**Thinking of opening tourist** accommodation in the Macedon Ranges?

If you are thinking of opening accommodation in the Macedon Ranges then it is imperative that you consider communicating with Council’s Planning, Building, Health and Economic Development & Tourism departments so that you can be advised of all legal requirements and benefit from the free promotion and services that Macedon Ranges Shire Council can offer your business.

A checklist has been developed for you to follow when setting up your accommodation business:

1. Seek advice and obtain necessary permits from Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Planning, Building and Health departments. Depending on the nature of your proposal, and the location, it could be subject to a range of legislative requirements. We understand that some business applications can be challenging so contact the Economic Development and Tourism department as they are there to help guide you through the process.
2. Obtain public liability insurance and investigate the need for other insurances.
3. Identify further licences or permits required. This will depend on the activities to be included in your business operations, for example; are you selling or serving alcohol? Will you be holding events?
4. Consider attending a Business Workshop (run by Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Economic Development and Tourism unit) and writing a Business Plan. There are many elements you need to think about - how you will take bookings, the rates you will charge, will you provide breakfast, do you need disability access and will you accommodate pets.
5. Sign up for a free listing on visitmacedonranges.com, the region’s official visitor website. Once your listing is published, you will be contacted by the Macedon Ranges Visitor Information Centres who will provide further details on how our department can assist with promotion of your business.

Planning

Please ensure you check with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Planning Department to ensure you comply with the legislative requirements. Planning can be contacted on03 5421 9690.

Building

Please ensure you check with the Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Building Department to ensure you comply with the legislative requirements. Building can be contacted on03 5421 9681.

Registration of Prescribed Accommodation

Under the provisions of the Health (Public Health and Wellbeing Act) Regulations 2009, an accommodation business which has facilities that can accommodate for 5 persons or more, must apply to be registered with Macedon Ranges Shire Council. The application must include a plan of the premises drawn to a scale of not less than 1:100, showing the proposed use of each room.Further Information can be found at [www.mrsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au)

Registration under the Food Act

Under the provisions of the Food Act 1984, accommodation businesses which provide food must either notify or register their food premises with Macedon Ranges Shire Council. Further Information can be found at [www.mrsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au)

Should you have any queries in relation to the Registration of Prescribed Accommodation or Registration under the Food Act please contact the Macedon Ranges Shire Council Health Department on 5421 9661.

Key Considerations

You will also need to consider the following when opening tourist accommodation:

* Bookings process – how will you take bookings? Will you be easily contactable most of the time on mobile phone for short notice bookings, or can you afford to engage the services of a booking agent?
* Minimum night stays – Some accommodation operators only take bookings for a minimum number of nights, others provide guests with one night only during off peak times and others accept bookings all year round for one night stays.
* Bedding configurations – Can you alter the bedding configurations and the facility set up to take different types of groups?
* Boosting sales during quieter times – There are many websites where you can promote your accommodation to help boost last minute sales for example: wotif.com or stayz.com. You may have to pay a commission to these online booking services & cancellation fees may apply so ensure you read the terms and conditions before proceeding.
* Breakfast and other food provisions - will you provide cooked breakfasts, breakfast provisions or a local restaurant or café dine in voucher? (*Registration of Food Premises required)*
* Laundry and cleaning – do you intend to do the laundry and cleaning of the premises yourself? Keep in mind this can be time consuming and you will need to have sufficient linen to turn over rooms quickly. Commercial laundry services are available.
* Disability Access – will your accommodation be suitable for people with disabilities? This type of accommodation is often sought after and you will need to consider things like: roll in away beds, safety rails etc
* Pet Friendly – will you be allowing pets at your accommodation? Some accommodation operators don’t, others are by negotiation and others are pet friendly.
* Children – Will you take bookings from people with children? In some circumstances some of our current accommodation providers don’t as they may be offering a ‘couples’ type retreat.

Further information on the above items and starting a tourism business can be found at: <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/business-tools-support/starting-a-tourism-business.html>

Further licences, registrations and permits

Any further licences required will depend on the activities to be included in your business operations. Some of the items you may need to consider are as follows:

* To register a business or company name: business name registration with Consumer Affairs Victoria, or company name registration with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.
* To register for tax: Tax File Number, Australian Business Number and GST /PAYG withholding registrations from the Australian Taxation Office.
* To sell and serve alcohol: a planning permit from the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and general liquor licence from Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.
* To play recorded music: music licences from the Australian Performing Rights Association and Phonographic Performance Company of Australia.
* To have tables and chairs on the footpath or display an A frame sign, a permit to establish an outdoor eating facility from the Macedon Ranges Shire Council.

*(Source: Tourism Victoria: Product Development Fact Sheet: Starting up an accommodation business)*

Tips regarding insuring your business

As well as insuring your premises and assets, the following additional insurances can be critical for accommodation businesses.

* Public liability of at least $10 million to cover paying guests and visitors.
* Product liability to cover prepared food or other products offered to guests.
* Motor vehicle insurance if your vehicle is used for business purposes.
* Personal injury and/or income protection, especially if WorkCover is not applicable to your business. Personal injury and income protection are often taken out by sole traders and partnerships.

Please note: The public liability part of a Home and Contents policy is void when a business is started on the premises. Additional insurance is essential. We recommend you contact your insurance company to discuss as there may be others that haven’t been listed here.

*(Source: Tourism Victoria: Product Development Fact Sheet: Starting up an accommodation business)*

Promotion and Relevant Industry Bodies

* Sign up for a free listing on visitmacedonranges.com.
* Register with Macedon Ranges Shire Council’s Economic Development and Tourism Department to stay informed on networking events, business information and opportunities thoroughly a monthly e-newsletter *(this will be done for you once your listing is published on visitmacedonranges.com).*
* List your business in two accredited Macedon Ranges Visitor Information Centres *(this will be done for you once your listing is published on visitmacedonranges.com).*
* Display your brochure in the two accredited Macedon Ranges Visitor Information Centres.
* List your business for FREE on the Macedon Ranges Business directory further details and to register visit [www.mrsc.vic.gov.au](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au) .
* List your business on the Daylesford Macedon Ranges (DMR) App, visit [www.dmrexplore.com.au](http://www.dmrexplore.com.au) for a number of sign up options including a FREE one
* ‘Like’ the ‘Macedon Ranges Naturally Cool’ Facebook page to view the page follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/MacedonRangesNaturallyCool>
* Join the Macedon Ranges Accommodation Association, further details at: [www.macedonranges.org.au](http://www.macedonranges.org.au)
* Promote your tourism business on [www.visitvictoria.com](http://www.visitvictoria.com) . This is a great way to market your business online whilst reaching an extremely broad audience.
* Get accredited with Australian Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP) [www.atap.net.au](http://www.atap.net.au). ATAP is a national online accreditation program that is widely based on Quality Assurance Principles.

Would you like more information?

For further information visit: <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/business-tools-support/starting-a-tourism-business.html>

If you have any queries please don’t hesitate to contact Dorothy Bartholomew at the Woodend Visitor Information Centre on 03 5427 3917 or Christine Sullivan at the Kyneton Visitor Information Centre on 03 5422 6785.

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