



21st November 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

TOURISM PIONEER ACKNOWLEDGED AT TOURISM AWARDS

Tourism pioneer Andrew Dwyer has been awarded the highest possible individual accolade at the Melbourne Airport 2006 Victorian Tourism Awards.

He has won the Qantas Award for an Outstanding Contribution by an Individual.

The prestigious Awards salute the tourism industry's leading operators, businesses and individuals.

Owner-manager of Diamantina Touring Company since 1987, Andrew Dwyer has worked tirelessly over the years to develop Victoria's tourism industry.

His contribution to tourism in Victoria includes the foundation of the Victorian Tourism Operators Association, the establishment of a tourism operators' public liability scheme, a tour operators licence framework for public land access, and a framework for a small business accreditation scheme.

Nicholas Hunt, Chief Executive, Tourism Alliance Victoria, said: "It would be fair to say that without Andrew Dwyer, the Victorian Tourism Industry would not have the same level of professionalism, and national and international respect it enjoys today."

"Few individuals can claim the string of firsts through personal involvement in the areas of public land access, accreditation, insurance support, and the establishment of VTOA which has made an indelible footprint on the Victorian tourism industry," he added.

"As a small business operator, he seized the initiative to begin to develop a much-needed industry body. His energy has helped to create many different initiatives and campaigns, from Team Victoria, through to highlighting the importance of product/experience," said Mr Hunt.

"Andrew has changed the face and direction of the tourism industry in this State. His outstanding contribution as a leader and pioneer has been acknowledged by the whole industry," he added.

These achievements have been accomplished over the past 19 years, during which time Andrew Dwyer, together with his wife Jane, have built Diamantina Touring into Australia's award-winning premier remote outback touring company. Diamantina Touring Company provides 4WD tours, bushwalking, boat trips, Aboriginal cross cultural tours, fishing, snorkelling, wildlife viewing, archaeology and bush tucker. Tourism Minister John Pandazopoulos congratulated Andrew Dwyer for his achievement.

"The awards process is not an easy one, nor is it meant to be," Mr Pandazopoulos said. "The Awards recognise people striving for excellence – it's not about being first past the post."

As a Victorian Tourism Awards-winner, Andrew Dwyer is now automatically entered into the 2006 Australian Tourism Awards to be held in Sydney in February.

Tourism Alliance Victoria represents over 3,000 tourism businesses in Victoria. It advocates for and supports the development of a professional and sustainable tourism industry across Victoria.

Media contact:

Nicholas Hunt, Chief Executive, Tourism Alliance Victoria
Telephone: (03) 9650 8399 mob 0407 861 967
Andrew Dwyer 03 5777 0681

Further background on Andrew Dwyer

Andrew has provided a great service to the tourism industry since 1987, giving his time in the following roles:

- 1987 Building a specialist business celebrating the best experiences within remote areas of Victoria and Australia.
- 1987 founding member of the Alpine Tourism Operators Association.
- 1988 Chair of the working group to explore the future of adventure tourism.
- 1989 Inaugural President of VTOA
- 1989 – 1996 President of VTOA.
- 1989 – 1992 Manager of VTOA

Outside of the VTOA environment Andrew invested his energies in promoting the Victorian Industry to trade shows in Asia, Europe and the U.S. This was the beginning of "Team Victoria". The approach that identified it was Australia first, Victoria second before moving the interest into product or specific experiences.

As an active industry leader, Andrew's input was sought by the Victorian Tourism Commission, particularly in assisting with pioneering work he undertook in marketing Victoria into the German market.