

From the Chair... Backpacker Conference a success!

The 2008 ATEC/BTAP Backpacker one-day conference in Newcastle was by all reports, including my own, a wonderful success, with over 90 delegates attending from around the country. For all those who missed out, a detailed review of the day is contained later on in this newsletter.

From the Chairman's point of view, the hot topics to come out of the conference and the ensuing BTAP committee meeting relate to EDMG, the WHV and TA's renewed focus on the Youth Market.

EMDG update

Despite the release of the Federal Budget there is still concern that the amount of funds available for distribution from the Export Market Development Grant scheme will be limited this year, and that the first round of payments may not exceed \$40,000, down from \$70,000 in previous years.

The EMDG scheme has been a cornerstone of the offshore marketing campaigns of many businesses, and anything that limits businesses in our sector from going offshore and spreading the good word is of concern to us all. The possible reduction in the grant would offset any gains made within the scheme with respect to 'new market opportunities'. It has been suggested that companies which are no longer eligible for the scheme after reaching their eight-year participation limit may once again be eligible under the scheme if the grant relates to new market opportunities.

BTAP fully supports ATEC with respect to the lobbying it is conducting on behalf of the entire tourism industry in regard to the EMDG scheme. In a first for an organisation of its type, ATEC is now eligible to apply for a grant under the EMDG scheme and BTAP will push strongly for ATEC to support the Backpacking Industry in some form or another with these funds. Stay tuned.

WHV update

There are many ideas and much discussion surrounding the labour issues which affect the entire country. There's the 'Pacific Island' solution, and even the 'imported Grey Nomads' solution recently floated by Queensland's Tourism Minister. These are all interesting ideas, but how will they affect the current successful WHV scheme?

BTAP has and will continue to lobby for regional hospitality and tourism to be included as part of the eligibility criteria for a second-year WHV. However in light of comments emerging from the Backpacker Conference, and from STA's CEO Peter Liney (who funnily-enough spoke at ATEC's Symposium and not at the Backpacker Conference), let's just get on with it and push for a two-year WHV, with no useless restrictions. If you would like to view Peter Liney's presentation, please download it here.

Youth Market update

It was great to hear Tourism Australia's Leigh Sorenson speak at the conference and to hear him say that the while the youth segment was always a key part of TA's 'Experience Seeker' marketing, like all of us it has realised that the youth segment cannot be reached with traditional marketing methods. Leigh appraised us all of TA's revitalised marketing approach to the youth segment, using Myspace and all the Web 2.0 strategies that we know have our customers attention these days.

If you would like Leigh's full presentation, please contact Patrick Moran at pmoran@tourism.australia.com.

BTAP funding

With funding secure until the AGM in November,



In the loop

- » **Tourism Australia**
- » **Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism**
- » **UN World Tourism Organisation**
- » **PATA**
- » **CRC for Sustainable Tourism**

Contact us

Tower Two, Level 18,
201 Sussex Street,
Darling Park, Sydney
NSW 2000
02 8262 5500

www.atec.net.au

BTAP's goal of becoming self-funded beyond 2008 is well underway. I would once again like to thank LeapFrog Travel Marketing's Matt Randall and all the suppliers who contributed goods or services to Matt's auction which raised over \$8000 earlier this year.

Respect should also go to BOA NSW for the outstanding leadership shown in sponsoring the Newcastle Backpacker Mini Conference to the tune of \$8000. Thanks must also go to Wake Up and Margaret Millet for their generous support of BTAP and the industry in general over many years. On behalf of BTAP and the entire backpacker industry thank you for your material support, not just words.

The Panel is now well on its way to self-sufficiency, with funds coming in from the Newcastle Conference itself as well as other fundraising initiatives coming up this year - namely the ABIC Ball. I call on each state backpacking association to consider how it may be able to contribute to stronger national representation for your industry. If we want to argue for a two-year WHV with no restrictions, a state-based organisation just won't cut it. We need a unified national voice.

Next BTAP meeting

The next BTAP meeting is in Northbridge, Perth on June 16, after which a joint Backpacking WA/BTAP industry presentation will be held followed by a networking function. Personally, I am really looking forward to this event and to meeting all of our colleagues in WA. It's the first time I can recall such a unified event being held in Perth and really hope to see as many people there as possible.

ATE is also being held in Perth that week, and whilst there may have been a bit of a decline in backpacker product and backpacker agents at ATE, BTAP is working with TA to try and identify ways of revitalising the event with respect to the budget/youth/FIT market

So on the back of a successful backpacker mini-conference in Newcastle, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the

event - in particular Jennifer Woodbridge (ATEC) and Peter Ovenden (Global Gossip) and hope that next years Backpacker Conference in Darwin is even better - bring it on!

