

Central Deborah - Bendigo

REPRESENTATIONS TO FEDERAL PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION

Bendigo – Wednesday 7th July 1999

- Explain background of Central Deborah
- Highlight retail functions -two gift shops, café, café tram, underground function centre
- Describe effect of banning Sunday Trading for business such as Central Deborah -in peak periods >50 people employed, annual turnover of \$1.2 million, contributes around \$3-\$4 million into the local economy, primary market is Melbourne and Country Victoria, week-end trading the highest, closure on Sundays during the peak seasons due to employment nos >20 would have effectively closed the business
- Based on a sample survey in 1994 'walk-ins' to the business, representing approximately 45% (30,000 customers) of the business's market base, 15% were international visitors. In the last 5 years we estimate that this has risen to 20% (mainly Asian, European), with a noticeable increase in European visitors during this period. This is consistent with Tourism Victoria's trend analysis (1997 - 2001 Strategic Business Plan) which indicates that Scandinavians and Germans are most likely to travel outside Melbourne to regional Victoria. These visitors, who have a longer length of stay in the country, tend to travel to regional destinations.
- General information enquiries regarding other attractions, shopping options, etc, to our Tour Desk, from domestic and international visitors, indicate that the 'traditional' notion of Sunday being a day of rest, with retail services shut, is out of step with the general expectations of visitors.
- The traditional working week is disappearing. What we are finding in the industry is that work commitments, the need for stress relief and decreasing leisure time are contributing to a massive growth in the short break market. In Victoria short breaks account for 53% of nights, compared to 40% nationally. These short breaks increasingly are 1-5 day escapes, which may or may not include a week-end. There is a general expectation by these visitors that retail products and services are available.
- The VFR (Visiting Friends & Relatives) market is very important to our business, with many people coming from Melbourne and surrounding country areas for short or long stay visits to family and friends. Again there is a general expectation by these visitors that retail products and services are available.
- A major objective of Tourism Victoria's Domestic strategy is to encourage more visitors to stay longer in the State and tour regional areas such as Bendigo. For this objective to be met, in order for regions to maximise the benefits achieved from tourism growth, regional areas can not afford to 'turn the lights on or off' when they wish.

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