

Inner Melbourne Action Plan

Briefing Report

Strategy 11.1 Promote the inner Melbourne region as a tourism destination

2013-14 Tourism Working Group Annual Report

Purpose

1. To update the IMAP Implementation Committee on the annual activity of the IMAP Tourism Working Group (TWG) in 2013-14.

Background

2. 2013-14 was the first year of the IMAP Tourism Working Group Strategic Plan 2013-16
3. The purpose of the IMAP TWG throughout the life of the Strategic Plan is to work collaboratively to:
 - Influence visitors and locals to choose Inner Melbourne as a place to visit, explore and return; and
 - Make it easy for visitors and locals to explore and engage with Inner Melbourne.

Discussion

4. The following summarises the work of the IMAP TWG in 2013-14:

The Visitor Journey

Action: Understand and articulate where the visitor points are and what information to deliver

Status: Commenced

In 2013, the City of Melbourne undertook research into the visitor journey, to better understand how visitors seek out and utilise information to plan their travel. The IMAP TWG are currently in the process of reviewing this research to better understand at what points along the visitor journey, they can have the greatest influence on encouraging visitors to spend time in inner Melbourne. Once the key points in the visitor journey are identified the group will then scope the type of information that needs to be provided to visitors and how this can be best provided through either existing or new channels/partnerships.

Action: Develop digital version of Inner Melbourne map for online and/or mobile use.

Status: Under review

Further work needs to be done on determining what a digital map would look like, how it would work and more importantly who the user would be and how they would use it. A new digital “slippy” version is being developed for inclusion on websites. Usage of this application of the map will be tracked and its effectiveness reviewed after twelve months usage.

Action: Investigate options to move to a more sustainable model for producing and distributing the printed map

Status: Completed

The IMAP TWG acknowledges the huge success of the Inner Melbourne Map brochure and recognises that it is an asset for both the Melbourne Tourism industry and visitors to Melbourne.

Despite the success, the Inner Melbourne Map brochure in its current form is expensive to maintain, print and distribute. Since 2006, the IMAP TWG has spent over \$400,000 on administering, managing and distributing the map. This is an average spend of \$50,000 per annum (excluding Officer time), with that figure increasing with the printing of more and more maps.

Over the past 12 months, the IMAP TWG has explored the option of partnering with Destination Melbourne, to produce one Melbourne map brochure, which meets the needs of visitors, and utilises resources more effectively.

Destination Melbourne currently produces the Melbourne Official Visitor Map (OVM) brochure, which is a similar product to the Inner Melbourne Map brochure. It is distributed through many of the same channels that the Inner Melbourne Map brochure is, which results in a significant duplication of resources.

To better understand how visitors and the Melbourne tourism industry utilise the two maps, the IMAP TWG and Destination Melbourne partnered to undertake qualitative research into the two map brochures to address the below objectives:

- Identify what the visitor requirements of a printed map are;
- Identify how the map offering can be enhanced for visitors (look/feel/size/content);
- Identify if the two maps realistically can merge into one or continue to be two separate maps;
- Identify if visitor requirements are met by the current maps;
- Identify what characteristics of a map make a visitor choose one map over another.

Nitty Gritty were engaged to undertake the research and presented the findings in March this year. It was clear from the findings that both maps were highly regarded and utilised by visitors and the tourism industry. It was also evident that the industry and visitors would welcome one Melbourne map, provided that supply can meet the demand.

Following the presentation of the research results, representatives from both the IMAP TWG and Destination Melbourne met to commence negotiations for the establishment of a partnership between both parties. Such a partnership would result in the following outcomes:

- The OVM brochure undergoing a review so it will better meet the needs of visitors;
- The incorporation of the Inner Melbourne map into the OVM;
- IMAP agreeing to discontinue the printing of the Inner Melbourne Map;
- IMAP agreeing to fund Destination Melbourne to increase the print run of the OVM from 500,000 to 1 million copies per annum for a fee of \$45,000 per annum (subject to CPI increase); and
- Consolidation of distribution channels.

A partnership with Destination Melbourne would provide a great outcome for the Melbourne visitor industry, whilst also enabling the IMAP TWG to free up resources for the delivery of other projects.

With approval from the IMAP Implementation Committee, the IMAP Councils and Destination Melbourne will enter into a two year funding arrangement that will allow for the smooth transition and communication of changes to the Melbourne tourism industry.

In addition to the partnership with Destination Melbourne, the IMAP TWG will continue to make available A3 and A4 versions of the Inner Melbourne Map for licence to tourism, hospitality and transport providers, thereby providing tourism and hospitality organisations, the opportunity to incorporate the Inner Melbourne map into their own publications.

SkyBus Campaign

Action: Evaluate SkyBus promotion program and determine next steps

Status: Completed

A full four-season campaign showcasing Inner Melbourne to passengers arriving at Melbourne Airport and travelling by SkyBus to the city was run on the SkyBus Television program on inbound services throughout 2012-13. The campaign concluded in August 2013 after which time, it was reviewed and evaluated.

The findings from the evaluation were reported to the IMAP Committee on 29 November 2013.

Partnership Development

Action: Develop a partnership with State's peak tourism body

Status: Completed

The IMAP TWG entered into a partnership agreement with the Victoria Tourism Industry Council (VTIC). Benefits included membership of peak committees, advocacy and policy development work, articles in the VTIC Tourism Excellence magazine, and opportunities to attend forums and conferences. The outcome of the first year agreement is being reviewed prior to a decision to enter into another agreement.

Connectivity & Amenity

Action: Investigate the feasibility of an Inner Melbourne tourist bus

Status: Under way

There is the potential to create additional connectivity and a seamless visitor experience of inner Melbourne through working with Melbourne City Sightseeing – the hop-on hop-off tourist bus operator.

Several routes within the City of Melbourne were confirmed as ongoing after successful trial periods. A new route was then developed to connect the CBD routes with a new City of Port Phillip route.

Each IMAP Council has been asked to identify key visitor attractions they wish to incorporate into a new or the expansion of a currently offered route. The operator has provided logistical considerations for discussion within each Council. Dependant on the outcome of these internal discussions the operator is open to working with the IMAP TWG to expand/create new routes in line with the visitor demand for their offering and what is feasible in each Council area.

Review IMAP TWG Strategic Plan 2013 - 16

Action: Proposal to develop a digital destination marketing and promotion platform for Inner Melbourne

Status: Pending

Following the work that has been completed to move production of the Inner Melbourne Map to Destination Melbourne and in line with the current planning and review of IMAP, the IMAP TWG believes that resources and effort should be directed at developing a proposal to create a digital platform to promote Inner Melbourne as a single tourist destination. This platform would most likely be a website but the scope of the project would also include social media options, as targeted social media can significantly increase visibility of and visitation to the website.

Options will include having the platform hosted by a strategic partner or hosting the platform on the IMAP(or its own) website.

Traditionally IMAP Councils have either promoted Inner Melbourne through their corporate websites, with varying effort and success or through the Tourism Victoria website. Tourism Victoria is focussed on promoting regional Victoria and this focus is unlikely to change in the short to medium term.

A review of the current Strategic Plan will take place in October so that the TWG can better focus on this proposal.

Recommendation

5. That the IMAP Implementation Committee notes the continuing work of the IMAP Tourism Working Group.