Peter Burke

EMDG and the Budget

The Federal Government announced in its 2008 Budget that Export Market Development Grants (EMDGs) would be funded to an additional \$50 million for the 2009/2010 year. However there was no mention of any additional funding for 2006/2007 or 2007/2008 EMDG applications.

The additional funding relates to applications for the 2008/2009 year that will be paid by Austrade in the 2009/2010 year. The Government announced that the \$50 million funding injection will bring the total amount available to exporters under the EMDG Scheme to \$190 million in the 2009/2010 financial year.

Other EMDG changes include increasing the maximum grant from \$150,000 to \$200,000, allowing patent expenses, lifting the maximum turnover to \$50 million, cutting the minimum expenditure threshold from \$15,000 to \$10,000, extending the number of grants payable per applicant from 7 to 8, and extend the list of services that are eligible.

Facts, figures, research and stats

State Tourism Organisations:

Each of the STOs produce valuable insights into the backpacker/youth and adventure market market. To find out what's happening in your state and to assist you with your business and marketing activities, visit your STOs corporate website:

NT - www.tourismnt.com.au/research

QLD - www.tq.com.au/research

SA - www.tourism.sa.gov.au/publication



In the loop

- » Tourism Australia
- » Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- » UN World Tourism Organisation
- » PATA
- » CRC for Sustainable Tourism

Contact us

Tower Two, Level 18,
201 Sussex Street,
Darling Park, Sydney

NSW 2000

02 8262 5500

www.atec.net.au

WA -

[www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Research and Statistics](http://www.tourism.wa.gov.au/Research_and_Statistics)

NSW -

[http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Facts And Figures](http://corporate.tourism.nsw.gov.au/Facts_And_Figures)

TAS -

www.tourismtasmania.com.au/research

www.tams.act.gov.au/play/tourism/research

VIC - www.tourism.vic.gov.au/facts-and-figures

TA - www.tra.australia.com

WHM Statistics

WHM visa grants for program year 2006-07 (1 July - 30 June)

1st WHM: 126,822

2nd WHM: 7790

Total: 134,612

WHM visa grants for program year 2007-08 (1 July - 31 March)

1st WHM: 106,791

2nd WHM: 8143

Total: 114,934

Percentage increase in comparison with the same period of the last program year cycle (1 July - 31 March)

1st WHM: 9.25%

2nd WHM: 49.80%

Total number of 2nd WHM visas granted since the 1 November 2005 (the initiative's commencement): 18,623

Update on 400-series visas

The Department of Immigration held a meeting for interested parties about the 400 series of visas - those for any form of temporary working visa - in Canberra on May 8. There was a good roll up with about 30 organisations being represented. These varied from church organisations, welfare groups and refugee-lobby groups right through the the

likes of CCUSA, IEP, IAEA and internship organisations. These visas deal with paid and unpaid work, visiting doctors, clergymen, dancers, entertainers and for visiting sportsmen and women for competitions. Most of the internships and welfare-type workers are unpaid.

The Department of Immigration officials came up with some interesting facts, figures and information:

* Super Yacht crews will have their own visa in future.

* The test for the Graduate Skilled Visa will be changed from 48 months to 18 months experience.

* The construction industry will get the chance to have a second Working Holiday Visa from 1 July.

* Industry Outreach officers are available to advise and help on visa matters - particularly the 457.

* 180,000 Working Holiday visas will be issued this year and more than 185,000 settled migrants.

* 41% of all those wanting a second working holiday visa worked in Queensland, - the next best were 20% in Victoria and WA.

* Working Holiday makers created 8,000 jobs and worth a \$1.3 billion annually.

* Since 31 October 1294 Work and Holiday Visas have been issued to US citizens - 12 have been issued to Australians to go to the USA on the reciprocal J1 visa. There will be a further relaxing of conditions for US citizens coming to Australia - and a completed Year 12 will be required in future. The Youth from USA 416 Visa will be retained because the 462 Visa is only for a short time and will be reviewed.

* Both Canada and the UK are changing their visa systems shortly - UK will be called the Youth Mobility Scheme.

* It is most unlikely to move the age upwards from 30 for these Youth Visas. Someone suggested a "Sea change Visa" for older workers.

* A Visa Wizard is being produced to help people applying on line through the visa 'jungle'.

* There is no discouragement for young people coming in on Temporary Work visas to apply to convert to other visas - such as the 457.

