

Booking and Information Sources

Visitors to Regional Victoria - December 2008



This fact sheet provides a summary of the findings from the Booking and Information Sources study conducted in December 2008 by the Regional Research Reference Group in conjunction with Tourism Victoria. The study aims to identify the information sources used and booking method at each travel stage for visitors to Regional Victoria.

BOOKING AND INFORMATION SOURCES RESEARCH

- Survey respondents were visitors to a regional Victoria destination(s) in the last 12 months for leisure. Interstate visitors that were surveyed stayed for an average of 10.9 nights on this trip, while intrastate visitors stayed an average of 4.5 nights.

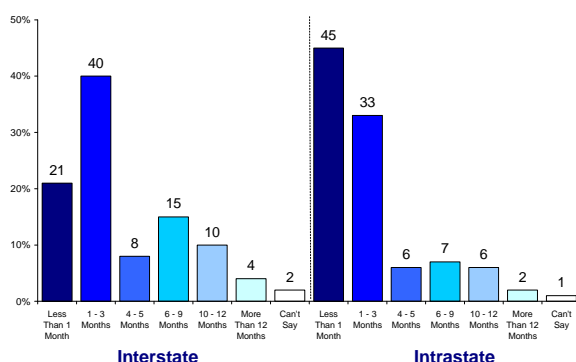
Note: Not all nights necessarily spent in regional Victoria. Respondents could have spent nights in Melbourne or other states during this trip.

Decision to Visit Destination

- The most common source used by interstate and intrastate visitors in deciding to visit their destination/s was word of mouth or recommended by someone you know (34% for both). Internet was the next most common source mentioned (28% interstate; 26% intrastate).
- Of those visitors who used the internet, the most popular website used by interstate visitors was the visitvictoria.com* website (31%), while for intrastate visitors search engines were highest in use (39%). 13% of intrastate visitors used the visitvictoria.com* website.

Types of Websites	Interstate	Intrastate
visitvictoria.com*	31%	13%
Search Engines	21%	39%
Airline	15%	-
Accommodation	14%	17%
Destination	12%	12%
Mapping Sites	10%	2%
Third Party (eg. Webjet)	10%	2%
Attraction	6%	4%

- Interstate visitors are making their travel decisions and beginning planning earlier than intrastate visitors. The majority of interstate visitors made the decision within 3 months or less prior to departure (61%), while 45% of intrastate visitors decided to travel within the month.



Prior to Arrival at Destination - Planning

- In planning their trip, more visitors used the internet than any other source (40% for both interstate and intrastate). This was followed by word of mouth or recommended by someone you know (33% interstate; 30% intrastate). Only 11% of interstate and 10% of intrastate visitors used printed brochures to plan their trip.
- The websites used by interstate and intrastate visitors to plan their trip differed. Interstate visitors used the visitvictoria.com* website (22%), airline websites (20%) and search engines (19%). In contrast, intrastate visitors used search engines (38%), accommodation (24%) and destination websites (17%).

Types of Websites	Interstate	Intrastate
visitvictoria.com*	22%	16%
Airline	20%	-
Search Engines	19%	38%
Accommodation	17%	24%
Destination	11%	17%
Third Party (eg. Webjet)	10%	12%
Mapping Sites	10%	8%

- The most important information[^] in planning their trip was information on accommodation (21% interstate; 36% intrastate), and attractions (18% and 22%).

Prior to Arrival at Destination - Booking

- Accommodation was pre-booked by 79% of intrastate visitors, with the accommodation provider the most popular source used to book (85%).
- Naturally, the interstate visitor tended to pre-book more elements of their travel due to distance and a longer length of trip. The most common items pre-booked included accommodation (47%), transport to the destination (32%) and event, festival, concert or theatre tickets (15%). Sources used to book were accommodation providers (48%), airlines (25%) and third party internet sites (16%).
- Although accommodation seems low for the interstate market compared to intrastate, this would

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be influenced by the high proportion of those travelling primarily to visit friends and relatives (45%).

- Of all visitors (interstate or intrastate) who used the internet to book their trip, 39% of visitors used an accommodation website and 30% used an airline website.
- The majority of interstate visitors who pre-booked did so in less than 3 months before their trip - 43% between 1-3 months and 39% less than one month before their trip. 56% of intrastate visitors booked less than one month prior to departure.
- 50% of interstate visitors made their travel and accommodation bookings over the internet, and 44% booked via telephone.
- In contrast, 62% of intrastate visitors made their booking via telephone, and 28% via the internet. Interestingly, in general, the preferred method of booking travel for the intrastate market was 45% telephone and 41% internet – an almost equal split.

During Trip - Planning

- During their trip, both interstate and intrastate visitors used four main sources of information: the Visitor Information Centre (VIC), suggestions by a local person, and printed brochures and maps to find out more about their destination/s.

