



Dear Members & Industry Contacts

## **Sapphire Coast Tourism Public Relations update**

Necessity is the mother of invention, and limited resources have encouraged Sapphire Coast Tourism (SCT) to employ clever strategies to achieve our PR objectives. Standard group visits (4-5 journalists) would ordinarily cost in the vicinity of \$5-\$10K per visit – with the industry norm requiring all flights, food, accommodation, transport and all ancillary costs to be covered by the local tourism organisation.

SCT does not have access to these funds and instead has taken the strategy to develop relationships with key freelance journalists. A combination of media networking and working with the local industry to provide free of charge (FOC) services, as well as an investment in our public relations strategy, has generated unprecedented exposure for the Sapphire Coast with huge potential benefits for the local tourism industry.

Over the past 6 months SCT has managed to secure \$213,633 worth of printed exposure for just \$12,000 through its PR consultant – a 1800% return on investment! This print media provided a total circulation of 1,550,492 and included articles in national newspapers, Victorian regional publications, metro community papers, and national glossy magazines. The region also enjoyed exposure on numerous travel websites and blogs targeting both the family and the senior market. SCT also have regular articles in 'Escape with ETs' online magazine which reaches fishermen and outdoor enthusiasts all over Australia and the world and has 200,000 bi-monthly visits and 18,500+ members.

With the industry's support, since May 2011 SCT have also hosted 6 different media visits for the Sydney Morning Herald, the Sunday Telegraph, Australian Geographic Outdoor, Urban Animal, the Cumberland Community (local papers in Sydney) and Qantas magazine. These visits have varied from 2-6 days in length and have covered the whole length of the region for a number of different stories. Articles from these media visits are yet to be published, but in the coming months will generate exposure for the Sapphire Coast with a total circulation of over 1,789,558 and an estimated value of \$302,410.

**This will bring the total circulation of SCTs PR strategy over the last 6 months to 3,340,050 and an estimated value of over half a million dollars (\$516,043) worth of exposure for the region! And all for a total investment by SCT of \$12,000...a whopping 4,300% return on investment!**

The public relations and media strategies implemented by SCT have effectively introduced the Sapphire Coast to a whole new world of communications channels and increased awareness. Where once we strived to have our national media releases noticed, we are now fielding calls from various media representatives interested in telling our story. Cost effective but extremely time intensive, our hard work is now starting to pay dividends for the region.

## **Sapphire Coast Tourism/Bega Valley region Visitor Statistics for Year End June 2011**

These positive results are also reflected in the visitor statistics for the Sapphire Coast/Bega Valley region. The March-June quarter showed an increase across all domestic categories including: domestic overnight visitors from 413,000 to 436,000 (6% increase); domestic visitor nights up from 1,887,000 to 2,023,000 (7% increase) and domestic day visitors only slightly up (which is good as they spend less \$) from 290,000 to 297,000 (2.5% increase).

Our international statistics have been slightly affected by the inbound/outbound tourism deficit with international overnight visitors showing a slight decrease from 28,000 to 27,000 (3.7% decrease) but international nights still remain strong from 93,000 to 96,000 (3.5% increase).

## Sapphire Coast Tourism on Facebook & Twitter

The Sapphire Coast Tourism Facebook page is growing and the regional Twitter accounts is now up and running to promote the whole of the Sapphire Coast region. 'Like' us, and share whats happening in your town and with your business and comment on other posts across our network who follow what's going on through the Sapphire Coast. We also re- post members posts so make sure you "LIKE" us so we see your posts.

<http://www.facebook.com/sapphirecoasttourism#!/>  
<http://twitter.com/#!/SapphireCoast>



SCT also encourages you to also to LIKE [www.facebook.com/visitsnw](http://www.facebook.com/visitsnw) and be active in the opportunities to promote the Sapphire Coast to Destination NSWs 12,000 fans.

## Facebook 'Check-In Deals' provides New Marketing Opportunities

Smartphone users are now able to use the Facebook 'check-in' feature on their phones to access special deals and discounts. The 'Check-In Deals' service allows users of Facebook's smartphone apps to 'Check-In' to participating stores and businesses in order to receive special deals. The Check-In Deals uses the Places feature of the Facebook app and utilises the GPS units of the smartphone to allow users to let their friends know where they are, as well as a list of nearby locations, including business, where users can 'check-in'.

