

Tourism Signage Guidelines

Mildura Rural City Council



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INTRODUCTION

Tourist and services signage are an important element of the Mildura region, delivering integral wayfinding outcomes to attract and guide visitors to tourist-oriented regions, precincts, businesses, and community facilities. As the economic importance of tourism to the region continues to grow, the number of tourist-related operatives and the number of signs on display to identify the, also increases.

The proliferation of signs, particularly in areas of environment, cultural or community significance, not only detracts from the appearance of the locality but also diminishes the overall effectiveness of individual signs.

This information sheet is for those considering an application to Council for tourist and/or services signage, outlining a set of requirements and principles adopted by Council in determining eligibility of applications. Information pertaining to the application and approval process is also included.

SIGNAGE AND ROADWAYS

To determine approval authority, consideration must first be given to the road location for the sign.

1. VicRoads is the coordinating road authority for Victoria's main arterial road network. As such, applications for any form of signage for these roads must be assessed by VicRoads, using an application form and guidebook available online at: <https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/business-and-industry/technical-publications/traffic-engineering>

Applications requiring an assessment by VicRoads should still be lodged initially through Mildura Rural City Council, who will coordinate assessments on behalf of the applicant. A map of VicRoads managed roads can be viewed here: [Map of DTP Managed Roads \(arcgis.com\)](#)

2. Mildura Rural City Council is the road authority responsible for signs displayed in all other road reserves throughout the municipality. The Mildura Planning Scheme outlines the provisions that effectively control signage on public and private land. A planning permit is not required to erect tourist or directional signage in a road reserve. Instead, the written consent of Mildura Rural City Council is required as per the Road Management Act 2004.

STATE AND NATIONAL GUIDELINES

Tourism Victoria and VicRoads have published Tourist Signage Guidelines, in place to provide a consistent application of both tourist and services signs across Victoria. Detailing eligibility criteria, design standards and guidelines for location, the aim is to provide guidance for delivering a unified, logical system of tourist and servicing signage that will improve both the effectiveness and visual appeal of the sign network across tourist areas.

Compliance with relevant Australian Standards published in AS 1742, *Manual of uniform traffic control devices* is required for all signs.

SIGN TYPES

Four types of signs are used across the Victorian road network. Please note that these guidelines are specific to Services and Tourist signs.

Arterial direction signs	White legend on green background. Includes route numbers where they have been assigned and standard symbols, where relevant. These signs are managed by VicRoads.
Community facility signs	White legend on blue background. Fingerboard style signs, mounted on a single post. These signs are generally managed by Council.

Services signs	White legend on blue background. May include standard services symbols. Can be combined with tourist signs.
Tourist signs	White legend on brown background. May include standard tourist attraction symbols.

BROWN OR BLUE SIGN

The following table indicates if a sign should be a brown tourist sign or a blue services sign.

Tourist signs (brown)	Services signs (blue)
Antique galleries	Accommodation
Art galleries and craft centres	Airports/airfields
Geographic features	Cemeteries
Historic properties and buildings	Convention centres
Industry-based attractions, e.g., factories, manufacturing plants, agricultural operations with guided tours	Educational institutions – kindergartens, schools, universities, colleges, TAFEs
Museums	Hospitals and medical facilities
Nurseries and garden centres with tourist facilities	Libraries
Parks and gardens	Municipal depots, tips and transfer sites
Places with guided tours	Parking, including rest areas
Scenic lookouts	Police stations, court houses
Theatres and concert halls	Post offices
Wineries	Religious venues
Zoos	Restaurants and refreshments
	Shopping centres and markets
	Sporting facilities, including golf clubs, swimming pools, bowling clubs, sports fields, stadia, racecourses
	Train and bus stations
	Toilets
	Town halls, civic centres, municipal offices

ELIGIBILITY FOR A TOURIST (BROWN) SIGN

Tourist or services signs are assessed against all state and national guidelines. Council must use a of criteria identified in the VicRoads publication Tourist Signing Guidelines to assess each application. See www.vicroads.vic.gov.au to access the full guide.