Sources Used During Trip	Interstate	Intrastate
Visitor Information Centre	33%	31%
Local Person	32%	30%
Printed Brochure	30%	35%
Maps	19%	19%

- The most important information during their trip was information on attractions (36% interstate; 40% intrastate), restaurants (27% and 36%), shopping (19% and 18%) and events (18% and 17%). Maps and travel routes were also very important (45% and 44%) while travelling.
- Nearly all interstate and intrastate visitors were either very satisfied (57% interstate; 48% intrastate) or satisfied (38% and 44%) with the information available during their trip.

During Trip - Booking

- Almost half of interstate and intrastate visitors did not make any bookings while on their trip (45% and 49%, respectively). The most common service or

facility booked during the trip was restaurants (26% and 35%).

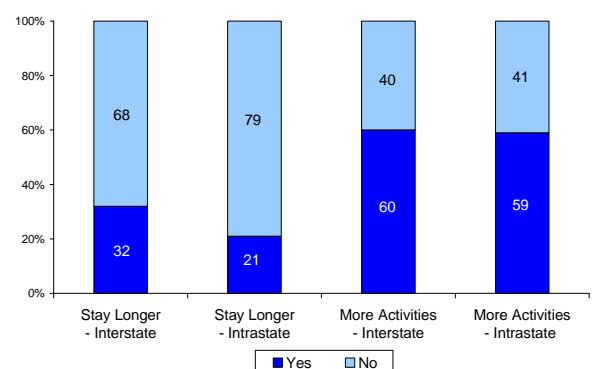
- For the interstate market, some booked accommodation while travelling (19%) which is not surprising given the longer length of stay (86% took a trip of 3 or more nights) and the greater likelihood of visiting multiple destinations on their trip.

Booked During Trip	Interstate	Intrastate
No Bookings At Destination	45%	49%
Restaurant	26%	35%
Accommodation	19%	11%
Activity	10%	11%
Transport At The Destination	9%	1%
Tour	7%	3%
Event/ Festival/ Concert / Theatre	5%	4%
Other	1%	1%

- These bookings tend to be made directly with the restaurant or accommodation provider, and either in person or over the phone.

Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

- 46% of interstate and 41% of intrastate visitors contacted the VIC either before or after they arrived at their destination. Nearly all contact with the VIC was made in person (87%), suggesting that contact was more likely to be at the destination.
- The majority of visitors who contacted the VIC were very satisfied with their experience (75% interstate and 69% intrastate).
- 60% of interstate and 59% of intrastate visitors were encouraged to do more activities as a result of their interaction with the VIC. Additionally, 32% of interstate and 21% of intrastate visitors were encouraged to stay longer than originally planned while visiting regional Victoria.



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- The main purpose for using the VIC was for general information on the region/area. This was followed by 'to get maps or directions' and 'to find out about attractions'.

Main Purpose	Interstate	Intrastate
General Information	49%	53%
Map/ Directions	21%	17%
Attractions	12%	9%

Considerations for Industry

- Product and service quality within regions is essential in order to stimulate positive word-of-mouth. Consideration should also be given to how electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) can best be utilised (social websites, online reviews, blogs, etc).
- With use of the internet in trip planning, it is important that product and destination content is kept current and updated on relevant sites. It is also important that operators have a simple booking method for potential visitors in order to convert online consumers from 'observers' to 'purchasers'. This is of particular importance for accommodation providers.
- Booking by telephone continues to be a preferred method, both prior to arrival (accommodation in particular) and at the destination (restaurants). In order to capitalise on this booking method, operators should consider appropriate diversions (ie. mobile, voicemail) outside of opening hours.
- Printed collateral content should provide a balance of both information and commercial advertising, dependent on where it is to be distributed.
- With collateral distributed to interstate markets, regions may wish to consider the level of accommodation content given the preferred use of the internet to obtain this information prior to visitor arrival.
- Regions should have a simple and clear map available for visitors – it is suggested that these are accessible through the internet and at the destination.
- Search engine optimisation and marketing should be considered due to the importance of online information sources.
- The timing of tactical campaigns should consider the different lead times of interstate and intrastate visitors in their decision to choose and book a trip.
- Updated information on attractions and events within regional Victoria should be clearly visible and

accessible to visitors at VICs in order to encourage more activity and longer length of stay. Within regions, it is suggested that promotion of events extends to future months in order to assist in repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth. Promotion of activities and events should be consistent with information available on destination websites for visitor use and planning prior to arrival.

Notes:

* visitvictoria.com or the State / Government website is the pre-coded variable used for all website specific questions.

^ Prompted multiple response question.

Sample Size/ Respondents: Interstate visitors n=199; Intrastate visitors n=192.

Source: **Booking and Information Sources Research** December 2008, Roy Morgan Research on behalf of Tourism Victoria.