, conventions and recurring and special events in the ACT and the region
3. the extent to which the image of and perceptions about the ACT community held by other Australians are coloured by media reporting and comments about the Federal Parliament, the effect this has on promoting the ACT and measures to counter adverse publicity about the ACT
4. any related matters which may arise

RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee's recommendations are:-

Chapter 4 – Paragraph 4.8

that:

- (a) the Tourism Commission be resourced to develop, in consultation with the industry, an integrated tourism strategy for the ACT which incorporates regional factors and interdependence
- (b) the Government, in consultation with the NSW Government and regional Shires, develop an inventory of tourism strengths and weaknesses including available infrastructure;
- (c) the Government consult with the NSW Government on joint funding of a tourism strategy program for the ACT and region; and
- (d) the Government, through the Tourism Commission, provide increased funding for the Canberra Region Tourism Marketing Group.

Chapter 5 – Paragraph 5.12

that the Government:

- (a) press the Federal Government to undertake necessary development and redevelopment of national areas in the ACT and especially the Parliamentary Triangle area;
- (b) consult with the NSW Government and regional Shires on action to provide signage and upgrade, where necessary, road signage to ensure consistency within the region and provide other signage including international pictorial signage to encourage and assist visitors to the region;
- (c) provide where appropriate international pictorial signage at tourist attractions;
- (d) provide that any new bus/transport interchange to be provided in Canberra have a central location; and
- (e) take account of the need for a tourism information facility to be provided in any new transit centre.

Chapter 6 – Paragraph 6.19

that the Government:

- (a) request the Federal Government to provide permanent Customs and Immigration facilities at Canberra airport;
- (b) press the Federal Government to upgrade Canberra airport as an international airport;
- (c) consult with the NSW Government and regional Shires with a view to making joint representations to the Federal Government to ensure development of the Canberra airport as a major passenger and freight gateway to the region;
- (d) through the Tourism Commission mount a campaign to ensure that airlines and inbound tour operators are fully aware of and publicise the fact that the stop over surcharge no longer applies for overseas visitors transitting Canberra;
- (e) press the airlines to remove the stop over fare surcharge which currently applies to domestic travellers transitting Canberra;
- (f) press the Federal Government to fund completion of the Federal Highway upgrade as a matter of priority;
- (g) coordinate with regional shires in pressing the Federal and NSW Governments to fund the upgrade of the King's Highway to a national highway standard;
- (h) consult with the NSW Government on a joint approach to the Federal Government for funding of the Canberra/Tumut road upgrade; and
- (i) ensure that any upgrade of the Boboyan and Tumut roads be conditional upon acceptable risks identified by a full environmental impact statement.

Chapter 7 – Paragraph 7.27

that:

- (a) the Government, through the Tourism Commission in the first instance, seek to persuade national institutions based in Canberra to adopt opening hours which are more visitor friendly and relevant to community needs;
- (b) the Government consult with the NSW Government and the region Shires on measures to facilitate travel within and through the region by upgrading signage and indicating alternative tourist traffic routes through the region to both Sydney and Melbourne;

- (c) the Tourism Commission consult with the NSW Tourism Commission in ensuring that the ACT and the south east region are promoted and marketed by the NSW Tourism Commission as distinct tourism destinations;
- (d) the Government seek industry cooperation for a joint industry/Government funded campaign to have inbound tour operators include Canberra and the region in visitor itineraries;
- (e) the Government discuss with publishers the viability of producing an ACT events calendar for commercial distribution;
- (f) the Government consider the licensing of commercial tour operators and others who propose to take groups of visitors to the Namadgi National Park; and
- (g) in authorising tourism developments and associated infrastructure in the ACT the Government have due regard for social, community and environmental considerations.

Chapter 8 – Paragraph 8.15

that:

- (a) the Tourism Commission, in developing the tourism strategy recommended in paragraph 4.8 of this report, include programs for attracting visitors to Canberra during the winter season;
- (b) the Government resource the Tourism Commission to enable it to assess, in cooperation with the region, the possibility of achieving a greater degree of ACT and region coordination of events;
- (c) the Government resource the Tourism Commission to bid for and develop with the major sporting codes programs for the ACT to be included in regular and special sporting and recreational fixtures;
- (d) the Government continue to provide indirect and administrative support for attracting high patronage recreational and sporting events to Canberra;
- (e) the Events Unit be resourced to provide interpreting and other services specific to the encouragement of organised visits to Canberra by ethnic community groups; and
- (f) the Events Unit liaise with ethnic communities and relevant educational bodies regarding the development of non-English language tuition facilities for persons involved in the tourism industry.

Chapter 9 – Paragraph 9.15

that the Government:

- (a) encourage the tourism industry to maintain, and increase, its direct financial and indirect assistance to promoting Canberra;
- (b) in any consideration it may give to a tourism promotion levy, ensure that it is not industry sector specific and that it is equitable and in conformity with regional Shire practice;
- (c) resource the Tourism Commission to enable it to assume a greater role in developing joint ACT/regional proposals for marketing the ACT and region as tourist destinations;
- (d) through the Tourism Commission seek to develop cooperative industry/Commission marketing targeted at the major eastern seaboard markets; and
- (e) provide for adequate taxi ranks at major tourism attractions in the ACT.

Chapter 10 – Paragraph 10.15

that the Tourism Commission function as an entity separate from the CVCB but that:-

- (a) the Government seek that the CVCB operate consistently with tourism development policy; and
- (b) that funds made available to the CVCB from the Government be accountable separately from funds made available to the Tourism Commission.

Chapter 11 – Paragraph 11.10

that:

- (a) the Government in consultation with the NCPA develop an education program about the ACT for Australia wide use;
- (b) the Government in consultation with education groups develop a schools and colleges program about the Legislative Assembly and its committees;
- (c) the Legislative Assembly, in consultation with the YMCA where appropriate, further develop the ACT Youth Parliament;

- (d) the Government in consultation with ACT community and business organisations, develop a program for engendering community pride in Canberra and the ACT; and
- (e) the Tourism Commission expand the visiting journalists program with support from ACT industry and commerce.

Chapter 12 – Paragraph 12.13

that the Government in cooperation with the relevant industry sectors and community interests:

- (a) undertake a feasibility study into the accommodation and other infrastructure demands associated with Canberra hosting the 2002 Commonwealth Games, the study to include other major events which could be attracted to Canberra towards the end of this decade; and
- (b) examine the feasibility of releasing hotel and other public accommodation sites at a rate commensurate with expected growth in tourism demand over the next 10 years.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The first stage of this report was the release of a discussion paper by the committee in November 1992. The introduction to the discussion paper stated that tourism in the ACT and region embraced a range of short and long term issues and that the committee was seeking to assess these in reaching conclusions about the future course of the ACT industry.

1.2 The discussion paper proved to be a valuable means of focusing more general attention on matters put to the committee by specific industry and community groups, officials and members of the public.

1.3 Comments were received on the discussion paper through direct responses, wide ranging discussions in the ACT and the region and a tourism forum conducted held on 29 April 1993. As a result the committee has been able to clarify various issues. In essence, a number of matters presented as conclusions in the discussion paper have been modified or restated as firm recommendations, actions taken by governments and instrumentalities have made some redundant and others have been deleted in the light of clarifying information. A number of issues have been expanded with attendant recommendations.

1.4 This report suggests further steps to enhance the ACT and region tourism industry. The recommendations recognise the continuing importance of tourism to the ACT economy in terms of the industry's potential to generate income and provide employment for a substantial number of Canberrans.

1.5 Conservatively speaking the tourism industry now earns the ACT close to \$10 million a week and provides employment for some 7,700 people. Tourism is a major ACT industry and holds even greater potential when consideration is given to the wider implications of ACT and regional interdependence.

1.6 In relation to tourism, as with many other matters, the ACT is not an island within southern NSW. ACT tourism needs the region for its manifold tourism attractions as much as the region relies on the ACT for visitors and community and economic services. For these reasons, this first inquiry by the committee has been directed towards the tourism potential of the ACT and the south-east region with a view to developing a "benchmark" report which will lead to an integrated tourism strategy for the ACT and the region.

1.7 The inquiry involved wide ranging discussions with regional shire representatives, tourism operators and ACT and NSW officials during visits to the region in September 1992 and May 1993. A visit to Brisbane in May 1992 was specific to international tourism, perceptions about the ACT as a destination and issues relating to the convention trade. A public hearing was held in Canberra on 30 July 1992 and, following comments received on the discussion paper, the committee held a tourism forum in Canberra on 29 April which attracted some 30 Shire, industry and senior ACT Government officials associated with the industry and its development.

1.8 The committee thanks all those who cooperated with it and contributed through submissions, responses to the discussion paper, in meetings and discussions in the field and during the tourism forum. The committee is confident that this report will challenge the Federal, ACT and NSW Governments and the regional shire councils to ensure that the ACT and the region are given fair and reasonable opportunity to maximise their tourism potential to the benefit of the wider regional community.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The committee has distilled the views of a wide and representative range of organisations and individuals within the ACT and the region in forming its recommendations. Opinions and views were expressed to the committee in the public hearing, in submissions, and in meetings with and visits to industry operatives throughout the region. Not least, the tourism forum was of particular value in allowing for the exchange of views in an informal atmosphere.

2.2 Chapter 3 is an overview of ACT tourism which places tourism in its economic, social and environmental context. The tourism industry is a major employer in the ACT with a potential to provide greater employment opportunities in the future.

2.3 Chapter 4 discusses the need for an integrated tourism strategy for the ACT and region and the committee recommends a Government role, principally through the Tourism Commission, in developing a tourism strategy. The committee discusses uncertainties within the tourism industry about long and short term goals. Various coordinating bodies exist to aid tourism development but the committee was struck by the lack of overall planning directed towards consolidating the gains which are made in this area. The committee found support for an integrated tourism strategy but indecision as to who should take the lead in this matter.

