

## **Policy on Road Signage of Tourist Attractions**

### **Context**

The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 requires that the construction, maintenance and operation of roads is carried out in a way that promotes, within overall transport objectives, the safe transport of people and goods (see section 9(b)(ii)).

The tourism industry in Queensland, and tourism peak bodies, believe that tourism signage on State-controlled roads is fundamental to the success of tourism businesses and the growth and sustenance of the very competitive tourism industry.

Traffic signs are an essential part of the road traffic system, and are provided to aid in the safe and orderly movement of traffic. The Department of Main Roads provides regulatory, warning, and guide or direction signage throughout the entire State-controlled road network to assist motorists.

Road signage of tourist attractions is limited to white-on-brown signs. The signage is not intended as advertising for commercial businesses, but rather as a guide for safe and efficient travel by tourists seeking particular destinations or areas of interest. The destinations might be single or grouped commercial businesses (e.g. wineries) or non-commercial attractions (e.g. natural rock formations). It is generally accepted that tourists form a distinct category of motorists who tend to be non-local and usually unfamiliar with the local road network.

Over time, road signs, including tourism road signs, have proliferated on parts of the road network. Where this has happened, particularly in built-up areas along heavily trafficked sections of road, the benefits of road signage have often been reduced, causing potentially hazardous conditions and visual pollution. This issue is often further accentuated by the large number of requests for signage on limited and already crowded roadside space.

Tourism Queensland and the Department of State Development recognise that tourism provides very significant economic and social benefits to Queensland. Further, road transport accounts for the movement of approximately 90% of all tourists.

It is therefore important that the Department of Main Roads' policy on road signage on tourist attractions allows for the most favourable treatment for tourism signage consistent with the overriding requirements of safety of all road users and avoidance of visual pollution from proliferation.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that, for signage to be effective, it needs to be incorporated within, and add value to, the total visitor information network.

### **Policy Objective**

To ensure that the establishment and existence of road signage of tourist attractions on State-controlled roads are consistent with road safety and other road and traffic objectives, and provide effective guidance in directing tourists and visitors to tourist facilities.

### **Policy Statement**

Road signage of tourist attractions within the boundaries of State-controlled roads will be permitted provided Main Roads is satisfied that:

- road safety is not adversely affected;
- signage supports state, regional, and local tourism development plans and associated promotional strategies;
- signage directs tourists and visitors to places of appropriate tourist merit;
- the number of signs is controlled to acceptable limits.

### **Rationale**

The stated objective of the Department's Road Network Strategy is to improve economic, trade and regional development, whilst ensuring adequate levels of safety and community access to the road network, and compliance with environmental policies at all levels of Government.

It is appropriate that the Department of Main Roads manages the road network in a way that enhances the tourist industry potential, since:

- tourism is a major industry in Queensland;
- tourism provides very significant employment opportunities, particularly throughout regional Queensland;
- approximately 90% of tourists use the road system to reach their tourist destinations.

It is recognised that the value of road signage of tourist attractions, to the tourism industry, may be significant and that there is a widespread belief in the tourism industry that road signage of tourist attractions will lead to greater patronage. Because of this, requests will often exceed the capacity to allow road signage of tourist attractions and thus it may be necessary to rely on industry representatives to assist the Department in prioritising applications and to advise on the tourism-related merits of applications.

The formation of DTSCs is seen as an appropriate way to ensure that the District Director can gain informed and unbiased advice on the tourism aspects of applications for signage and advice on alternative options to individual road signage to tourist attractions. Representation on the committee from the tourism industry is seen as essential, together with representatives from Local Government, RACQ, Police and Main Roads.

Particularly in areas with numerous requests for road signage of tourist attractions, it is considered that greater benefits will be gained by both the tourism industry and the Department, if priority is given to signage that complements other marketing initiatives, rather than to signage that is not supported by other measures.

For this reason, it is a requirement that an integrated approach be adopted, especially in such areas. This integrated approach is to be achieved by Road System Management Division while liaising centrally with statewide bodies such as Tourism Queensland, RACQ and Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), to ensure that an appropriate total information network is implemented for tourism in Queensland.