This service allows business to communicate with and market their products and services to both current and potential customers in new and localised ways. Customers benefit from the offers they receive by 'checking-in' at a business, while the businesses benefit by being publicised as a 'check-in' point on the news-feeds of that individual's entire Facebook friend list. A guide has been published by Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/deals/checkin/business>

## Tourism gets kitted up for Social Media

Still not sure about all of this social media and what it means for your business? The use of Social Media channels by consumers has rapidly expanded, resulting in a high demand by industry for simple and relevant information on how to capitalise on this opportunity. In the most exciting addition since the inclusion of video tutorials, the latest release of the Tourism e-kit launches 11 new tutorials on Social Media!!

The new Social Media tutorials feature practical hands-on exercises and relevant examples, including; Social media for tourism; Online reputation management; Facebook; Twitter; YouTube and other video media sites; Flickr and other image media sites; TripAdvisor; Blogging; Online Tourism Communities; Mobile technology for Tourism Businesses and the Groupon Phenomena. The new Social Media tutorials are now available to download for free from ATDW's corporate site [www.atdw.com.au/tourism\\_e\\_kit.asp](http://www.atdw.com.au/tourism_e_kit.asp)



## Sapphire Coast Tourism Mobile Phone Application



We are underway with the development of a Sapphire Coast Tourism mobile phone app as part of the partnership funded program with Destination NSW and the South Coast Regional Tourism Organisation.

The app will most likely be developed and released in stages as the development is quite labour intensive and will reflect what resources we can put to the project. More detail about this project to follow shortly. A brief (2.50 minutes) overview of the app and why it will be relevant, who is using smart phones etc. can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzQWawRvzaQ>.

Mobile apps are likely to be as relevant as websites if not greater, for destination marketing in the future. An example of a similar app, for those of you with iPhones, is Visit Bourke or Sydney Hills.

## Canberra Travel Show

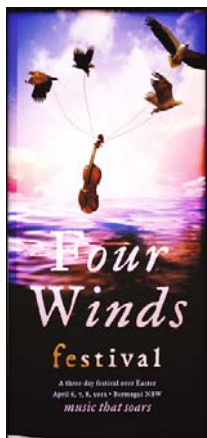
SCT attended the Canberra Times Leisure Travel show 21-23 October, this time sharing a stall with the NRMA Merimbula Beach Holiday Park! The overall numbers were slightly down on last year's show but we still received a great response and lots of inquiry into different types of accommodation and experience on the Sapphire Coast. SCT would like to thank John Wells from Eden Tourist Park & Zane Grey Tourist Park for helping out in manning the stall at the show.

## NSW Tourism Awards

Congratulations and Good Luck to Soul Quest Travel and Tathra Beach House Apartments who will be heading to Sydney for the NSW State Tourism Awards on 17 November. Sapphire Coast Tourism had 5 entries in the South Coast Awards and now 2 finalists in the NSW State Tourism Awards. Congratulations and best of luck to Soul Quest Travel and Tathra Beach House Apartments!



## Music that soars: Four Winds Festival 2012 is launched



Classical accordion meets recorder, didgeridoo meets cello, the 2012 Four Winds Festival next Easter (2012) will host a melodious and beguiling collision of musical cultures, as well as the superb sounds of Bach on two pianos and the voices of the Gondwana Chorale soaring above the amphitheatre. Announced recently by artistic director and recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey in Bermagui, Ms Lacey said the youthful voices of the Gondwana Chorale will open the Saturday program and will be the first artists to perform in the new permanent Sound Shell. Four Winds have commissioned artistic director of Black Arm Band, Lou Bennett, to write a new song for Gondwana.

“What you’ll hear over our Festival weekend is almost all exclusive to Four Winds. By joining us you’ll be present at multiple world premieres, you’ll discover new work, new artists, new instruments and new ensembles and hear music you know and love,” Ms Lacey said.