2.4 Chapter 5 focuses on the infrastructure necessary to cater for visitors to the ACT as well as tourism to and within the region. This includes the proposed central bus terminal, the tourism information centre and signage. Also, significant areas of the Parliamentary Triangle need development and upgrading. Progress has been made with user friendly signage in Canberra, but more needs to be done and there is a particular need for consistency in signage throughout the region. The committee's recommendations address these issues.

2.5 Chapter 6 deals with transport linkages between Canberra and other capitals and between the ACT and the region. Foremost of ACT and regional concerns is that the Canberra airport lacks international status and that the ACT and region are disadvantaged by existing and planned usage of the airport. Airfare structures, roads and rail are also discussed. The committee's recommendations are designed to considerably boost ACT and region tourism.

2.6 Chapter 7 discusses the potential for expanding tourism. The ACT by definition is well placed to capitalise on the presence of the national institutions which are a major drawcard for visitors. The committee refers to problems in maximising this drawcard potential. It gives particular attention to the need for greater ACT and region cooperation in marketing the region to both domestic and overseas visitors. An events calendar and eco-tourism are also discussed. The committee's recommendations identify the need for ACT and NSW Government, and Shire and industry cooperative arrangements.

2.7 Chapter 8 addresses the cyclical nature of ACT and region tourism. Winter is a slow time for the industry in Canberra, but a high point for the alpine region. The committee discusses ways to coordinate events both in the ACT and within the region. An increased role for the Tourism Commission's Events Unit is canvassed.

2.8 Chapter 9 covers promotion and marketing and, importantly, who should pay and by what means. Various options are discussed. In essence, the committee recognises that industry self help and joint marketing arrangements will in the medium term need to be explored and its recommendations include an enhanced role for the Tourism Commission in bringing these to fruition.

2.9 Chapter 10 deals with the structure of the Tourism Commission, a matter covered in some detail in the committee's discussion paper last year. The committee notes that the Government has changed the membership of the Commission's Advisory Board. The committee also discusses the Canberra Visitor and Convention Bureau and makes associated recommendations concerning its operations.

2.10 Chapter 11 covers the effect on tourism of so called Canberra bashing. This was an issue of concern to the committee in its discussion paper. The committee has focused on the educative process and its recommendations endorse the schools based education program about the Legislative Assembly and the further development of the Youth Parliament.

2.11 Chapter 12 discusses Canberra's bid for the year 2002 Commonwealth Games and the Sydney Olympic Games bid, the interrelationship of both bids, what needs to be done to assist the bids, the tourism potential should either or both bids succeed and preparing for their possible success.

3. ACT TOURISM – AN OVERVIEW

3.1 The most recent figures show that in 1992 tourism contributed an estimated \$490 million to the ACT economy, \$298 million directly and \$192 million indirectly through the supply of goods and services to the tourism industry. In that year tourism provided some 7,720 jobs representing 5 per cent of the ACT's workforce.¹

3.2 Apart from those involved in the industry, the committee believes that the importance of tourism to the ACT and region economies is not well understood or appreciated. Tourism improves wider employment prospects and the overall economy. In particular, events which have drawn many people to the ACT have provided a special boost to the economy. Floriade, for example, contributes much in accommodation and revenue, and generates employment.² When the National Gallery of Australia has a major exhibition, it attracts many people to the ACT and boosts the local and regional economy through overnight stays and extended sightseeing.

3.3 The interim Canberra Casino began operations in November 1992 and in the first six months of operation has attracted 430,000 visitors of which, according to Casino market research,³ 50 per cent were visitors from interstate. This has coincided with significant increases in recorded occupancy rates in Canberra⁴. Events supported by the ACT Tourism Commission's (Tourism Commission) Events Unit have included the Pacific Power Commonwealth Bank Cycle Classic, the inaugural Canberra Fishing Festival of 1993, the Australian Long Track Motor Cycle Speedway Championship, the Esanda Rally of Canberra, the World Cup Showjumping, the Coca-Cola Youth World Cup Soccer Tournament, the ACT Women's Golf Championship, the Capital Cup International Women's Soccer Tournament, the Kanga Cup International Soccer Series, and the National Folk Festival.⁵

Expenditure Patterns

3.4 In 1990/91 average expenditure on accommodation by visitors to Canberra was \$100 per stay, with hotels and motels the main accommodation used, although the Tourism Commission noted an increase in the use of serviced apartments in the period.⁶ Of the 1.138 million visitors,⁷ 877,000 stayed overnight or longer, and of these, 29 per cent did not spend

¹ Bureau of Industry Economic Study, *Tourism Expenditure ACT Economic Input Output Model*

² Submission no 14, p18

³ The Canberra Times, 17 May 1993, page 12

⁴ ACT Tourism Commission, *Target Tourism*, May 1993

⁵ Chief Minister, *Ministerial Statement*, 21 October 1992

⁶ Submission no 21, Research Addendum, pp2-4

⁷ In 1992 there were 1.45 million visitors – Chief Minister statement to the Assembly, 18 May 1993

on accommodation, suggesting that these visitors stayed with family and friends. Some 8 per cent of visitors spent between \$11 – \$50 on accommodation, 16 per cent spent \$51 – \$100, 20 per cent spent \$101 – \$200, and 16 per cent spent more than \$201. Mean expenditure on accommodation was \$100 per person.⁸

3.5 For those paying for accommodation, the choices of stay ranged from hotel/motel for 54 per cent, caravan park/camping for 9 per cent, guest house/youth hostel for about 4 per cent and serviced apartments for 2.5 per cent.⁹

3.6 The approximate mean expenditure on items other than accommodation was \$64 per person on food and drink, \$2 on organised tours, \$38 on shopping and \$27 on other goods and services.¹⁰

3.7 A number of issues arise from this aspect of the survey, issues such as how to encourage visitors to stay longer and utilise accommodation, shopping and entertainment facilities. These matters are covered later in this report.

Employment

3.8 Tourism related employment directly includes people involved in the accommodation, club, restaurant and catering, airline, bus, coach, taxi and visitor attraction sectors as well as in some tourist specific areas of retailing. Tourism is labour intensive and it was acknowledged in many submissions that increased tourism and longer stays generate greater employment, particularly for young people.

3.9 The committee is mindful that care needs to be taken when estimating what effect increased tourism has on employment. It was suggested to the committee that 17 extra tourists create one new job, and that most of the jobs created by extra visitors will be part-time. It was postulated that to sustain an increase of 16 new jobs an 8.7 per cent annual compounding increase in hotel/motel overnight stays would be needed.¹¹

3.10 As part of its charter the National Capital Planning Authority (NCPA) is required to assess economic developments in the ACT including tourism. In its proposal for strategic investment prepared in February 1992, the NCPA noted that the ACT suffered more than any Australian State from reductions in domestic tourism between 1989/90 and 1990/91 with resulting falls in room nights and associated expenditures. The Authority stated that bringing

⁸ Submission no 21, Research Addendum, p24

⁹ *ibid*, p8

¹⁰ *ibid*, p24

¹¹ Submission no 6, p2

domestic visitor numbers back to 1989/90 levels could be expected to provide approximately 1000 additional jobs in the ACT.¹²

3.11 Tourism related employment is also created and maintained in areas such as the Territory's national parks, nature reserves and nature parks which employ 90 people, and the Floriade which generates employment for some 145 people over the four week event.¹³

3.12 On a much broader basis, the development of major national institutions, such as the National Museum, National Archives and National Film and Sound Archive, all of which would be substantial tourism drawcards, would create employment during their construction and when they become operational. The committee was advised that a Federal Government commitment to fund the construction of these institutions as well as the refurbishment of the Old Parliament House would, *inter alia*, provide a basis for the expansion of Canberra's tourism industry and create some 12,000 jobs.¹⁴ The committee is pleased to note that since releasing its discussion paper the Federal Government refurbished and opened in December 1992 the Old Parliament House as a political museum and function centre.

Investment in Infrastructure

3.13 Existing tourism related investment in the ACT is considerable. The national institutions including the new Parliament House, National Library, National Film and Sound Archive, National Botanical Gardens, Australian War Memorial, High Court, National Gallery of Australia and the National Science and Technology Centre are obvious tourist attractions. They require their own infrastructure of car and bus parking and catering outlets. At many points throughout the ACT there are parking, picnic and barbecue facilities, cafes and visitor centres. Infrastructure such as shop fronts and guided walks to enable visitors to enjoy the ACT's attractions are also present.¹⁵

Social and Environmental Considerations

3.14 The committee was cautioned about the negative aspects of tourism especially where insufficient consideration is given to social and environmental factors. The Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra recognised the economic and cultural contribution made by tourism, but said these can be overstated, a view supported by the National Parks Association of the ACT. The Council noted the adverse environmental and social impacts of mass tourism and the potential conflict between mass tourism and conservation.¹⁶ In this regard, the committee noted that the ACT Parks and Conservation

¹² Submission no 12, p2

¹³ Submission no 14, pp11,18

¹⁴ Submission no 12, pp5,6

¹⁵ Submission no 14, p11

¹⁶ Submission no 16, introduction & pp1,4,5

Service recommends that management plans be developed for special areas in national parks. Another view was that particular events, such as motor road races, have incurred the ACT in huge and sometimes partially hidden monetary and community expense.¹⁷

3.15 The committee is sensitive to these issues and takes the view that all tourism infrastructure and developments should have due regard to social, community and environmental implications.

¹⁷ Submission no 10, p1

4. A TOURISM STRATEGY

4.1 The committee's discussions in Canberra and throughout the region suggest a degree of uncertainty in sectors of the industry about its long and short term goals. This may well reflect an industry involving a wide range of large and small enterprises as well as governmental institutions. The committee welcomed the frankness of many in the industry and notably the Australian Tourism Industry Association, Canberra Region Chapter (ATIA), in articulating the problems they face in seeking to develop a tourism strategy. It noted also the marketing and promotion roles of the Tourism Commission.