Criteria for Tourist Attraction Signing

In order to qualify for tourist attraction signing (other than a natural feature), an application from a tourist attraction must satisfy all of the following essential criteria. The attraction must:

- (a) Have tourism as a core business activity.
- (b) Provide a substantive tourism experience in addition to, or as part of, any commercial/retail activity.
- (c) Have all relevant State and Local Government licences and approvals to operate as a tourist attraction, including health, planning and parking requirements.
- (d) Be open to the public without prior booking during the attraction's normal opening hours.
- (e) Be open on weekends and at least three other days of the week, plus public and school holidays.
- (f) Be open for a minimum of seven hours per day on the days the attraction is open.
- (g) Be listed on the database of the nearest accredited Visitor Information Centre (with opening hours, admission prices, locations and directions).
- (h) Promote the location and clear directions to the attraction to visitors from outside the local area.
- (i) Be appropriately signed within the property line so that it is easily identifiable by passing motorists.
- (j) Have appropriately trained visitor contact staff; and
- (k) Maintain a record of visitor numbers and comments.

The Tourist Signing Guidelines also outlines 'desired criteria' alongside a set of more specific criteria for a range of attraction types: for example, galleries, museums, seasonal attractions and wineries.

Criteria for Tourist Accommodation Signing

Requirements for tourist accommodation differ for rural and urban areas, with further criteria also set out for specific types of accommodation: for example, caravan parks, motels, and farms stays. To be eligible for tourism accommodation signing, accommodation facilities must:

Essential:

- (a) Hold all relevant State and Local Government licences and any other appropriate consents.
- (b) Be open daily.
- (c) Be available for casual accommodation (prior booking not required).
- (d) Be open to the general public (i.e., not exclusively for coach tours or other organised groups).
- (e) Be listed on the database of the nearest accredited Visitor Information Centre (with opening hours, admission prices, location and directions).
- (f) Promote the location and clear directions to the facility to visitors from outside the local area.
- (g) Be appropriately signed within the property line so that the facility is easily identifiable by passing motorists; and
- (h) Have appropriately trained visitor contact staff.

Desirable:

- (i) Be a member of a recognised Local, Regional or peak sector tourism organisation and/or be accredited under a scheme approved by the Tourism Accreditation Board of Victoria.

Criteria for Restaurants

To be eligible for signing, restaurants meet the following essential criteria:

- (a) Be located outside the built up area.
- (b) Hold all relevant State and Local Government licences and any other appropriate consents.
- (c) Be open to the general public (i.e., not exclusively for coach tours or other organised groups).
- (d) Provide full table service.
- (e) Be open at least six days per week; and
- (f) Offer regional and/or local produce as part of the visitor experience.

ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES (BLUE) SIGN

Eligibility for service signs generally relates to the benefit of the signs to visitors. The table below is used by Council staff to assess all applications for services signs.

Type of service or community facility	Permitted	Permitted where primary purpose is to serve visitors	Discouraged
Aged care facility			✓
Art gallery		✓	
Barbecue (public)			✓
Boat ramp/jetty	✓		
Cemetery		✓	
Community service			✓
Emergency service	✓		
Ferry	✓		
Golf course		✓	
Library		✓	
Medical centre		✓	
Museum		✓	
Parking areas (public)	✓		
Picnic facilities			✓
Place of assembly		✓	
Place of worship	✓		
Post office	✓		
Railway station	✓		
Recreation centre		✓	
School			✓
Service station			✓
Surf life-saving club	✓		
Toilets (public)	✓		
Tourist information bay	✓		
Town hall/municipal offices	✓		
Visitor information centres (accredited)	✓		
Visitor radio services			✓
Yacht club		✓	

APPLYING FOR A SIGN PERMIT

Applicants seeking approvals to place a tourist attraction and/or services sign within a road reserve should lodge an application to the responsible officer for tourism signing within Mildura Rural City Council. Application should be via the standard application form which is available on Council's website. Applicants are encouraged to first discuss their proposal with Council's Economic Projects Officer to discuss eligibility, design and wording.