For more information <http://www.fourwinds.com.au/fest2012/welcome.htm>

## Visitor Economy Taskforce – Have your say

The Visitor Economy Taskforce was established recently by the NSW Government to develop a tourism and events strategy to double overnight visitor expenditure by 2020. The Taskforce is chaired by Russell Balding AO and its members include the Hon. Bruce Baird AM, John King OAM and Sandra Chipchase, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW. Read about the Taskforce and its terms of reference here [http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Visitor-Economy-Taskforce\\_p5060.aspx](http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Visitor-Economy-Taskforce_p5060.aspx)

The Visitor Economy Taskforce is now asking *individuals and organisations to have their say* to contribute to building the future for tourism and events in NSW. The Taskforce is inviting online comments through the NSW Government’s ‘Have your say’ website. The website can be used by individuals, industry participants, local government, organisations and associations. Additionally, workshop consultations will be held around the state. The closest workshops to the Sapphire Coast will be held in Kiama on 22/11 or Cooma 23/11. For more info and to RSVP to attend these workshops, please register at <http://haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au/iap-visitoreconomy>

## Register your business with Destination NSW!

The updated Destination NSW website has affected your Get Connected business listing. If you haven’t updated your listing since September this year – your listing may have **BEEN DELETED!** As a region we used to have over 180 businesses registered. At this point in time there are only 20 accommodations/attractions/events/hire/tour products listed for the whole of the Sapphire Coast...so a visitor searching on the Destination NSW website would be pretty disappointed with what we have to offer as a region.

This is dire straits for the whole industry and a very poor pre-visitor experience. You are missing out on free promotion and business! The visitnsw.com website receives over 7 million hits per year. **RE-REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS or JOIN UP FOR FREE NOW** at [http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Get\\_Connected\\_p582.aspx](http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Get_Connected_p582.aspx)

### TQUAL Accreditation Marketing Campaign

On behalf of the Tourism Quality Council of Australia, Tourism Australia will soon market TQUAL accreditation to Australian consumers. T-QUAL Accreditation is the Australian Government's partnership with quality tourism accreditation, rating and certification programs. Its logo – the TQUAL Tick – is a symbol of excellence that identifies quality tourism businesses and operators in Australia. TQUAL are providing tourism businesses with resources to ensure everyone can benefit from this campaign. The marketing campaign will include:



- A dedicated TQUAL micro site within the TripAdvisor Australia website that will showcase T-QUAL endorsed tourism businesses
- An advertising campaign across numerous Australian travel planning sites that will direct consumers to the TripAdvisor micro site
- Preferential listing on [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com) for TQUAL endorsed businesses that are part of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW)
- A supporting PR program that will highlight quality tourism experiences throughout Australia.

#### **How to get involved**

Operators must join, or be a member of, a TQUAL endorsed accreditation, rating or certification program. Once they are a member of a T-QUAL endorsed program, they must sign a sub-licence to allow them to use the TQUAL Tick in their marketing. In order to fully benefit from the marketing campaign, TQUAL endorsed operators must ensure they are listed on TripAdvisor (so that they are included in the TQUAL micro site), and the ATDW or Destination NSWs Get Connected program (to ensure they are preferentially listed on [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com)). For more information, visit <http://www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/industry/6302.aspx> and if you have any questions regarding the marketing of TQUAL accreditation, please contact Antonia Sherry on 02 9361 1900 [asherry@tourism.australia.com](mailto:asherry@tourism.australia.com) or Dawn Chamberlain [dchamberlain@tourism.australia.com](mailto:dchamberlain@tourism.australia.com)

### TQUAL Accreditation partners with TripAdvisor



As mentioned above, the TQUAL accreditation program has entered into a strategic, world-first partnership with TripAdvisor – the largest universal travel site, used by 32 million consumers globally and 1.8 million consumers domestically each month. This partnership makes further use of social media and will leverage consumers' growing use of online travel sites with a TQUAL micro site to be listed on TripAdvisor's Australia website. The site will combine customer reviews with TQUAL endorsement to promote quality tourism products. As detailed above, you'll need to:

1. Sign up to the TQUAL accreditation program <http://www.tourism.australia.com/en-au/industry/6302.aspx>
2. Get listed with Trip Advisor <http://www.tripadvisor.com.au/>
3. Get listed with either the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) [http://www.atdw.com.au/how\\_to\\_list.asp](http://www.atdw.com.au/how_to_list.asp) OR Destination NSWs Get Connected program [http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Get\\_Connected\\_p582.aspx](http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Get_Connected_p582.aspx)

We hope you find this newsletter and information of benefit to you and your business.

Kindest regards  
The SCT Team