4.2 Ideas about strategy development abound and the committee notes the efforts of bodies such as the Canberra Region Tourism Marketing Group and the Canberra Region Campaign to foster an interdependent regional approach to tourism marketing. However, the committee observes that the effectiveness of these bodies is hampered by funding limitations and that achieving their full potential will be questionable unless the obvious but disparate talents within the industry are harnessed. That this has not happened to any marked degree is, in the committee's view, due in part to a lack of direction and the cohesiveness of purpose that could be expected to flow from an integrated tourism strategy.

An Integrated Tourism strategy

4.3 As the dominant player within the region, the ACT is best placed to exert leadership, take initiatives and, through the ACT Government, coordinate policy with the NSW Government and regional Shires in developing an integrated regional economic strategy which would include tourism.

4.4 The committee sees greater scope for the South East Economic Development Council to focus upon those factors facing the ACT and region which act to hold back the realisation of its full economic potential. The committee has in mind developing regional industry and tourism strengths by joint ACT/NSW Government/Shire Council upgrading of infrastructure and pressure on the Federal Government in regard to airport and other transport links to the region.

4.5 The role of ACT and regional industry is vital to this process and, particularly in the tourism industry sector, it must play a major role in developing an integrated tourism strategy. Indeed, in the regional context, the committee considers there is a dichotomy between what is supposed to be done and what is achieved. There is a need to focus on the activities of government agencies. The committee sees a role for the Tourism Commission as the catalyst for drawing the industry together for this purpose and to that end would propose expanding the Commission's charter and an increased budget allocation to support it.

4.6 Tourism will also be an essential element of the Government's Canberra in the Year 2020 Study presently under way in response to the Assembly resolution of 20 August 1992. The committee expects that tourism will be an important focus of this Study.

Issues For Consideration

4.7 Factors for consideration in the development of an integrated tourism strategy will include:

- growth targets
- marketing and promotion, and funding
- tour packaging
- accommodation and related tourism facilities
- inventory of and responsibility for infrastructure development including road and air links and signage
- measurement of environmental impacts
- legal issues relative to ACT/NSW and Shire cooperation.

A number of these matters are dealt with in more detail later in this report.

Recommendations

4.8 The committee recommends that:

- (a) the Tourism Commission be resourced to develop, in consultation with the industry, an integrated tourism strategy for the ACT which incorporates regional factors and interdependence;
- (b) the Government, in consultation with the NSW Government and regional Shires, develop an inventory of tourism strengths and weaknesses including available infrastructure;
- (c) the Government consult with the NSW Government on joint funding of a tourism strategy program for the ACT and region; and
- (d) the Government, through the Tourism Commission, provide increased funding for the Canberra Region Tourism Marketing Group.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

5.1 In the discussion paper, the committee noted the views of the NCPA¹⁸ that there is major scope for adding to Canberra's attraction as a tourist and visitor destination at relatively little cost by investing in infrastructure improvements such as:-

- clearly defined tourist routes to major tourist attractions with appropriate signage;
- directional and identification signs for the major national institutions and principal attractions like the National Gallery of Australia;
- readily available parking;
- providing alternatives to car travel;
- rejuvenating poorly landscaped and seriously neglected parts of the Central National Area (ie Parliamentary Triangle area) of Canberra, including the development of Kings Park, upgrading of Commonwealth Park, and landscaping of the Parliamentary Zone; and
- landscape and lighting upgrading on Anzac Parade.

5.2 A number of submissions to the committee called for significant infrastructure developments such as an international airport, an improved high speed rail service to Canberra, and the upgrading of arterial roads leading to Canberra.

5.3 The committee was concerned that significant parts of the Parliamentary Triangle, especially adjacent to the Old Parliament House were in a dilapidated and unkempt physical condition. This area presents poorly to visitors the more so as it is in the central national area which attracts many visitors and the committee, in the discussion paper, indicated the need for the Government to consult urgently with the Federal Government on action to rejuvenate the area.

5.4 Day to day maintenance of national land in the ACT is funded by the Federal Government and carried out by ACT Government agencies. The committee notes that the NCPA has reportedly¹⁹ called tenders for litter, garbage collection, public toilet cleaning, carpark and path cleaning for the Triangle and other national areas. The NCPA is reported as saying this will lead to cleaner national areas and eventually to things in better repair. While the committee welcomes this commitment to tidying up the national areas and so making them more attractive to visitors, it remains concerned that this does not address the problems caused by the run down condition of much of the Triangle area. The committee remains of

¹⁸ Submission no 12, pp8,9

¹⁹ The Canberra Times, 16 May 1993, page 5

the view that the Federal Government has a responsibility as custodian of the national areas to ensure that they reflect the national ethos and engender pride in those who visit the national capital.

Signage

5.5 In its discussion paper the committee suggested the upgrade of road directional and institution identification signage to assist visitors to the ACT and the region. It notes a considerable improvement in signage in the ACT with a substantial number of identified tourism routes for visiting motorists. As the domestic market provides the great bulk of the ACT's tourism and it is largely road based, these improvements are of considerable value.

5.6 While inter regional road links and signage are also being improved, from its observations the committee considers that much still needs to be done to encourage tourism traffic to explore throughout the region by means of informative and attractive directional signage. In particular, the committee urges consistency in signage throughout the region. This could be done through the establishment of regional signposting committees.

5.7 The tourism forum drew attention to the need for user friendly international pictorial signage at tourism attractions rather than signs in English. A further suggestion was that where access to natural attractions which involve hiking or where facilities such as toilets are lacking there should be appropriate advisory signage. The committee endorses these suggestions.

A Central Bus Terminal

5.8 The discussion paper referred to a view that if Canberra is to become a regional "hub" of tourism it needs a transit centre where all transport forms can come to and go from. A rail line could be brought into the city, and the airport linked to the city by light rail. It was suggested that the airport's navigational equipment be upgraded to overcome the delays presently caused by fog in winter. This would enable skiers, for example, to fly into Canberra and then take a coach to the snowfields.²⁰

5.9 The committee noted a general acknowledgement of the ACT's importance to the region particularly as a rail and air transport hub. It noted also that it had been a commercial decision to establish the Jolimont interstate bus terminal but that an alternative terminal operated at the Canberra Rex Hotel. Advice provided at the forum was that work is underway within the Government to revise current arrangements but the problem is deciding the location of a terminal in the light of the proposed City Hill redevelopment. The forum was also told that there had been a fall off in bus patronage.

5.10 A major consideration with a transit centre is that it should be conveniently located with regard to accommodation. This is a particularly important consideration for budget

tourists including backpackers and, for similar reasons, the committee considers it essential that the transit centre be a stopping point for ACTION bus services.

Tourism Information Centre

5.11 The committee has some concerns about the effectiveness of the Tourism Information Centre at its present location in Dickson. In any consideration of the siting of a transit centre provision for a tourism information facility in the centre should, in the committee's opinion, be taken into account.

Recommendations

5.12 The committee recommends that the Government:

- (a) press the Federal Government to undertake necessary development and redevelopment of national areas in the ACT and especially the Parliamentary Triangle area;
- (b) consult with the NSW Government and regional Shires on action to provide signage and upgrade, where necessary, road signage to ensure consistency within the region and provide other signage including international pictorial signage to encourage and assist visitors to the region;
- (c) provide where appropriate international pictorial signage at tourist attractions;
- (d) provide that any new bus/transport interchange to be provided in Canberra have a central location; and
- (e) take account of the need for a tourism information facility to be provided in any new transit centre.

²⁰ Submission no 19, p2

6. TRANSPORT LINKAGES

6.1 Despite its premier location and multiplicity of attractions within the most populous region of Australia and adjacent to the principal ports of entry and communication, the Canberra and the region tourism industry has to contend with significant institutional and structural disabilities. The existence of these barriers disadvantages not only ACT and region tourism but also the earning capacity of the Australian industry. The barriers mean that overseas visitors are denied the opportunity of convenient access to world class tourist destinations in the region and because of this will spend less in Australia and put unnecessary pressures on tourism facilities in other States. They mean that inbound tourism operators have little incentive to include the region in tour programs.

Direct International Flights

6.2 Canberra does not have an international airport. This means that all international visitors to the region must arrive at Melbourne or Sydney. Apart from the inconvenience this causes intending visitors to Canberra, it is a disincentive for those who would like to visit the region. The Canberra Visitors and Convention Bureau (CVCB) advised the committee that one of the weaknesses of Canberra as a convention destination is that there are no direct international arrivals, resulting in the high cost of access from overseas.²¹

6.3 The committee was advised that the Australian Tourism Commission anticipated an 11 per cent cumulative growth in international arrivals between now and the year 2000. This growth exemplifies the problem faced by Canberra and the region in getting a fair share of the visitor traffic by the lack of an international airport. The ACT Tourism Commission advised the committee that the problem is amplified by the fact that international airlines give overseas arrivals a free sector from Sydney to Melbourne thus discouraging tour wholesalers from including Canberra in itineraries. The Commission advised that to overcome the problem wholesalers would have to be subsidised for the Canberra sector or Canberra would need an international airport.^{22/23}

6.4 In the meantime, the committee was informed, the Commission is pursuing overseas charter operators with a view to getting some flights through Canberra. The ATIA also urged a strategy to attract as many international charter flights as possible.²⁴

6.5 The committee considers it an urgent priority for Canberra to have better access to international visitors. At present Customs and Immigration clearing facilities are provided on an as needs basis by Sydney based personnel at a cost of some \$7,000 for each charter

²¹ Submission no 22, p8

²² Submission no 21, p6

²³ Submission no 21, p6

²⁴ *ibid*, & Submission no 20, p4

flight to Canberra. This not inconsiderable cost in itself is likely to be a disincentive for maintaining charter flights on a regular basis and the committee would wish to see this penalty removed. It is something of a catch-22 situation. Regular flights are needed to justify the provision of permanent Customs and Immigration facilities, while regular flights are likely to depend on the provision of these services. Already there are indications that Australia's domestic carriers could be attracted to using Canberra as a port for flights to and from New Zealand.