* The Tax Office will be able to take in direct all Super payments from Working Holiday visa people and will pay it out direct after the worker has left the country. If it has not been claimed within five years it will go into Tax Office coffers.



In the loop

- » Tourism Australia
- » Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- » UN World Tourism Organisation
- » PATA
- » CRC for Sustainable Tourism

Contact us

Tower Two, Level 18,

201 Sussex Street,

Darling Park, Sydney

NSW 2000

02 8262 5500

www.atec.net.au

If the worker subsequently returns to Australia on a permanent work basis they will be able to reclaim Super lost in this way.
* There were a number of other initiatives being discussed which related solely to the 416 Special Programme Youth Exchange visas and these will be detailed in the minutes from the meeting which will come out in the next few days. I can give further information to anyone interested.
* Visitoz has now been granted 100 Paid Internships per year for agricultural workers from Southern Africa, South America and (non WHV) Europe.

Joanna Burnet
Visitoz
T: +61 (0)7 4168 6185
F: +61 (0)7 4168 6126

www.visitoz.org

Upcoming events

The World Youth & Student Travel Conference (WYSTC) - Brooklyn, New York, USA 13 – 17 September 2008.

The World Youth and Student Travel Conference is the must-attend trade event for key stakeholders and organisations in youth, student and educational travel. Providing the diverse industries that serve today's young travellers and students with a global meeting point to come together, across sector and conduct business.

Traditionally, the Australian contingent has been strong at the event and this year we have no doubt Australia will once again make a huge impression. WYSTC is offering an earlybird special if you book before 20 May. For further information regarding the event, please visit www.wystc.org.

Korean WHM Fair - 25 & 26 October 2008, Seoul, Korea.

This event is organised with the support of Australian Education International, Department of

Immigration and Citizenship, Queensland Government Trade and Investment Office, Western Australia State Government Office, Tourism Australia, and various state government tourism representatives in Korea. Interested? Visit www.austrade.gov.au/KoreaWHM08 or contact your STO.

Adventure & Backpacker Industry Conference – 13 November 2008, Sydney

For more information, please visit www.aabic.com.au

Tourism Awards

The 2008 tourism awards for excellence are now open in each of the states and territories. If you own or work for an organisation you believe is one of the best in your state, BTAP encourages you to enter. There are over 27 categories, including Backpacker Accommodation, Tour & Transport Operator, Attractions, Festivals & Events, New Tourism Development and Adventure Tourism.



In the loop

- » Tourism Australia
- » Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- » UN World Tourism Organisation
- » PATA
- » CRC for Sustainable Tourism

Contact us

Tower Two, Level 18,
201 Sussex Street,
Darling Park, Sydney

NSW 2000

02 8262 5500

www.atec.net.au

BTAP contacts

Peter Burke, Traveller's Autoban - BTAP
Chairperson
Email: pb@travellers-autobam.com.au

Peter Oviden, Global Gossip - BTAP Vice
Chairperson
Email: povenden@globalgossip.net

Meg Allen, Nomads World
Email: meg@nomadsworld.com.au

Mike Barrow, The Word Australia
Email: mike@thewordaustralia.com.au

Joanna Burnet, Adventure Marketing
Email: joannaburnet@bigpond.com

Brett Claxton, Calypso Backpackers Resort
Email: clacko@mac.com

Greg Cole, Adventure Tours Australia
Email: gcole@adventuretours.com.au

Sallie Gregory, Beaches Backpackers, Hervey
Bay
Email: sallieg@beaches.com.au

Julian Ledger, YHA NSW
Email: julianl@yhansw.org.au

Karen Fitzgerald, Tourism NT
Email: Karen.fitzgerald@tourism.nt.gov.au

Jennifer Woodbridge, ATEC - Industry
Development Manager (BTAP) Email:
jennifer.woodbridge@atec.net.au

Have your say

Do you have an issue of national interest to the backpacking community that you would like BTAP to address? If so, contact your state backpacking industry association to raise at the next panel meeting. Stay up-to-date with the latest backpacker industry news by subscribing to future issues of The BITE. If you haven't already subscribed and would like to receive regular updates, forward your details to: thebite@atec.net.au



In the loop

- » Tourism Australia
- » Dept of Resources, Energy and Tourism
- » UN World Tourism Organisation
- » PATA
- » CRC for Sustainable Tourism

Contact us

Tower Two, Level 18,
201 Sussex Street,
Darling Park, Sydney
NSW 2000
02 8262 5500

www.atec.net.au