An application can be made at any time and applicants are advised that the time period for determining an outcome of an application can take up to three months, depending on complexities related to the application. If approved, written consent for a tourist or services sign will take the form of a written confirmation outlining the general conditions to be met by the applicant including technical and physical standards of the design, installation standards, and maintenance requirements. Where relevant, special conditions may be imposed. Permits for a tourism sign are issued pursuant to sections 63 and 66 of the Road Management Act 2004.

SIGN INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE

Where signs are located on arterial roads, VicRoads will specify conditions relating to the installation of the signs, as well as those services which can be provided by a VicRoads or an approved VicRoads contractor.

Mildura Rural City Council is required to coordinate the manufacturing and installation of signs. Successful applicants will be provided details of Council's process and cost recovery policy.

The applicant must comply with the conditions of consent in relation to maintenance of the sign, and any special conditions outlined.

The need for sign replacement or repairs, for any reasons, shall be at the discretion of the relevant road authority. The cost for sign maintenance – including due to damage or vandalism – replacement and reinstatement is the responsibility of the applicant.

Only VicRoads contractors are permitted to install, maintain, replace or re-erect signs on VicRoads road reserves. For all other roads, written consent from Council must be obtained before any sign installation or maintenance works are undertaken.

NON-COMPLIANCE

The relevant road authority periodically checks for compliance in line with the sign's approvals. Failures to comply with approval conditions is an offence under section 66 of the Road Management Act 2004 and may result in termination of the consent and removal of the sign by the relevant road authority.

COSTS

Financial responsibility for all tourist attraction and services signing rests with the applicant, noting the following exceptions:

- Signing of road authority assets, such as rest areas, are funded by the road authority
- Public facility signs (e.g., toilets, emergency medical services, etc) are funded by the road authority.

The costs involved include:

- The purchase of the sign(s) – estimated as \$302.50 excl. GST for an Advance Tourist Attraction sign (G11-1) and \$220 excl. GST for a fingerboard sign (G11-4). See examples below.
- All associated installation, maintenance and removal costs (unless otherwise agreed).

Example Guide Signs – Tourist Series



G11-1



G11-4

OWNERSHIP OF SIGNS

The applicant who has paid for the provision of a tourist attraction or services sign remains responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the sign, subject to, and in accordance with the approvals.

Written consent will outline ownership conditions, including:

- Standards and specifications relating to sign construction, installation and maintenance
- Responsibility in relation to cost, maintenance and removal
- Conditions under which the road authority may remove the sign; and
- Conditions relating to the continuing operation of the tourist or services establishment.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to immediately notify the relevant road authority to arrange for removal of all road signing to the property in the event of the business closing or if it is no longer an eligible tourism business. Costs for removal of signs will be charged to the business owner.

PERMIT PERIOD

The consent issued by the relevant road authority grants the applicant the right to place a sign in the roadside reserve for a period of five years, after which time the appropriateness and efficacy of the sign may be reassessed. The road authority maintains rights to replace or remove any signs installed on roads under its control when any of the following occurs:

- Applicant no longer conforms to the conditions of the consent
- There is a demonstrated need for aggregating signs in a particular location; or
- The road authority needs to resume the land.

Costs for removing signs in the first instance above will be charged to the business owner.

ALTERATIONS TO SIGNS

Consent is granted for only the original sign face design. Alternations are not permitted unless written consent is obtained from the relevant road authority. Any alteration is subject to a new application and may require new consents to be obtained.

Unauthorised alteration to a VicRoads sign to include commercial information or the unauthorised addition of private/commercial signing to a VicRoads' structure is strictly prohibited.