6.6 The committee recommends that the ACT Government consult with the Federal Government with a view to obtaining agreement for Customs and Immigration facilities to be provided at Canberra airport on a permanent basis to meet charter flights.

6.7 The committee further recommends that the ACT Government consult with the Federal Government with a view to upgrading Canberra airport as an international airport.

Canberra Airport

6.8 It is of considerable concern to the broader ACT and regional industry as well as the tourism industry and the committee that neither the ACT or NSW Governments, the regional Shires or the communities generally have no direct say in the use or development of the Canberra Airport. Yet the airport is a major passenger gateway to the region, is an important freight facility and likely to be more so in the future.

6.9 Control and ownership of the airport is vested in the Federal Airports Corporation (FAC), a Federal Government business enterprise which has no responsibility for or to the ACT and region communities. Grave concerns were expressed at the tourism forum that this unrepresentative body has apparently unilaterally decided that the airport's contribution to the ACT and region economy is of lesser relevance than the building up of the Corporation's asset base elsewhere.

6.10 This effectively means that the Corporation's own imperatives are favoured ahead of proposals to develop the airport as a regional passenger and freight distribution centre. Clearly, the development of Canberra airport as a freight distribution centre would bring substantial economic benefits to the region. The committee considers it intolerable that such an unrepresentative body should be empowered to frustrate desirable economic planning objectives which will provide significant employment opportunity in the ACT and region. The forum voiced strong support for joint representations by the ACT, NSW and regional Shires to the Federal Government to ensure development of the airport as a major passenger and freight gateway to the region.

Domestic Airfare Structures

6.11 The committee notes that the domestic airlines after considerable prompting dropped the surcharge which had applied to international visitors who broke their journeys between Sydney and Melbourne to overnight in Canberra. This has not been well publicised and the mythology persists to some extent that it is more expensive for international visitors to stop over in Canberra. The committee considers that an intensive effort levied at inbound

tour operators and the airlines is needed to ensure that they are both aware of this change and that it is properly explained to travellers and factored in to tour programming.

6.12 However, the Canberra stop over fare penalty still applies for domestic air travellers who break their journeys between Melbourne and Sydney in order to overnight in Canberra. As presently structured, breaking travel in this way requires the traveller to purchase two sector fares at greater cost than would be the case for a journey Melbourne-Sydney which lands at Canberra en route.²⁵ There can be no question that the high volume Canberra/Melbourne and Canberra/Sydney routes are highly lucrative for the airlines and the airlines owe something to the ACT and region communities in return. The committee considers the Government is in a morally and materially strong position to convince the airlines to remove the fare surcharge.

Roads

6.13 The discussion paper referred to certain road linkages between Canberra and the south east Region and identified those which discouraged visitor traffic as the Federal Highway upgrade, the Kings Highway to Bateman's Bay, the Canberra/Tumut road, and the Canberra/Adaminaby (Boboyan) road.²⁶ The discussion paper noted that over 74 per cent of visitors travelled by private vehicle and 11 per cent by bus.²⁷

6.14 Since the release of the discussion paper, the committee notes that the Goulburn and Gunning by passes on the Hume Highway have been completed and these should have some residual benefit for Canberra. However, there has been no action to complete the Lake George section of the Federal Highway upgrade and while this situation persists Canberra will be disadvantaged. The committee recommends that the ACT Government press the Federal Government to complete this section of the highway as a matter of priority.

6.15 The committee, in its discussion paper, proposed action to upgrade the Kings Highway and is pleased to note that the Federal Government has since provided some funding to assist regional Shires in improving this major road link between Canberra and the coast. Sections of the highway have been brought to a safer standard as a result but the committee considers that Canberra and the region will continue to be disadvantaged until the highway is brought up to a national highway standard.

6.16 During consultations with the Shires, the committee received strong representations for the sealing of the Canberra/Tumut road to an acceptable standard. The Tumut Shire argued persuasively that a good quality direct road would considerably enhance the tourism potential of both the ACT and Tumut regions with particular reference to Victorian tourists.²⁸

²⁵ Submission no 21, p5

²⁶ Submission no 4, p3 & submission no 20, p6

²⁷ Submission no 7, p4

²⁸ Tumut Shire Council, Submission To Upgrade The Canberra - Tumut Road Via Brindabella As A

The committee has no difficulty in accepting the economic and broader social benefits that would derive from the road upgrade. However, it is aware that the major part of the cost, possibly in the region of some \$20 million or more, would fall to the Yarrowlumla Shire. In view of the geography of the Yarrowlumla Shire the committee doubts its willingness or ability to commit expenditure of this magnitude for a road which would have marginal benefit for the Shire. The costs for the ACT too would not be inconsiderable. The committee considers therefore that the issue should be taken up jointly by the ACT and NSW Governments with the Federal Government for funding under the roads program or the One Nation Program.

6.17 The committee supports further upgrading of the Boboyan road as and when funding and priorities permit. However, it notes concerns expressed by the Conservation Council of the South East Region and Canberra about the environmental impact of this road through the Namadgi National Park. The Council had similar reservations about the Tumut road. The committee shares these concerns to the extent that it would not wish to see upgrade of these roads unless acceptable risks were to be quantified by a full environmental impact statement.

Rail

6.18 In the discussion paper the committee proposed that the Government seek NSW agreement for improved rail services between Canberra and Sydney. The committee also noted support for the development of a fast train service between Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.²⁹ These issues were not pressed further in the tourism forum although the committee notes that NSW Countrylink has announced that a Canberra/Sydney Explorer rail service will operate from October 1993 with three each way services a day. This will be a substantial improvement on the current rail access between the cities.

Recommendations

6.19 The committee recommends that the Government:-

- (a) request the Federal Government to provide permanent Customs and Immigration facilities at Canberra airport;
- (b) press the Federal Government to upgrade Canberra airport as an international airport;
- (c) consult with the NSW Government and regional Shires with a view to making joint representations to the Federal Government to ensure development of the Canberra airport as a major passenger and freight gateway to the region;

²⁸ Cont. Regional Road, March 1990

²⁹ Submissions 21, p3; 20, p6 & 6, p2

- (d) through the Tourism Commission mount a campaign to ensure that airlines and inbound tour operators are fully aware of and publicise the fact that the stop over surcharge no longer applies for overseas visitors transitting Canberra;
- (e) press the airlines to remove the stop over fare surcharge which currently applies to domestic travellers transitting Canberra;
- (f) press the Federal Government to fund completion of the Federal Highway upgrade as a matter of priority;
- (g) coordinate with regional shires in pressing the Federal and NSW Governments to fund the upgrade of the King's Highway to a national highway standard;
- (h) consult with the NSW Government on a joint approach to the Federal Government for funding of the Canberra/Tumut road upgrade; and
- (i) ensure that any upgrade of the Boboyan and Tumut roads be conditional upon acceptable risks identified by a full environmental impact statement.

7. POTENTIAL FOR EXPANDING TOURISM

7.1 The discussion paper canvassed a wide range of views as to how to attract visitors to Canberra. Proposals included developing Canberra's unique identity as the national capital, promoting its cultural life, the arts and festivals, focusing upon special events and themes such as sport, promoting environmental attractions such as the Namadgi National Park, coordinating activities and planning so as to make Canberra and the region a year round tourist destination and more actively seeking overseas and domestic tourists.

Attractions

7.2 Canberra's status as the national capital, the home of the Federal Parliament and the centre for the major national institutions are major attractions for most domestic and overseas visitors.

7.3 The Canberra Visitors Survey by the Tourism Commission showed that over the two years prior to 1992, the most popular attractions in the ACT were Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial, the Australian National Gallery and Telecom Tower. Substantial numbers also visited the High Court, National Library, Botanic gardens, The Mint, Regatta Point, the Science and Technology Centre and the various embassies.³⁰

7.4 While the benefits accruing to the ACT and region tourism industry from Canberra's national status are considerable, the committee considers that additional rewards will be gained by broadening the appeal and focus as to what Canberra and the region have to offer the visitor and holiday maker. For example, it seems to be known to relatively few that the ACT and region offers the largest variety of fresh and saltwater recreational fishing within a two hour drive than anywhere else in Australia.³¹ The discussion paper drew attention to this and the committee is pleased to note that the sport has been given a good deal of publicity since then.

7.5 It was put to the committee that tourists are attracted by things that are different, to new cultural experiences, and that if Canberra is to be a truly successful tourist destination, it needs to develop and promote its own identity, that which makes it different from other places. A case in point will be the establishment of an Aboriginal keeping place. The extension of this view was that Canberra's cultural life should complement the constructed and the natural environments. Thus, the development of a strong local identity through Floriade and the success of the Canberra Raiders Rugby league football team.³² As an

³⁰ Submission no 21, Research Addendum, p16

³¹ Submission no 4, p2

³² Submission no 14, pp4,5

extension of this view, it was suggested to the committee that tourism packages built around special events presented in the ACT and incorporating other Canberra region attractions should be developed.³³

National Institutions

7.6 While the national institutions mentioned earlier in this report are a significant drawcard for ACT tourism, it is regrettable that a number of them do not appear to regard themselves as part of the tourism industry. These bodies correctly see their functions as providing the service or services set out by their respective charters. The availability of these institutions to tourists and other members of the public at times outside normal public service working hours does not appear to be a major consideration. The committee suspects that this is a view not generally held by similar institutions in other countries.

7.7 It was particularly noticeable to the committee that during the summer months when, due to daylight saving, the sun was still high in the heavens at 5pm, most institutions were closing their doors. At a time when many members of the community were free to enjoy the benefits of cool summer evenings they were being denied the opportunity to visit various national institutions. The implications for Canberra tourism are more serious as the committee suggests that many visitors who might have been prompted to stay an additional night in order to make late afternoon or early evening visits to national institutions would have been discouraged from doing so.

7.8 The committee is aware that later opening hours involve staff costs, but it should not be beyond the capability of institutions to devise means of containing such costs or even deriving net financial returns from later opening hours.

7.9 A more important consideration in the committee's view is that the national institutions should recognise more clearly their role in tourism and make appropriate adjustments to their operations to cater for visitors.

