Tourism or the Visitor Economy? Advocating for Regional Tourism

Coralie Bell
ART Chair
What is a tourism business?
What types of businesses 'support' tourism businesses?
So, what is the ‘visitor economy’ and how does it differ from the term ‘tourism’?

The visitor economy is a concept that takes into account economic activity much broader than that traditionally described as ‘tourism’. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) defines it as any direct, indirect, and induced economic activity resulting from visitors’ interactions with a destination outside their usual environment. More so, it is a phrase used to describe the economic benefit of visitor activity not only for the industry directly related to tourism, but in a very real wider sense.

Visitor Economy Thinking for Local Government

Launched at the ART convention in Devonport, Tas
Why the visitor economy matters to Local Government

$373 million dollars is spent on tourism each year by local government alone
• Growing jobs, bringing new dollars into the local economy, improving the profitability of local businesses as well as supporting new start-ups and attracting new major investment to the area, all act to improve the rate base.

• Businesses are important ratepayers and visitor spend helps strengthen the income local governments receive in rates.

• LG invests already in pools, art galleries, libraries, cafes, museums, halls, public toilets, rubbish collection...

• For many parts of rural and regional Australia, investment in the visitor economy is proving to be one of the most effective ways for local areas to grow and plan for the future.
• There is a clear linkage between the visitor economy and regional livability, jobs, services and overall community health and well-being
• As visitor numbers increase, so too does the pressure on Local Government.

• The assets and infrastructure are the first to feel it and, as business grows, the need to review processes for planning and policy become apparent.
Destination Management Planning

• Don’t be complacent, developing a strong and clear visitor economy growth strategy at a council level is imperative.

• This is more than a Destination Marketing Plan – it is a Destination Management Plan.

• A plan that doesn’t just “sit on the shelf”.

• A wish list v’s identifying projects that are realistic and achievable within allocated resources.
• Managing the visitor economy is a shared responsibility with many stakeholders contributing to outcomes. Economic development and job creation start with the private sector.

• Local government plays an important role in managing local development and supporting the visitor economy sector in their areas. Local tourism associations work closely with the community and around visitor needs.
Social License

• The more the community is engaged and supportive of the opportunities of tourism, the more they will collaborate to develop and embrace a destination management plan.

• When councils upgrade facilities and pay more attention to the environment both visually and functionally, pride in the environment develops and the positive community stories grow.
Business Friendly Policy

• Local government is often the biggest investor in tourism development while the biggest barrier to tourism development at the same time

• We can create policy that encourages a business-friendly environment and promotes an entrepreneurial mindset in communities

• Become business enablers
How: Cut the red tape?
How Can I pitch the Visitor Economy to Council?

• Sometimes senior management at Council just don’t get it.

• Council support for tourism ebbs and flows depending on the elected members understanding of its importance.

• Communicate the linkage between the visitor economy, community wellbeing and expanding the capacity of the ratepayer base.
Brainstorm – what’s your elevator pitch?

• What would you say?
• Who are the local hero's?
National Approach to a Tourism Policy

• What does this mean to Local Government?

• Why do we need one?

• Ok, how do we get one?
Australian Regional Tourism

• What is the role of ART?
Top six regional tourism priorities

1. Enabling Infrastructure
2. Providing Strategic Industry Advice
3. Reliable and Useable Data
4. Regional Dispersal
5. Skills and Labour
6. Product and Experience Development
The Tourism Hub

• Designed to connect tourism professionals to share industry advice, resources and best practices to common challenges

• Provide Local Government professional development via the tourism webinar series

• Cost: Free to Local Government
How do I become an ART member?

• You can see myself or Lauren Douglass, ART Executive Officer here today

• Sign up online at www.regionaltourism.com.au