

**POLICY NUMBER 12 (C)**

**Tourism Policy**

<b>DATE AMENDED:</b>	September 2012
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>	October 2013
<b>DATE ADOPTED:</b>	May 2004
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Manager Tourism & Economic Development
<b>REFERENCES:</b>	2002 Hepburn Shire Council – Tourism Directions Statement. Hepburn Shire Council - Council Plan 2009-13

**PROGRESSIVE ORGANISATIONS HAVE GOOD POLICIES**

Policies help organisations and the public to better understand an organisation's priorities and where it is heading. Hepburn Shire Council is committed to development and maintaining a comprehensive set of policies to guide the organisation towards a better environmental, social, cultural and economically sustainable future.

Policies are regularly reviewed and staff input is actively sought in this process. Community input is sought for those policies which have a major public focus.

Comments are also welcomed after policies have been adopted to assist in their continuous review and improvement.

## THIS POLICY

Tourism benefits local communities economically and socially, and can help raise awareness and support for conservation and responsible management of the environment. Within the tourism sector, economic development and environmental protection can work hand in hand to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. Policies and actions must aim to strengthen the benefits and manage any potential negative impact of tourism

## SUSTAINABLE TOURISM POLICY

Hepburn Shire Council promote and support a growing tourism industry that provides a rewarding experience for the visitor in a manner that sustains social, environmental and economic sustainability.

<sup>1</sup>Council support the United Nations Environmental Program's (UNEP's) definition of Sustainable Tourism and believe that sustainable tourism should:

1. Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural resources and biodiversity.
2. Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.
3. [Assist with] long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders.

As far as practicable, Council will pursue sustainable tourism practices by applying the UNEP *12 aims of Sustainable Tourism*, as outlined below, within each of our economic, social and environmental platforms.

## OBJECTIVES

***Council accepts that it shares accountability with National and State Government, the community and business for the issues of managing growth, adapting to climate change, local economic development, support for environmental conservation, and public health, safety and security.***

In this context, this tourism policy strives to achieve the universal objectives as proposed by the United Nations Environment Programme & UN World Tourism Organisation<sup>2</sup>:-

### 1) *Economic Viability*

*To ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and enterprises, so that they are able to continue to prosper and deliver benefits in the long term.*

### 2) *Local Prosperity*

*To maximise the contribution of tourism to the economic prosperity of the host destination, including the proportion of visitor spending that is retained locally.*

### 3) *Employment Quality*

*To strengthen the number and quality of local jobs created and supported by tourism, including the level of pay, conditions of service and availability to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from *UNWTO, 2004* United Nations Environmental Program Sustainable Tourism

<sup>2</sup> From *UN Environment Programme & UN World Tourism Organisation Publication: "Making Tourism More Sustainable – A Guide for Policy Makers"*

4) *Social Equity*

*To seek a widespread and fair distribution of economic and social benefits from tourism throughout the recipient community, including improving opportunities, income and services available to the poor.*

5) *Visitor Fulfilment*

*To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, available to all without discrimination by gender, race, disability or in other ways.*

6) *Local Control*

*To engage and empower local communities in planning and decision making about the management and future development of tourism in their area, in consultation with other stakeholders.*

7) *Community Wellbeing*

*To maintain and strengthen the quality of life in local communities, including social structures and access to resources, amenities and life support systems, avoiding any form of social degradation or exploitation.*

8) *Cultural Richness*

*To respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions and distinctiveness of host communities.*

9) *Physical Integrity*

*To maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes, both urban and rural, and avoid the physical and visual degradation of the environment.*

10) *Biological Diversity*

*To support the conservation of natural areas, habitats and wildlife, and minimise damage to them.*

11) *Resource Efficiency*

*To minimise the use of scarce and non-renewable resources in the development and operation of tourism facilities and services.*

12) *Environmental Purity*

*To minimise the pollution of air, water and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.*

## SUPPORTING THIS POLICY

### GENERAL

Council will:

- Support sustainable tourism in its Regulatory, Economic, Social and Planning areas and policies.
- Encourage tourism enterprises that actively incorporate sustainable business practices into their operations. Council will lead by example.
- Work with our Local Tourism Associations, *Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism*, *Tourism Victoria* and other tourism and community organisations and government departments and agencies, to develop sustainable tourism.
- Encourage co-operation between private operators and other agencies such as the *Daylesford and Macedon Ranges Tourism Board* and *Tourism Victoria* in marketing, product development, customer service, training and industry development.
- Seek representation on local and regional tourism associations and boards.
- Will, where appropriate, engage in and develop tourism opportunities both in its own right and in partnership with business, governments, and community stakeholders.
- Foster and create a community awareness of the role and value of tourism within the region.
- Aim to be the premier rural location in temperate Australia for feature film and television series production, and be the site selector's first choice as a film friendly region in all other areas of the commercial and creative filming.

### ECONOMIC

Council will:

- support the management and operation of Visitor Information Centres at Creswick, Trentham and Clunes and an accredited Visitor Information Centre at Daylesford.
- Provide an appropriate budget allocation for tourism expenditure.
- Assist, financially and by other means, tourism organisations or events that provide evidence of the potential to benefit both community and visitors in the area.
- Seek ongoing commitments and financial involvement from Government, industry and investors in the provision of tourist facilities.
- Use its rating policy to encourage development that delivers quality, sustainable tourism outcomes.
- Consider the social, cultural, economic and environmental impact of proposals within the area, when considering tourism development applications.
- Ensure that zoning and other statutory requirements encourage sustainable tourism, and ameliorate against developments that might reduce the potential opportunities for

sustainable tourism, in its strategic plans, town plans, development control plans and emergency plans, and within the guidelines of planning policies and protocols.

## SOCIAL and ENVIRONMENTAL

Council will:

- Encourage tourism operators to seek accreditation and to strive for continuous improvement of tourism products. Furthermore, Council will promote participation in suitable certification systems for sustainable and eco tourism.
- Take into consideration the unique cultural, natural and heritage landscapes in relation to tourism development opportunities.
- Support the establishment and accessibility of regional parks and the enhancement of specific natural features, conserve areas of outstanding beauty and recognise items of heritage significance.

## STAKEHOLDERS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Council recognise other State and Federal Government agencies, the local community, and the general public as stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism products. In particular, this includes Parks Victoria, the Department of Sustainability and Environment and other land managers in our region.

Council also endorse the sentiments of the United Nations Environmental Program as follows:  
*“Many different interests can benefit from tourism being made more sustainable:*

- *Tourism enterprises, while seeking long term profitability, should be concerned about their corporate image, the relationship with their staff, and their impact on the global environment and that immediately around them.*
- *Local communities are seeking increased prosperity but without exploitation or damage to their quality of life.*
- *Environmentalists are concerned about the harmful impacts of tourism but also see it as a valuable source of income for conservation.*
- *Tourists are seeking a high quality experience in safe and attractive environments; they are becoming more aware of the impacts of their travelling.*
- *In seeking more sustainable tourism, governments must recognize the different positions and motivations of these stakeholders and work with them to achieve common goals.”* (Copyright UNEP/GRID Arendal)