## **References**

- Transport Infrastructure Act (1994)
  - Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Queensland)
  - Road Signs - Specifications AS1743 of 1992
  - Road Direction Signage Policy
  - Guideline for establishing District Tourism Signage Committee
  - Traffic Engineering Manual
  - Procedure for Road Signage of Tourist Attractions (attached)
  - Guidelines for Consideration of Applications for Road Signage of Tourist Attractions (attached)
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*Effective Date: /08/99*

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR ROAD SIGNAGE OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS**

### **FOR REVIEW OF ROAD AND TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

Consideration of the acceptability, or otherwise, of applications from the point of view of road and traffic considerations, should take the following into account:

#### ***(i) General***

The presence of road signage of tourist attractions is not to detract from the effectiveness of other road signage.

#### ***(ii) Proliferation***

Proliferation is generally controlled by the requirement to limit signage to five sign messages at any given location. That is, at any location, the maximum number of destination messages, including both "normal" road direction destinations and tourism destinations, is five. When requests exceed this limit, consideration is to be given to using generic symbol type signs to consolidate messages. Priority should be given to signage for major tourist attractions, and if necessary, consideration should be given to replacing or combining existing messages. In such instances, negotiations should take place with any tourist establishments whose existing signage could be affected, before agreeing to any change to existing signage to accommodate further signage. Since it is the new applicant whom wants to change the status quo, it could reasonably be expected that the applicant would be responsible for negotiations with tourism operators whose existing signs would be affected.

#### ***(iii) Sign Information***

The legend to be included on any tourism road sign may include the operating name or logo of the facility. Further legend would generally not be appropriate, as the aim of the road signage for tourist attractions is to direct or guide tourists to their tourism destination, not to attract tourists.

Signs are to be removed or covered during closure if the establishment does not operate normal hours for the region.

#### ***(iv) Distance Limits***

Usually approval of road signage of tourist attractions would be limited to establishments within approximately ten kilometers of the proposed sign. However, it is recognised that there may be justification for a relaxation to this general limit, such as in remote localities where driving greater distances is more readily accepted, or where tourism development is minor and proliferation is low. Where tourism establishments are a considerable distance from the state-controlled road, the distance to the establishment should be clearly signed.

**(v) Themed Routes and Tourist Drives**

Refer to “Guidelines for Establishing Themed Routes in Queensland”

**(vi) Visitor Radio**

Visitor radio signage is not permitted on motorways.

**FOR CONSIDERATION OF TOURISM MERIT**

Tourism merit relates to a subjective assessment which takes into account the regional context and value of a tourist facility. The concept focuses on the attributes of a facility, or destination from a tourism perspective, and does not discriminate on the basis of the size of the facility or whether it is commercial or non-commercial. Consideration of tourism merit should take the following into account:

**(i) Tourist Recognition**

The facility must be recognised by local and/or regional tourist organisations, Tourism Queensland, and local government as being a bona fide tourist facility.

**(ii) Patronage**

The minimum level of patronage considered appropriate would depend on the characteristics of the tourist facility, and the level of general tourist development in the area. Higher patronage levels would generally be required for facilities further away.

In this respect, the concept of the patronage/distance relationship (“K” factor) described below may be useful.

$K = \text{Patronage}/\text{Distance}$ , where:

patronage = annual attendance;

distance = distance in kilometers from the state controlled road; and

K is a regional factor based on expected demand, to control proliferation.

The definition of the “K” factor is to be determined for each district by the DTSC. It is recommended that:

- the “K” factor be reviewed periodically (say annually), to ensure equity and consistency between applications;
- the “K” factor vary across a district depending upon the level of signage proliferation and level of control required. A graphical representation of the patronage/distance relationship may simplify this process (e.g. as shown diagrammatically in Attachment A);
- consideration be given to adopting different “K” factors to differentiate between different classes of attractions, such as between National Parks and commercial facilities as shown in Attachment A; and

- an audit of signage within each district occur to assist in equitably managing this process.

**(iii) Distance**

The distance criterion is related to the patronage/distance relationship established for each district. It is reasonable to expect that; distance limits would vary for different types of road, and for different types of attractions/services, throughout the district.

**(iv) Facilities Criteria**

The DTSC should establish “essential” and “desirable” criteria expected of tourist establishments to warrant consideration for road signage. These criteria should be reviewed regularly (e.g. annually) by the DTSC.