ACT and Region Cooperation

7.10 From its familiarisation visits and discussions with tourism operators in the SE Region, the committee is convinced there is substantial scope for the ACT and the region to exploit the opportunities which arise throughout the year to capitalise on the huge market available to the region. Some eight million Australians live within a day's motoring of any part of the region. The region encompasses the sophistication of the national capital, the snowfields, south coast beaches and national parks.

³³ Submission no 17, p2

7.11 The Tourism Commission is involved with the NSW Tourism Commission in cooperative advertising and the committee noted the ATIA view that the relationship should be expanded further to develop niche markets within the region, for example specialist air charters based on Canberra Airport and reaching less accessible parts of the region.³⁴ The committee was advised that the NSW Tourism Commission considers the ACT part of a NSW region called "Canberra and the Snowy Mountains" and is happy to promote it in this way.³⁵

7.12 There are close links between Canberra and Queanbeyan. The Canberra Business Council advised the committee that activities in the two cities have a direct bearing on each other and therefore require close coordination. It recommended that any joint planning in regard to the tourism industry be conducted with Queanbeyan representation.³⁶ This point was reinforced by the City of Queanbeyan which called for coordination between events in the ACT and region, so that major events do not occur at the same time.

7.13 The committee recognises the efforts being made with cooperative regional marketing. However, from its on site discussions with regional tourism operators and officials it is forced to the view that the region's enormous tourism potential is largely untapped. This is not due to any lack of commitment or purpose. All the Shires devote resources to tourism marketing and the Canberra Region Tourism Marketing Group is dedicated to its task. But limited funding for the group and financial constraints on the Shires mean that the variety of holiday experiences that can be enjoyed throughout the region in all seasons at marginal additional cost are not fully promoted. As a result the ACT and wider region share of the domestic and overseas tourism market appears to be disproportionately less than it should be.

7.14 In its discussion paper, the committee considered that the ACT and NSW Governments should allocate more resources to promoting the ACT and the region to a wider market in Australia and overseas. However, while ACT funding has been substantially maintained, the committee notes with considerable disappointment the decision of the NSW Government to close the tourism offices in the Snowy and south coast regions and centralise marketing in Sydney. This decision can only have an adverse effect on regional development and marketing. Nevertheless, the committee urges the ACT and NSW Governments and the regional Shires to give more attention to facilitating travel within the region by upgrading signage and indicating alternative routes through the region to both Sydney and Melbourne. The latter will become increasingly important when the Bombala/Cann River road upgrade is completed in the near future.

³⁴ Submission no 20, pp6,7

³⁵ Submission no 21, p2

³⁶ Submission no 15, p2

ACT Interstate Representation

7.15 For budgetary reasons and to maintain funding for the Tourism Commission's marketing activities, the Commission closed its Melbourne and Sydney offices during 1991/92. The Commission advised the committee that it has developed much closer relationships with both the NSW Tourism Commission and the Australian Tourism Commission and because it is never likely to be in a position to open offices overseas or interstate, it makes sense to work closely with these bodies.³⁷

7.16 In its discussion paper the committee expressed reservations about closure of the Melbourne and Sydney offices. The Canberra Accommodation Industry Association (CAIA) view was that reopening of these offices should only be considered following demonstrated need and cost effectiveness. It further argued that other capitals, in particular Brisbane, should have some form of Tourism Commission representation.³⁸ Apart from CAIA's reaction, this issue did not become a focus in responses to the paper or in the committee's tourism forum. Therefore the committee concludes that it is not a matter for undue concern to the industry and consequently does not recommend reinstating direct interstate representation.

7.17 From its discussions with tourism marketers in other States, and particularly in Brisbane, it is clear to the committee that the ACT is treated fairly by the NSW Tourism Commission and is a drawcard for tourism in NSW as an add-on in promoting tours and visits to the region. Nevertheless, the committee considers there is substantial potential for the ACT to be marketed both as part of the south east Region and as a tourist destination in its own right by the ACT industry and the Tourism Commission.

Inbound Tourism

7.18 Australia received some 2.214 million international visitors in 1990, and the ACT attracted around 177,000, representing 8 per cent of the total. The main sources of visitors to the ACT were Asia 22 per cent, UK and Ireland 21 per cent, US and Canada 20 per cent and Europe 18 per cent.³⁹

7.19 While these figures indicate the Tourism Commission's international marketing priorities, the Commission advised the committee that it does not have the financial capacity to undertake its own international promotion. The Commission advised that its close relationship with the NSW and Australian Tourism Commissions enables it to participate in cooperative projects. In addition, the Commission plans a comprehensive campaign aimed at Australian based inbound tour operators.⁴⁰ The committee notes, however, that the majority

³⁷ Submission no 21, pp2,3

³⁸ letter to committee received 2 March 1993

³⁹ ACT Tourism Commission, *Marketing Strategy 1992/94*, p6

⁴⁰ Submission no 21, p8

of international visitors to Canberra and the region are still likely to result from the marketing of Australia as a tourism destination rather than the region.

7.20 It was put to the committee by ATIA that as international arrivals will rise by 11 per cent for the rest of the decade, and domestic tourism will grow by under 2 per cent, the Tourism Commission should put greater emphasis on the international market, and in particular South East Asia. ATIA acknowledged the Commission's budgetary limitations and called for a targeted approach and participation in cooperative marketing suggested by the Australian Tourism Commission.⁴¹

7.21 The discussion paper canvassed views put to the committee about direct ACT tourism representation overseas. These views were not reinforced in responses to the discussion paper or in the tourism forum and the committee is confident in reaffirming its position as stated in the discussion paper that the Tourism Commission should continue its existing cooperative arrangements with its NSW and Australian counterparts. This should, in the committee's view, be supplemented with high quality promotional material on the ACT and region and attendance by Commission and industry representatives at relevant trade shows.

7.22 The committee supports an intensive promotional campaign, funded jointly by the Government and industry, targeted at inbound tour operators to include Canberra and the region in international visitors itineraries.

An Events Calendar

7.23 The committee's tourism forum debated the concept of an events calendar at some length. It was claimed that there is substantial scope for an ACT and region calendar covering all activities from the arts through to sporting events. It was suggested that the calendar be launched as a commercial venture. In a mixed response, problems of coordination, lead times for copy, regular updating and identifying the target markets were raised.

7.24 Notwithstanding the potential difficulties, the committee considers the calendar concept has merit particularly in allowing for planning by tour operators and encouraging tourism within the region. The committee also considers the concept has potential for being developed on a sectional basis covering areas of specific interest to potential visitors such as the arts and sports. In this regard, the committee notes that the ACT Government Office of Sport and Recreation publishes a high quality calendar of ACT activities which is supported by private advertising. The broader calendar proposal might well have commercial appeal and the committee suggests that the Government raise with potential publishers the possibility of it being produced commercially.

⁴¹ Submission no 20, p4

Eco-Tourism

7.25 The ACT and region have a wealth of natural pristine attractions. These range from the snowfields and alpine regions to the coast and to the national parks such as Namadgi. A number of regional towns have annual festivals centred upon natural phenomena such as the Festival of the Falling Leaf in Tumut. Eco-tourism therefore can be well catered for and the committee is convinced there is a substantial market for such tourism.

7.26 However, the committee supports the thrust of recommendations by the 1991 report of the Ecologically Sustainable Development Working Group on Tourism as they relate to the protection of the environment.⁴² The committee is conscious that the environmental impact of such tourism needs to be properly managed and is confident that this is presently the case in Namadgi. With any significant increase in Park visitors, it may become necessary for the administering authority to license tour operators to ensure that they are qualified to supervise visitor groups and avoid damage to the Park.

Recommendations

7.27 The committee recommends that:—

- (a) the Government, through the Tourism Commission in the first instance, seek to persuade national institutions based in Canberra to adopt opening hours which are more visitor friendly and relevant to community needs;
- (b) the Government consult with the NSW Government and the region Shires on measures to facilitate travel within and through the region by upgrading signage and indicating alternative tourist traffic routes through the region to both Sydney and Melbourne;
- (c) the Tourism Commission consult with the NSW Tourism Commission in ensuring that the ACT and the south east region are promoted and marketed by the NSW Tourism Commission as distinct tourism destinations;
- (d) the Government seek industry cooperation for a joint industry/Government funded campaign to have inbound tour operators include Canberra and the region in visitor itineraries;
- (e) the Government discuss with publishers the viability of producing an ACT events calendar for commercial distribution;

⁴² Submission no 26, p6

- (f) the Government consider the licensing of commercial tour operators and others who propose to take groups of visitors to the Namadgi National Park; and
- (g) in authorising tourism developments and associated infrastructure in the ACT the Government have due regard for social, community and environmental considerations.

8. CYCLICAL FACTORS AND COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES

8.1 Since 1988 the ACT has experienced a significant growth in bed numbers with the majority of the additional beds coming onto the market at about the same time. The industry now has some 43 accommodation houses in the ACT and about 12,000 beds, the rapid increase in serviced apartments during 1991 and 1992 being a feature as has been the case elsewhere in Australia. The committee was advised that there appears to be excess capacity at the 3 star level.⁴³

8.2 It is against this background that the cyclical nature of tourism related events in the ACT is causing concern in the accommodation side of the industry in particular. Fluctuating occupancy rates continue to occur with significant differences depending on property location and the impact that particular special events have on visitor numbers. The major gaps in the Canberra tourism calendar are February and the July–September period. To overcome cyclical slacks in demand during these traditionally low visitation months the accommodation industry suggested a strategic plan incorporating, inter alia, a range of attractions and events.⁴⁴

Possible Solutions

8.3 The committee notes the view that if Government is overtly involved in creating events this may encourage demand for public funding to assist with what would then be perceived as a Government requested event. This was apparently an outcome of attempts to establish the proposed winter festival.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the committee considers there is scope for relocating some events to fill gaps in the yearly calendar.

