



# A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO PROVIDING SERVICE TO CHINESE VISITORS TO TASMANIA

## TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT



### Giving Service To Chinese Travelers

It is important to show tourists they are welcome and you want them to enjoy their visit.

- Acknowledge visitors as soon as you see them, say 'welcome'. If they have to wait say 'welcome, please wait a moment'.
- The main thing to remember is to be friendly to visitors and show you want to help. Do not be nervous about acknowledging that a visitor is Chinese, it will be fine with them. It is good to make small talk about where they are from and their visit to Tasmania.
- To get body language right:
  - ◊ Stand still and let the customer stand at the distance he or she is comfortable
  - ◊ If they express friendship by touching your arm or shoulder, copy what they do. You should not initiate touching but if you do not reciprocate what they do they will think you have rebuffed their friendly gesture.

### Making Travel Plans with Chinese Travelers

Decision making may be challenging for Chinese people, they are concerned with 'saving face', both theirs and yours, they often :

- Are reluctant say they do not understand, or to ask questions about a travel option.
- Give positive feedback about suggestions regardless of their real opinion. If they are not happy they will complain to each other later.
- Give 'yes' as their default answer to questions they do not understand.
- Avoid saying 'no' to a request. 'That is not very convenient' is the strongest refusal you are likely to get. More likely you will hear 'perhaps' but it really means 'no'.
- Not ask for what they want if they are not sure whether it is OK.
- Not want to say something is too expensive for them.



How you can assist decision making:

- Avoid closed questions, e.g. 'would you like a taxi from the hotel to the restaurant?' the answer **Chinese people hide their thoughts** will probably be 'yes'.
- Avoid completely open questions e.g. 'how would you like to get from the hotel to the restaurant?'
- Give the alternatives, information about them, and let the visitor choose, e.g. 'it takes about 15 minutes to walk from the hotel to the restaurant, a taxi would cost about \$8, which would you like? This guide will help you devise alternatives.'

### Language and Communication

Some Chinese people learned English at school but their reading and writing is usually much better than their speaking and listening.



- Write down important points. They are more likely to understand writing than speech and can translate at their leisure. They will have a record to refer to.
- When you write, lower case printing is the easiest for Chinese people to understand.
- When you speak, choose simple words, speak slowly, enunciate your words separately, and avoid slang and local expressions.
- Say what you mean literally and precisely. Do not say 'the bus will leave soon', say 'the bus will leave in about 5 minutes'.
- If you are dealing with a visitor through an interpreter look at and speak to the visitor, do not have a discussion with the interpreter and ignore the actual traveler.

#### **Write down important points**

- Provide a written itinerary with details of departure times, assembly points, luggage requirements, regulations regarding any items that cannot be taken across State or National borders, etc. Remember travelers know nothing about local conditions or practices.
- Maps showing departure points, routes and destinations will reduce confusion and anxiety.

## Planning Travel Itineraries

- Choose destinations rather than the drive or walk to get there.
- Recommend several close attractions rather than one distant one.
- It is important to have toilet breaks at least every two hours.
- If a meal break is included in there should be hot food if possible, e.g. hot chips are much better than cold sandwiches.
- Itineraries need to provide enough time for shopping and photos, it is important for Chinese tourists to take home a record and gifts from their trip.
- Early morning starts and late night arrivals should be avoided where possible.

### CHINESE TRAVELERS

For most Chinese tourists destinations are more important than the journeys to get to them. In cars and on buses they will often sleep rather than look at the scenery. They prefer to cram a lot of sites and attractions into a short time. They usually do not like to walk too far. Taking home photographs and souvenirs is important.

## Legal Compliance and Dealing with Difficult Situations

Where legal compliance with road or other transport regulations is essential you will need to make rules clear, point out that everyone needs to comply and keep checking that they are followed. This will apply to things such as:

- Not smoking on buses and in transport terminals.
- Wearing seatbelts, bicycle helmets, lifejackets, and so on.
- Maximum passenger numbers in cars and buses.

If you need to ask visitors to comply with rules:

- Do not get angry, you would lose face and respect badly.
- Say that rules are Government law and you will both be in trouble if they are broken.
- Tell them what they should do and provide them with anything necessary to comply.
- Thank them for their cooperation.



*In China safety gear is often not worn.*

For important legal information it is prudent to give written advice to travelers translated into Standard Modern Chinese.

## Taxis

In China taxis are used extensively by people at all levels of society. At home our Chinese visitors expect to be able to hail taxis on the street readily, negotiate a cheaper than meter price for the journey, have a driver wait while they do things, and never pay a tip. If you are involved with arrangements involving taxi use it is a good idea to explain how to call a taxi by phone and that for normal trips the fare is determined by the meter not by negotiation. Mandarin for 'run the meter' is 'da biao'.

## Union Pay Credit Cards

By far the most common Chinese credit card is Union Pay. Your Chinese customers will only be able to spend the cash they are carrying unless you accept Union Pay cards. You can arrange that through Union Pay or some Australian banks. Not taking Union Pay credit cards is a serious handicap to a retail business dealing with Chinese tourists. Taking Union Pay also indicates you welcome Chinese visitors' business.



*A welcome sign*

### TIPS ABOUT CHINESE CULTURE

- Contrary to our local impressions Chinese people do not feel obliged to comply with the letter of the law; rather, road rules, safety regulations and the like seem to enjoy the status of suggestions open to negotiation.
- Even if they speak some English, Chinese people will talk to each other in Chinese. They can communicate so much better in Chinese. Do not take offence they probably are not talking about you.
- In China it is normal for customers to try to bargain prices down by asking for discounts. They can be persistent in this, you may have to say that discounts are not possible.
- Usually Chinese will arrive early for any arrangement. Trains and buses typically pull out of the station one or two minutes early. They are likely to arrive early for arrangements, they will be happy to wait, they are just anxious to make sure they are not late.