Suggested criteria could be as follows:

Essential

- The establishment should be recognised by the local and/or regional tourist bodies, Tourism Queensland, and local government, as being a bona fide tourist facility.
- The establishment should cater primarily for tourists and visitors.
- Adequate parking should be available at or in the vicinity of the establishment.
- The establishment should be open to the public at reasonably expected times.
  
- In heavily built-up areas or major tourism precincts, minimum annual patronage levels may be required.
- The establishment should satisfy any local government requirements, and any approvals must be current.

Desirable

The establishment should:

- have conveniently located facilities
- produce or be included in, a leaflet, brochure, or on the internet
- be clean and well presented.

**(v) Themed Routes and Tourist Drives**

Refer to “*Guidelines for Establishing Themed Routes in Queensland*”.

**(vi) Visitor Radio**

Visitor radio should satisfy the following criteria:

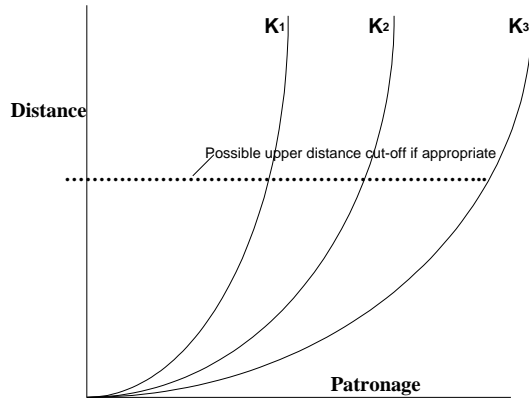
- the road should pass close to, but not necessarily through, a tourist destination (e.g. a tourist area on a byway);
- the program content must comply with any regulatory requirements for Visitor or Tourist Radio;
- no signage is to be allowed on motorways.

***(vii) Tourist Area/Gateway Signage***

The DTSC should consider the need for tourist area or gateway signage, and should ensure that any such signage is consistent within the regional context.

# Attachment A

## K Factor Graphical Presentation



Where

- K<sub>1</sub>, K<sub>2</sub>, and K<sub>3</sub> reflect different tourism values considered appropriate for different categories of tourism establishments; (e.g. K<sub>1</sub> may represent National Parks (low patronage), K<sub>2</sub> may represent medium patronage facilities, and K<sub>3</sub> may represent major commercial attractions (such as theme parks))
- Patronage is the annual attendance; and
- Distance is the distance in kilometers from the site of the proposed sign (on the state-controlled road)

*Example: Say K<sub>1</sub> is the "K factor curve" adopted by the District Tourism Signage Committee in a particular district for National Parks. Then for a National Park in the district to be considered to have sufficient tourism merit to warrant road signage of that tourist attraction, the point on the diagram corresponding to the actual patronage and distance values for that National Park, should fall on or to the right of that curve.*

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*Effective Date: August 1999, for review at same time as policy.*

## **Procedure for Road Signage of Tourist Attractions**

### **Formation of DTSCs**

The District Director should encourage the formation of District Tourism Signage Committees (DTSCs), and should take the initiative in inviting representatives of Regional Tourist Associations, local governments, RACQ, and Police throughout the District to be represented on the committee. In some districts, the District Director may consider it appropriate to form more than one DTSC. The DTSC is seen as the principal source of informed advice to the District Director on tourism-related issues in connection with tourism road signage. However if DTSCs prove not to be viable, alternative sources of informed advice would be, in order of preference:

- the Regional Tourist Association (RTA); or
- Tourism Queensland.

### **Applications for Signs**

Applications for Tourism Road Signage of Tourist Attractions on state controlled roads are to be in writing, using the standard proforma (see Attachment 1). To facilitate supply of all required information, and to achieve a degree of self assessment, application kits consisting of an application form together with an abbreviated version of the policy and guidelines, is to be available to prospective applicants from District offices, local governments, and RTAs.

### **Consideration of Applications**

The District Director is to review the application to determine whether:

- the application is acceptable based on road and traffic (including traffic safety) considerations, and
- the application is acceptable based on considerations of tourism merit.