8.4 The Arts festival, for example, could be held in the winter months, and the Tourism Commission advised the committee that it has formed a subcommittee to drive the establishment and initial fostering of a Canberra Winter Festival.⁴⁶ Apart from the splendid efforts of the National Gallery of Australia, there is scope for a combined cultural exhibition by artists and individual galleries. Such an exhibition could be promoted interstate, possibly in conjunction with an appropriate exhibition by the National Gallery. The committee believes this could be done in cooperation with regional snowfields promotions.

8.5 The committee's visits to the region and discussions with tourism operators and Shire representatives leads it to the view that there is substantial scope for Canberra and the region to coordinate events and activities within the region to the benefit of both the ACT and the

⁴³ Submission no 9, p3 & submission no 21, p6

⁴⁴ Submission no 9, p3

⁴⁵ Submission no 14, p7

⁴⁶ Act Tourism Commission, letter to the Committee dated 16 April 1993

region through tourism side visits. The committee considers that the Tourism Commission should be resourced to take a lead in making regional assessments of the possibilities inherent in such coordination.

8.6 A point worth noting is the possibility of "festival burn out" through having something on all the time although this would not seem to be problem for the ACT at this stage. Nevertheless, the committee's attention was drawn to the fact that, in recent years, the Melbourne City Council had a year round program of events which has now been abandoned as the pressure of constant activity was untenable. The Bicentenary celebrations were put forward as another example of this phenomenon.⁴⁷

Scope for and Timing of Events

8.7 The committee's discussion paper noted that ACT sporting and recreational facilities are of such a standard that there is potential for bidding and attaining major one-off sporting/recreational events such as the Australian Masters Games, Golden Oldies Rugby Union Festivals and the World Orienteering Championships. The committee was advised that the first three events have a potential economic value of \$12m-\$17m.⁴⁸ An example of what could be done was the Canberra Fishing Festival held over 10 days in January 1993.⁴⁹

8.8 The committee was informed that a high number of sports consistently fail to recognise that their event is not just for participants but also suitable for spouses and spectators and this oversight results in considerable loss of potential tourism.⁵⁰ However, the committee notes, for example, efforts by representatives of the ACT Australian Football League to have an Australian Football League team based in Canberra and considers that the ultimate success of these efforts will be of substantial benefit to the ACT community in terms of visitor numbers for home games.

8.9 There appears to be scope for altering the timing of some existing events so that they take place during periods of low accommodation demand, subject always to relevant factors such as likely weather conditions at particular times. The right timing would help to flatten out the cyclical troughs and increase the length of stays, such as either side of major festivals rather than within them.

8.10 The committee is not attracted to Government involvement in creating events in the absence of a natural demand or reason for them, especially where this would make demands on the public purse. It notes the significant degree of indirect and administrative support

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p6

⁴⁸ Submission no 14, p14

⁴⁹ Transcript, public hearing 30 July 1992, p29

⁵⁰ Submission no 14, p14

given by the Government to the tourism, sport and other event based activities through its various agencies but considers that, for the most part, the organisation of events is a commercial activity which should be the responsibility of those involved in promoting them.

8.11 However, this is not to say that Government ought not to encourage viable events, use its good offices in helping to attract them to the ACT or facilitate the organisation of events. Indeed, the committee recognises that seeding funds are an essential part of attracting events and for some very worthwhile events the absence of any financial support from Government could result in their loss to Canberra and considerable loss of visitor income.

Events Unit

8.12 In its discussion paper the committee noted that provision for an Events Unit had been made in the Tourism Commission's 1992/93 budget. The Events Unit, in essence, exemplifies one type of financial support to the industry. The committee foreshadowed the unit having a major role in developing the tourism calendar and especially suggested that it be resourced to liaise with ethnic communities to ensure that Canberra provided appropriate interpreting and other facilities to meet the needs of community organised visits.

8.13 The discussion paper noted the ATIA view that effort should be made to attract those events that can be repeated every year.⁵¹ As mentioned earlier, the Events Unit has already been active in its association with a broad range of cultural and sporting events.

8.14 The committee observes that the Events Unit has been well received within the ACT tourism industry, although ATIA and CAIA in responding to the discussion paper supported additional funding for the Unit. Both considered that interpreting and other services should be undertaken by bodies more appropriately suited for these duties.⁵² The committee agrees with the need for an effective level of funding for the Events Unit, but holds to the view that it should have the resources to capitalise on the substantial tourism business which can be generated through liaison with ethnic community groups.

Recommendations

8.15 The committee recommends that:

- (a) the Tourism Commission, in developing the tourism strategy recommended in paragraph 4.8 of this report, include programs for attracting visitors to Canberra during the winter season;
- (b) the Government resource the Tourism Commission to enable it to assess, in cooperation with the region, the possibility of achieving a greater degree of ACT and region coordination of events;

⁵¹ Submission no 20, p5

⁵² ATIA letter to the committee dated 26 February 1993, and CAIA letter received 2 March 1993

- (c) the Government resource the Tourism Commission to bid for and develop with the major sporting codes programs for the ACT to be included in regular and special sporting and recreational fixtures;
- (d) the Government continue to provide indirect and administrative support for attracting high patronage recreational and sporting events to Canberra;
- (e) the Events Unit be resourced to provide interpreting and other services specific to the encouragement of organised visits to Canberra by ethnic community groups; and
- (f) the Events Unit liaise with ethnic communities and relevant educational bodies regarding the development of non-English language tuition facilities for persons involved in the tourism industry.

9 FUNDING FOR PROMOTION AND MARKETING

9.1 The Tourism Commission has budgeted \$2.066m in 1992/93 for tourism marketing. This expenditure will be supplemented by income from cooperative marketing ventures. At 30 April 1993, the Commission had earned some \$87,000 from such ventures. In previous years marketing expenditure has also been supplemented from commissions on accommodation sales, but the Commission ceased accommodation bookings in November 1992 except for group bookings and income from this source will be considerably smaller in the future.

9.2 In the discussion paper, the committee noted that most industry submissions considered that the Commission's marketing budget was inadequate for a highly competitive industry. In response to the discussion paper, ATIA strongly recommended increased funding for the Commission's general activities and further appropriation for promoting the ACT overseas and especially in Japan.⁵³ In its response, CAIA said that more intensive promotion should be the target for all market segments not only inbound tour operators.⁵⁴ At the tourism forum debate on funding centred on where the money would come from rather than how it was spent.

Who Should Pay and How

9.3 The discussion paper canvassed a range of industry specific allowances to stimulate the industry such as tax allowances, special land prices, rates incentives, special depreciation allowances, and the waiver or reduction of standard fees and charges for Government services associated with new events during their formative stages. However, the committee observes that all governments provide base funding for tourism marketing and promotion but expect industry to contribute to cooperative marketing. The committee also notes that many of Canberra's attractions including the national parks are available free to visitors and tour operators or are subsidised by the public as in the case of Floriade.

9.4 On the revenue specific side, the discussion paper canvassed matters such as bed taxes, levies on hotel bills, taxes on airline and coach tickets, franchise fees and levies on commercial and residential rates as a means of providing additional tourism promotional funds. However, the committee was cautioned that if the ACT were to be the only regional jurisdiction to put any one of these into place the industry could become dispirited.⁵⁵ Further, it was pointed out at the forum that any such moves by the ACT acting alone would benefit the surrounding Shires at the expense of ACT industry. It was considered that any industry specific imposts would need to be coordinated within the region but that for this to be possible, the regions would have to be convinced as to the benefits for them.

⁵³ ATIA letter to the committee dated 26 February

⁵⁴ Response to the Committee received 2 March 1993

⁵⁵ Transcript, op cit, p63

9.5 The rationale for a levy on commercial premises is that tourism benefits all businesses directly and indirectly. However, this view is not supported by the ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry which advised the committee that the general business community should not have to pay higher taxes to support the promotion of just one sector of industry, namely the tourist industry. The Chamber argued that the Government must either limit itself to promoting Canberra for a host of reasons or support other industry groups whose aims are as worthy in developing the ACT economy.⁵⁶

9.6 The committee noted a general lack of enthusiasm at the forum for industry imposts but support for tourism costs to be built into consolidated revenue raising.

Industry Self Help

9.7 The Committee recognises the difficulties inherent in developing strategies which will be acceptable to most if not all the operators in the tourism industry given that it comprises many enterprises of greatly differing strengths and size, and where they have differing objectives and expectations. The degree of diversity within the industry presents difficulty for the Tourism Commission in developing marketing campaigns based upon financial support from the industry. A relatively small motel operator drew the committee's attention to the inequity of small and large hotel/motels being asked to contribute the same amount for marketing campaigns, and said that if establishments were required to contribute on a proportional basis then more of them would be willing to enter promotional activities.⁵⁷

9.8 ATIA advised the committee that it was satisfied with the high level of cooperation within the industry and the Government, although it would like to see the Tourism Commission move towards greater emphasis on packaging ACT products in association with industry operators. ATIA pointed out that during 1991/92 the industry contributed \$200,000 in cooperative marketing ventures to the promotion of Canberra as well as a greater contribution in terms of free of charge and subsidised services for familiarisation of interstate travel industry staff and visiting journalists.⁵⁸

Joint Marketing

9.9 The tourism forum was advised that ATIA is developing a policy framework to include scope for joint marketing and it was suggested that the Tourism Commission's role be broadened to include tourism development.

9.10 Joint marketing could be region wide in terms of ACT/individual or regional Shire participation or on an industry sectional basis within the ACT or across the region. However, the committee believes the regions need to be convinced as to the benefits for them

⁵⁶ Submission no 11, p3

⁵⁷ Submission no 23, pp1,2

⁵⁸ Submission no 20, pp3,6

of joint marketing which would involve them in expending funds. At this stage there appears to be some uncertainty within the region about future directions, a situation not made easier by the withdrawal of the NSW Tourism Commission regional offices. The committee discerned a lack of leadership in this area and considers there is a role for the ACT Tourism Commission in developing joint marketing proposals with the regions.

