

RECOMMENDED CODE OF PRACTICE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

This recommended code of practice is to be considered best practice in the provision of accommodation services to young people. It is recognised that as each property differs, as do their clientele, their conditions and policies will also reflect varying needs. Hence it is recommended that each property draft its own conditions of stay document, based on the principles outlined below, and clearly communicate these to potential guests.

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with local accommodation services, tourism industry, the Victorian Department of Justice (Consumer Affairs Victoria) and Local government.

The purpose of this code is to raise awareness amongst accommodation providers about issues that should be considered when developing conditions for the up coming School Leavers period (19th November – 4th December 2010).

Information regarding Privacy and Discrimination Legislation is also provided to avoid litigation based on inadvertent breaches of the laws. Properties that endorse these guidelines will do their utmost to ensure that these principals are adhered to, so that young people can know what to expect when coming to the Surf Coast during the School Leavers period.

It should be noted that for many young people coming to the Surf Coast during this period, it could be their first time staying in such accommodation independent of their parents and families. As such, it is vital that when outlining reservation and conditions of stay policies, these policies should be documented and clearly communicated to the young people.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

Accommodation providers assure that they will:

- Endeavour to provide a safe and secure environment for young people who come to celebrate the end of the school year. There is also an acknowledgement that young people should maintain a responsibility for their own safety whilst on the Surf Coast. Information and awareness of safety issues will be made available by Accommodation providers, the Surf Coast Shire and other agencies involved with "Good Times, Great Breaks 2010" School Leavers program.
- Treat young people with respect and dignity at all times.
- Ensure that all advertising is accurate and could not mislead young people.
- Brief any security employed on providing service that is sensitive to the needs of young people.
- Develop procedures in case of an incident that ensure that the young person's safety is considered and maintained. This may include contacting parents if an issue occurs.
- Have access to first aid qualified staff or other people, and to be aware of appropriate action in case of accident, emergency or any other incident.
- Ensure that all terms and conditions implemented will comply with State and Federal law with regard to duty of care, discrimination and privacy considerations.

DISCRIMINATION LAWS

- Accommodation providers should protect themselves against possible litigation by avoiding conditions which could be deemed as discriminating against young people according to State and Federal Law. (Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission) Direct age discrimination is classified as “*a situation where a person is treated unfairly or less favorably because of their age than another person.*” Such a situation is unlawful. Rules which may be seen as discriminatory may include:
 - Conditions that only apply to young people or School Leavers;
 - Conditions that allow random inspections of rooms without young peoples’ consent;
 - Blanket statements that the breach of any rule regardless how minor will result in eviction.
- A property may set guidelines and rules that they see as reasonable provided they apply to **all** customers, and therefore do not discriminate against people based on their age.

RESERVATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF STAY

Below are suggestions of what could be included in Reservation and Conditions of Stay policies, to be developed by each accommodation provider.

- Always take a deposit either by cash, cheque or credit card.
- Operate under clear terms and conditions that should refer to your deposit and refund policy. These should be simple and well documented.
- Policies should be forwarded to guests **prior to accepting bookings**, and verbally discussed on arrival.
- Request each client/guest to provide contact details of next of kin/contact person in case of emergency.

Your conditions of stay should be forwarded to the young people well in advance of their stay. These may include information on the following issues:

- Cleanliness and tidiness of rooms and the rest of the property.
- Rules concerning smoking, alcohol consumption and use of illicit drugs.
- Excess noise considerations.
- Proper securing of rooms when young people leave the premises.
- Rules about guest presence on the premises.
- Times of check in and checkout.

It is recommended to include information on legal matters when preparing conditions of stay such as:

- Surf Coast Shire by laws which prohibit the consumption of alcohol in public places. Penalties may apply for breaches.
- Failure to abate noise can become a police issue and may result in a fine of up to \$500.