If the application is acceptable based on road and traffic considerations, and doubt exists as to consideration of tourism merit, the District Director should refer the application to the DTSC for advice and recommendation.

The DTSC should be asked to assess whether or not the application is acceptable based on considerations of tourism merit, and to provide reasons as to why the application should be approved or rejected. The DTSC would also be asked for advice where, because of the existence of a number of road signs of tourist attractions already at a particular locality, there is a need to prioritise the signage, or consider alternatives such as generic or collective tourism signage instead of individual signs.

### **Advising of Outcome**

The District Director should advise the applicant of the result of the application in writing, giving brief reasons if the application is being rejected. Rejection of an application because of tourism considerations should be based on advice from the DTSC. A copy of the correspondence advising the result of the application is to be forwarded to the DTSC.

### **Flowchart**

Attachment 2 shows the procedure in flowchart form.

### **Conditions**

Approval is to be based on the following conditions:

Approval is to be for a period of five (5) years, unless the District Director requires the approval to be limited to a lesser period.

The applicant is to pay Main Roads in advance for the estimated cost of purchase and erection of the sign, together with a further amount equal to the cost of purchase of the sign. This further amount is to cover the estimated cost of routine maintenance throughout the life of the sign, which is regarded as five (5) years. Routine maintenance includes cleaning, removal of obscuring vegetation, and minor repairs such as repositioning, straightening posts, etc., but excludes total replacement of the sign (e.g. due to loss, theft, or total destruction).

If the District Director approves the sign for a period less than five years, the charge for routine maintenance is to be reduced proportionately.

The sign is to be supplied and installed by Main Roads, unless otherwise approved by the District Director.

The continued existence of the sign is dependent upon the tourism merit of the tourist facility continuing in accordance with the details provided in the application for the signage. Should the tourism merit not be sustained at the patronage and service levels existing at the time of the application, the District Director may require that the sign be removed, and if necessary may arrange to have the signs removed at the applicant's expense.

## **Dispute Resolution**

Reasonable attempts should be made throughout the process to avoid conflict, by explaining to the applicant where appropriate the reasons why any proposal can not be approved.

If an applicant feels aggrieved with the outcome of the application, the following dispute resolution process is to be adopted:

- The applicant is to be invited to refer the dispute, in writing, to the Regional Executive Director, for review.
- The Regional Executive Director may liaise with the relevant tourism authority (DTSC, RTA, or Tourism Queensland, as considered appropriate) regarding any tourism-related basis (as distinct from road or traffic basis) for the dispute.
- The Regional Executive Director will review the basis of the decision, and may consider mediation to resolve the conflict, subject to the applicant's agreement.
- The Regional Executive Director will arrange for the results of the mediation to be confirmed in writing, or, if mediation did not take place or did not result in a mutual agreement, advise in writing the results of his review.

## Application for Road Signage of Tourist Attractions

**Name of Applicant:**.....

**Address:**.....

(Street) .....

**Postal Address:**.....

(If different from

above).....

**Phone:**.....**Fax:**.....

**E-mail:**.....

**Name of**

**Establishment/Attraction:**.....

(Note: This should form the basis of the wording on the

sign if approved)

**Address of**

**Establishment:**.....

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### Please append the following to this application:

- (i) details of relevant licenses and approvals to operate as an establishment, including any accreditation
- (ii) an outline of your promotional activities, e.g. brochures etc.
- (iii) opening days and hours, by season if appropriate
- (iv) visitor numbers if available or estimates of annual visitor numbers
- (v) number of car or bus parking spaces available
- (vi) details of training of visitor contact staff
- (vii) membership of relevant associations
- (viii) details of on-site signing
- (ix) description of requested tourism road signage, including desired location, and requested wording, supported by a sketch

### Please submit application to:

District Director  
XXXXXXXXX District  
PO Box XXXXXXXX  
XXXXXX, QLD 4XXX

**Name of contact for further information:**.....

**Phone:**.....

***NOTE: Signage approved and erected as a result of this application may be removed at the applicant's expense if the circumstances as detailed in the application, and the standard of service, are not sustained by the establishment.***

## PROCEDURE FLOWCHART FOR ROAD SIGNAGE OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS APPLICATIONS