9.11 With regard to industry joint marketing the forum was told that there could be problems should sections of the industry involved pull out and adopt a "free ride" mentality. The proponent of this view suggested a statutory levy would overcome this as well as ensure certainty of funding. In this context it may be relevant that the large hotels fund their own specific promotions and in the process confer a benefit on the wider tourism industry by publicising the ACT and region.⁵⁹

9.12 The committee sees scope for more purpose directed cooperative marketing ventures. It understands the Tourism Commission has been getting good results from targeting the North Shore, Northern Beaches and Eastern Suburbs areas of Sydney and urges that efforts directed to these areas continue. The committee also considers that the Sydney Western Suburbs market of probably some three million people within a three hour drive of Canberra is worth targeting by the 3 star accommodation sector of the industry, possibly by joint Commission/industry funded packages.

ACT Bus and Taxi Services

9.13 These services were covered briefly in the discussion paper and the committee was pleased with the response by both ACTION and Aerial Taxi Cabs. ACTION advised the committee that as the largest bus fleet operator it is often the only practical choice for large functions held in conjunction with conventions and the like. With regard to sightseeing services, the committee was advised that ACTION had not always been welcomed by some sectors of the ACT business community in competition with it. The committee was advised that ACTION markets its products, maintains tourist information display racks at Canberra Airport and major hotels/ motels and promotes Canberra through its "painted all-over" National Attraction Buses and the three Downtowner buses.⁶⁰

9.14 Aerial Taxi Cabs advised the committee that it is active and prominent in promoting Canberra and has sponsored matters such as the Canberra Visitors and Convention Bureau (CVCB) Meeting Planners Guide, the ACT Tourism Awards, television, radio advertising and brochures on tours. The committee was asked to propose improved taxi rank allocation at tourism attractions such as the War Memorial, the National gallery and the Canberra Casino.⁶¹ The committee supports the need for accessible taxi services especially at top tourism attractions.

⁵⁹ Transcript, op cit, p3

⁶⁰ Department of Urban Services, letter to the committee dated 10 February 1993

⁶¹ Aerial Taxi Cabs Co-operative Society Ltd, letter to the committee dated 25 February 1993

Recommendations

9.15 The committee recommends that the Government:—

- (a) encourage the tourism industry to maintain, and increase, its direct financial and indirect assistance to promoting Canberra;
- (b) in any consideration it may give to a tourism promotion levy, ensure that it is not industry sector specific and that it is equitable and in conformity with regional Shire practice;
- (c) resource the Tourism Commission to enable it to assume a greater role in developing joint ACT/regional proposals for marketing the ACT and region as tourist destinations;
- (d) through the Tourism Commission seek to develop cooperative industry/Commission marketing targeted at the major eastern seaboard markets; and
- (e) provide for adequate taxi ranks at major tourism attractions in the ACT.

10. STRUCTURE OF THE ACT TOURISM COMMISSION

10.1 The discussion paper focused on the structure of the Tourism Commission in the light of considerable comment from the industry about its operations. Apart from no change as an option, the committee discussed the possibility of

- providing for a direct stake by ACT industry in funding the Commission through specific tourism taxes or levies and in electing some board members;
- part privatisation of the Commission, with shareholding limited to industry operators and holdings related to their size. These shareholders would elect some board members;
- vesting the Tourism Commissioner with statutory authority, with powers to undertake major market development projects in consultation with the Government and the peak ACT tourism body.

10.2 The committee was informed that for some years the industry had considered that a tourism statutory authority should deliver tourism programs as is the case in most States, and that some in the industry assumed a statutory authority would be free of Government controls on its promotional spending.⁶²

10.3 There was a view that as a statutory body the Tourism Commission would be freed of bureaucratic control.⁶³ It was asserted that the changes in leadership and staffing structures of the Commission over the last six years had done little to create a stable environment to promote and market Canberra efficiently.⁶⁴

10.4 ATIA had informed the committee that the future role of the Commission should be to concentrate its efforts on marketing the Canberra region within Australia and increasingly more in the international arena. It suggested an eight member Commission Board comprising local and international marketing expertise⁶⁵ and, in its response to the discussion paper, supported a statutory authority structure for the Commission.⁶⁶

10.5 The dual role of the Commission in both marketing the ACT and servicing the visitor was questioned on the basis that the dual role was not successful and that the servicing function was given less attention and resources than it deserved.⁶⁷

⁶² Submission no 21, p2

⁶³ Transcript, op cit, p2

⁶⁴ Submission no 7, p1

⁶⁵ Submission no 20, pp2,3

⁶⁶ Letter to the committee, dated 26 February 1993

⁶⁷ Submission no 9, p4

10.6 In its discussion paper the committee expressed doubt as to whether statutory status alone would improve the functioning of the Commission and saw the real issues as funding and the contribution to be made by the tourism and other industries benefiting from tourism. The committee noted the Commission's view that the Government could not be expected to fund the Commission without heeding the effect on the ACT's economy, or the value of tourism expenditures to the ACT community.⁶⁸

10.7 The committee also expressed reservations as to whether the Commission had the strategic planning and vision necessary to ensure that the ACT industry gains a much greater share of the international tourism market as well as developing its potential as a destination for the domestic market.

10.8 The committee is therefore pleased to note changes to the Commission's Advisory Board announced by the Chief Minister on 25 March 1993. The Chief Minister advised the Legislative Assembly that the Advisory Board would, among other things, look for solutions to the winter tourism problem and give emphasis to international marketing.⁶⁹

10.9 The committee has an open mind as to whether the Commission would function any more effectively than at present by being taken off-budget as a statutory authority. For the present it is satisfied to see how effective the Commission is under its new Advisory Board in acquiring greater global marketing expertise.

Canberra Visitor and Convention Bureau

10.10 Responsibility to promote Canberra as a convention and conference centre has been delegated to the Canberra Visitor and Convention Bureau which is an incorporated association. The committee was advised that the Tourism Commission funds the Bureau, to the extent of \$225,000 in 1991/92, and works cooperatively with the Bureau. The Bureau also raises revenue from membership fees and cooperative marketing. The relationship between the two bodies was described by the Commission as excellent.⁷⁰

10.11 The committee was advised that the CVCB has achieved notable recent successes, attracting some \$32m in revenue over the next seven years with a further \$107m subject to bids currently in the system. It is regarded as a cost effective organisation, generating an estimated \$83 in industry revenue for each \$1 it receives.⁷¹

10.12 To the extent that there are concerns about the available pool of funds for tourism promotion and marketing, the committee noted ATIA's view that various groups within Government agencies that are responsible for events, festivals, and other marketing of the

⁶⁸ Submission no 21, p2

⁶⁹ Legislative Assembly debates

⁷⁰ Submission no 21, p7

⁷¹ *ibid*

city be co-located into a single unit either within the Tourism Commission or the Department of the Environment, Land and Planning.⁷²

10.13 In its discussion paper, the committee accepted that there is a case for formally amalgamating the CVCB and the Commission on the grounds of good administration in managing the tourism promotion and marketing dollar. The two bodies share a common strategy and the CVCB receives its principal funding through the Commission. Amalgamation should be possible without the CVCB losing its effectiveness or identity as the principal body responsible for attracting convention business to the ACT. The advantage would be a corporate strengthening of the Commission, a more cost effective use of resources and a broader industry input to and wider recognition of the CVCB role.

10.14 However, the committee noted that the CVCB now relies more heavily upon industry support than previously, a situation consistent with the committee's views about industry input to the promotion and marketing of Canberra as a visitor destination. Accordingly, the committee would wish to see industry support of the CVCB encouraged and increase. The committee therefore considers that by remaining separate from the Commission, the CVCB is likely to operate more efficiently and economically and be better placed to attract financial support from the private sector.

Recommendations

10.15 The committee recommends that the Tourism Commission function as an entity separate from the CVCB but that:-

- (a) the Government seek that the CVCB operate consistently with tourism development policy; and
- (b) that funds made available to the CVCB from the Government be accountable separately from funds made available to the Tourism Commission.

⁷² Submission no 20, p3

11 CANBERRA BASHING AND EFFECT ON TOURISM

11.1 Canberra is often identified in the minds of other Australians with some of the negative aspects of the Federal Parliament and its bureaucracy. Perceptions about Canberra and its image are coloured by the media especially when reporting Federal Parliament. Also newspaper and electronic media articles about Canberra are not infrequently critical about Canberra. In view of this, the committee considered it timely to establish if the wider Australian community has difficulty in differentiating between Federal politics, the city and the Canberra people, what effect, if any, this has on Canberra as a tourist destination and how negative perceptions can be countered.

11.2 It is important to recognise that tourists are attracted to diversity and to new cultural experiences. It was put to the committee that in order to be a truly successful tourist destination, Canberra needs to develop and promote its own identity, that which makes it different from other places. In Canberra's case, it not only had to develop its own identity, but it had to overcome one which has been imposed on it by being equated with "the Government" and "the Commonwealth". As such, decisions of the Federal Government have been considered as "Canberra" decisions.⁷³

11.3 The committee noted a general community concern about Canberra bashing and the added burden placed on the tourism industry in countering prejudiced views about Canberra.

Promoting the Canberra Image

11.4 The committee agrees with the view that Canberra's role as the National Capital should not be played down as this is the very reason for its existence,⁷⁴ and the national parliament building is a major tourist drawcard in its own right. Indeed, the committee notes the recent national survey by the NCPA, which has a promotional responsibility in regard to the national capital, found 82 per cent of respondents were proud of the national capital.⁷⁵

11.5 A number of suggestions were put to the committee on retaliatory measures which could be taken against media outlets and journalists who wilfully denigrate Canberra. However, the committee favours a program of education, both broadly based and purpose directed with a view to establishing positive perceptions or changing existing negative perceptions about Canberra.