BOND

- It is acceptable to request a bond from young people provided this conforms with your normal bond policy. Accommodation providers should be aware that taking a bond from a young person when this is not your normal practice is unlawful under state and federal anti-discrimination laws.
- If you do collect a bond for all customers then you should, in writing:
 - Inform customers of Terms and Conditions prior to stay
 - Inform of the process concerning bond money refund.
 - Clearly identify circumstance under which a bond could be forfeited.
- Prior to the arrival young people should be informed of the requirements relating to bonds.

SAFETY ISSUES

- Larger accommodation providers may want to supply guests with some form of identification. A good example of this may be wrist tags or Photo ID tags.
- These will allow accommodation providers to identify people who are guests at their property, and thus ensure guests accommodation remains a safe and secure environment.
- Information will be made available to accommodation providers to give to young people regarding services and considerations during the School Leavers period. This information will clearly outline issues dealing with:
 - Transport
 - Safety
 - Youth Workers
 - Local laws
 - Emergency contacts

EVICTION

- An eviction should only occur after prior warning, or in extreme circumstances. The reasons for this must be clearly articulated to the evictee and be in line with normal operating policies.
- Its recommended accommodation providers document any behavior that is inappropriate, any verbal warnings given to clientele and any activity leading to eviction including date, time and location for their own records.
- Processes that ensure the safety of young people are essential during and following an eviction. This may include actions such as contacting parents or police.
- Terms and Conditions concerning possible eviction, and the processes to be followed in such an instance should be clearly communicated to young people in writing well in advance of their arrival.

ENDORISING THE CODE OF PRACTICE

Accommodation providers who are accepting bookings from School Leavers during this period are encouraged to sign this Code of Practice, thus endorsing the above recommendations.

Providers are asked to include property details, sign the below slip, and return to:

Brooke Lunny
Surf Coast Shire Tourism
PO Box 350
TORQUAY VIC 3228

Once this endorsement has been returned, the Property will be registered with Surf Coast Tourism as a "School Leaver Friendly" accommodation provider. The Surf Coast Shire Tourism Unit will be providing support and assistance to "School Leaver Friendly" accommodation providers.

"School Leaver Friendly" accommodation providers will:

- Receive regular communication in relation to the 2010 program
- Be issued a colour coded wristband for your guests
- Be listed on the Website as "School Leaver Friendly" Accommodation
- Be listed on the "School Leaver Friendly" Fact Sheet which is distributed through the Surf Coast Visitor Centres and is available on the website www.visitsurfcoast.com

(Please note: you must be a Surf Coast Tourism Member to be listed on the factsheet and on the website)

**School Leaver
ACCOMMODATION CODE OF PRACTICE
ENDORSEMENT FORM**

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IN THE REPLY PAID ENVELOPE

PROPERTY NAME: _____

PROPERTY ADDRESS: _____

PROPRIETER: _____

PROPERTY CONTACT DETAILS:

PHONE _____

FAX _____

EMAIL _____

WEBSITE _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

GUEST CAPACITY (Specify for each week):

Week One (19 Nov to 27 Nov 2010) _____

Week Two (27 Nov to 4 Dec 2010) _____

PROPERTY DESCRIPTION (to be included on "School Leaver Friendly" Fact Sheet/Website)

TARIFF (specify per person/per room/per unit): _____

ENDORSEMENT:

I, Name) on behalf of (Property), declare that I do endorse the recommendations included in the Recommended Code of Practice for Accommodation Providers.

As Such, we will

- Ensure that Terms and Conditions are communicated clearly to young people prior to arrival;
- Endeavour to ensure that the above principles are considered in the development of such Terms and Conditions.

Signed.....

Date.....

The Surf Coast Shire considers that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance, and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. Council will comply with the Information Privacy Principles as set out in the Information Privacy Act 2000. Council will only use the personal information required on this form for the purposes of the Accommodation Code of Practice and associated tasks. The information will not be disclosed to any other party unless Council is required to do so by law. You can view and change the information by contacting Customer Service on (03) 5261 0600.