11.6 With this in mind, the committee considers there should be more effective encouragement of the media to promote the ACT as a tourist destination. In this regard, the

⁷³ Submission no 14, p4

⁷⁴ Submission no 14, p5

⁷⁵ The Canberra Times, 30 September 1992, p3

committee welcomed the local media campaign late last year to defend Canberra and portray the community in a more positive light. The committee proposes that the Tourism Commission continue and expand as appropriate the visiting journalist's program with financial support by the tourism industry.

11.7 The committee also supports the development of a schools education program on Canberra as the National Capital, noting that the NCPA survey found that 94 per cent of respondents agreed that information about Canberra and the ACT as a visitor destination should be available to schools. This could be done through school project kits developed by the Government in consultation with education groups and the tourism industry and be supplemented through vehicles such as the Rotary Adventure In Citizenship program.⁷⁶ The committee's discussion paper suggested there was considerable potential for developing an understanding about Canberra by means of a Youth Parliament and is pleased to note that the Speaker of the Assembly initiated the ACT Youth Parliament which met in the Assembly Chamber in May this year. The Youth Parliament which attracts significant support from the YMCA will have a valuable role in ensuring that the ACT community has the opportunity to become more aware of the work of the Legislative Assembly and its committees.

11.8 Observation and anecdotal evidence indicates that the Canberra community created considerable goodwill with the 30,000 plus visitors attending the Vietnam Memorial dedication in October last year. This will have left lasting positive impressions about the ACT, and exemplifies the view put to the committee that festivals such as the Canberra Festival reinforce Canberra's positive aspects and that they should be promoted.

11.9 The committee also considers there is substantial scope for influencing perceptions about Canberra by engendering within the ACT community pride in the city and what the ACT and region have to offer the visitor. Accordingly, the committee proposes that the Government in cooperation with ACT community and commercial interests develop an appropriate campaign.

Recommendations

11.10 The committee recommends that:-

- (a) the Government in consultation with the NCPA develop an education program about the ACT for Australia wide use;
- (b) the Government in consultation with education groups develop a schools and colleges program about the Legislative Assembly and its committees;

- (c) the Legislative Assembly, in consultation with the YMCA where appropriate, further develop the ACT Youth Parliament;
- (d) the Government in consultation with ACT community and business organisations, develop a program for engendering community pride in Canberra and the ACT; and
- (e) the Tourism Commission expand the visiting journalists program with support from ACT industry and commerce.

⁷⁶ Submission no 11, p1

12. COMMONWEALTH GAMES AND THE SYDNEY OLYMPIC BID

12.1 In 2001 Australia will celebrate 100 years of Federation and Canberra will no doubt be a major focus for many of the activities associated with that celebration. The award of the 2002 Commonwealth Games to Canberra would be a fitting culmination of these events. The Games would be an excellent goal towards which all sectors of the community – Government, business and the people could strive.

12.2 By 2002, as is the case now in many respects, Canberra will be ideally placed in terms of infrastructure, facilities, regional population, climate, and ease of movement between prospective sporting venues to host the Games. Canberra already boasts an extensive range of quality sporting facilities which should require little, if any, further development as Games venues.

12.3 A major consideration of importance too, is that the Games would not need to be solely Canberra based. Regional interdependence would allow for certain events to be held outside the ACT, while the benefits would accrue to the region as a whole through demand for accommodation and other services including tourism spin-off. This being the case, the committee considers there is substantial scope for involvement by the NSW Government in any bid by the ACT to hold the 2002 Games.

12.4 The committee, at its public inquiry, noted broad support for the Games bid. However, there was a general concern that the bid be thoroughly researched in terms of accommodation and other infrastructure. The view was put that there is currently an accommodation oversupply and that the provision of additional facilities to meet Games generated demand would need a continuing momentum,⁷⁷ while the accommodation industry cautioned the need for a long term strategic plan that would pick up and carry on after the Games.⁷⁸ The ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the bid subject to the necessary infrastructure to support it. The Chamber advised the committee that any accommodation limitations could prevent Canberra from hosting the 1999 conference of Rotary International, which would draw some 50,000 people, unless the combined effects of the Games and other events lead to infrastructure being developed to handle these numbers.⁷⁹

12.5 The committee was advised that from a Government perspective the matter would require a feasibility study in terms of infrastructure and underwriting the bid. The committee was also advised that consideration of a bid would involve diplomatic issues in view of suggestions that the Third World Commonwealth countries are likely to support another Third World country to host the Games after Malaysia in 1998.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Transcript, op cit, p7

⁷⁸ *ibid*, p76

⁷⁹ *ibid*, p12

⁸⁰ *ibid*, p58

Sydney Olympic Bid

12.6 It was suggested to the committee that Canberra could tap into the year 2000 Olympic Games if the Sydney bid succeeds by picking up one or two of the Sydney Games activities.⁸¹ In the discussion paper the committee expressed its full support of the Sydney Olympic bid and notes that the ACT Government has since become a sponsor of the bid with a contribution of \$25,000. Announcing the sponsorship, the Chief Minister said that if Sydney was successful the ACT would be in a strong position to benefit from increased recognition and increased tourism.⁸²

12.7 The committee considers the benefits for the ACT flowing from the Sydney bid and its success will be considerable. It notes that the bid has already given Australia significant international exposure and that the NSW Minister responsible for the bid has acknowledged the ACT will have an important role in the staging of the Games should the bid succeed. The Minister said that the ACT's sporting facilities have impressed the International Olympic Committee.⁸³

General Considerations

12.8 The years 1999 through 2002 offer a horizon of substantial tourism potential for Canberra and the region, embracing the centenary of Federation, the possibilities inherent in hosting the Rotary International conference, linking into the Sydney Olympic Games bid, the Commonwealth Games bid and other international sporting events and conferences. The opportunities are such that the committee considers the Government, in cooperation with the tourism industry, should undertake a feasibility study into the Commonwealth Games bid and include in the feasibility study other major international events which could be attracted to Canberra. In line with its views expressed elsewhere in this report, the committee considers that the ACT and region business communities should be prepared to accept a direct financial role in supporting Canberra's bid for the Commonwealth Games and the Sydney Olympic bid. In this regard the committee notes the work being undertaken by the Canberra 2002 Commonwealth Games Bid.

12.9 The committee appreciates the concerns expressed about Canberra's current ability to accommodate the large numbers who would attend the Commonwealth Games and other large scale events. However, the committee again notes that the dedication of the Vietnam Memorial in October 1992 drew more than 30,000 visitors, the largest numbers of visitors ever to the city at any one time. Canberra and nearby NSW centres accommodated these numbers without difficulty. The committee also calls to mind the city's successful hosting of the World Council of Churches Conference in 1991.

⁸¹ *ibid*, p72

⁸² Chief Minister, Media Statement, 25 April 1993

⁸³ Mr Bruce Baird, Media Release, 28 April 1993

12.10 In the normal course the committee would expect a reasonable addition to the ACT and region visitor accommodation infrastructure over the next 10 years and would anticipate no real difficulty in the industry handling the numbers who would attend the 2002 Games. Accordingly, the committee considers the ACT Government should ensure that additional hotel sites are made available on a regular basis in accordance with expected growth in occupancy rates. This would minimise any adverse impact that major events may have on the local community.

12.11 The committee considers that the best course would be to undertake a feasibility study of the accommodation and other infrastructure demands which would be made on the ACT if it were to host the 2002 Commonwealth Games.

12.12 Such a study should take account of likely developments associated with the expected growth of Canberra over the next 10 years and major events such as the centenary of Federation in 2001. The committee suggests that the Government examine the feasibility of releasing hotel sites in accordance with expected growth in demand at a regular rate in order to preclude excessive development of a boom and bust nature.

Recommendations

12.13 The committee recommends that the Government in cooperation with the relevant industry sectors and community interests:-

- (a) undertake a feasibility study into the accommodation and other infrastructure demands associated with Canberra hosting the 2002 Commonwealth Games, the study to include other major events which could be attracted to Canberra towards the end of this decade; and
- (b) examine the feasibility of releasing hotel and other public accommodation sites at a rate commensurate with expected growth in tourism demand over the next 10 years.

Lou Westende MLA
Presiding Member

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED

1. Mrs J Graham
2. Mrs J Dalglish
3. The Meetings Industry Association of the ACT
4. ACT Sport and Recreational Fishing Council
5. Mr Walter De Angeli
6. Mr Don Allan
7. Canberra Visitors and Attractions Association
8. Canberra Region Campaign Inc
9. Canberra Accommodation Industry Association
10. Mr Brian Barlin
11. ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ltd
12. National Capital Planning Authority
13. Mr N Israel, Pavilion Hotel
14. Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
15. Canberra Business Council
16. Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra
17. Canberra Festival Inc
18. Australian Hotels Association
19. The Ethnic Communities Council of the ACT
20. Canberra Region Chapter, Australian Tourism Industry Association
21. ACT Tourism Commission
22. Canberra Visitors and Convention Centre

- 23. Australian Representation Services Pty Ltd
- 24. ACT Cultural Council
- 25. Mr A C Patrech
- 26. National Parks Association of the ACT
- 27. Department of Urban Services
- 28. Aerial Taxi Cabs Co-operative Society Ltd

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF WITNESSES AT PUBLIC HEARING

- Mr O Kleinig, Canberra Business Council
- Mrs R Nolan, Canberra Business Council
- Mr C J Louttit, ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Mr P McKendry, Australian Hotels Association
- Ms L Greene, Canberra Visitors and Attractions Association
- Mr G Winter, ACT Sport and Recreational Fishing Council
- Mrs E Grant, Canberra Festival Inc
- Mr R Falconer, Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra
- Mr D Von Behrens, Conservation Council of the South-East Region and Canberra
- Mr G J Fraser, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
- Mr J R Thwaite, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
- Ms C A Parsons, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
- Ms V Wade, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
- Mr P C Davies, Department of the Environment, Land and Planning
- Mr D Lawrance, ACT Tourism Commission
- Mr J S Milton, Canberra Region Chapter, Australian Tourism Industry Association
- Mrs S Rogerson, Canberra Accommodation Industry Association
- Mr K Young, Canberra Accommodation Industry Association