



**Department of Tourism, Arts and the Environment**

**Tourism Tasmania**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**TT 2008/01**

**'Inventory Exchange Platform'**

**2 January 2008**

**Responses Due 1 February 2008**

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information contained in this document is confidential and is provided only to give potential suppliers an adequate understanding of Tourism Tasmania's requirements.

Under no circumstances should information be disclosed to any outside party.

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# 1 Introduction

This intention of this document is to gain information from potential suppliers that will assist Tourism Tasmania to complete the planning stage of its Digital and Distribution Project by assisting in finalising the definition of some of the key requirements of the project.

Subsequent to this process, Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Tender (RFT) documents **may** be issued. It is important that suppliers responding to this RFI provide detailed information regarding capabilities and experience and an indication, in broad terms, as to how they would approach working with Tourism Tasmania to achieve the objectives set out in this document.

## 1.1 Overview of Tourism Tasmania

Tourism Tasmania is a statutory authority established in 1997 to promote Tasmania nationally and internationally as a world-class visitor destination.

Tasmania's inbound tourism industry is reliant on air and sea transport services to and from the Australian mainland (and other ports of origin). Air travel accounts for over 80% of passenger movements to and from Tasmania and as such is crucial in supporting Tasmania's tourism, business and community requirements. Demand for travel is greatest during the peak tourist season of December through April.

The Tourism Tasmania Corporate Plan 2006-09 highlights our points of intervention in the market place as being to:

- Create new knowledge and understanding for industry and stakeholders through research, analysis and insights
- Address barriers to conversion and travel to Tasmania by identifying and taking action with those who can make a difference
- Establish, articulate and maintain the brand and brand values, particularly through creative and innovative marketing
- Achieve alignment of Tasmania's tourism product, experiences and infrastructure to match market expectations of the Brand

Consequently our key roles are to:

- Grow our domestic market share
- Grow our international market share
- Grow the number of Tasmanians holidaying on the island
- Strengthen the relationship between our Brand and consumers
- Attract more high-yield visitors
- Increase stakeholder satisfaction with our performance

- Increase customer satisfaction with their Tasmanian experience

Visitor numbers, spend and nights have continued to grow strongly since access became a major joint focus of government and industry over the past seven years. In a difficult domestic tourism environment, Tasmania is still making gains and in the 12 months to June 2007, 827,000 visitors arrived as passengers on scheduled air and sea transport (up 2%) with air taking an 85% share. Since the advent of low cost air travel, sea travel via the Spirits of Tasmania has declined in share from some 24% of the market to its current low of 15%.

More information about Tourism Tasmania and current visitor arrivals can be found at <http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au>

Tourism Tasmania has progressively reviewed its intervention in the marketplace and has made several key decisions based on the changing needs of the consumer and the changes to the travel industry:

- Continuing its direct and indirect involvement in the distribution of Tasmanian tourism product and information by a range of means
- Closure of mainland travel centres
- Introduction of online booking capability for agents
- Introduction of limited online retail capability
- Introduction of a range of websites for international, interstate and intrastate consumers as well as special interest and niche sites

The extensive changes in the tourism and travel landscape, together with the advent of the Internet and the resulting structural changes in the industry resulted in consumers accessing destination information and making travel and holiday decisions in whole new way – digitally.

The distribution market for travel has changed dramatically and the changes in importance of various channels to both consumers and operators have generated this change to the 'effectiveness' of current distribution activities.

Increasingly, the consumer is choosing the channel by which they access travel and tourism product, and using digital means to locate and purchase their choices.

As a result, many traditional distributors and intermediaries (retail and wholesale travel agents) are moving to incorporate the internet into their models as customers move their preferences to online channels:

The impact of digital on tourism goes beyond that of the massive changes it has made possible to traditional distribution channels.

Increasingly consumers are using the internet as their primary source of information for both research and selection of travel experiences – and the increasing importance of the range of digital media available to destination marketers is complicated by the challenges in both understanding and integrating ‘digital’ into marketing (and distribution) strategy.

## **1.2 Strategic Overview**

To address these changes to both the industry and consumer behaviour, Tourism Tasmania has developed a Digital and Distribution Strategy which has (in part) the following key objectives:

- To re-invent our approach to distribution of Tasmanian holiday content to better meet operator and consumer needs in a changing world.
- To continue to support the national retail travel agency networks with targeted Tasmanian product through a revitalised approach to wholesale travel that is not solely focussed on commercial outcomes, but rather on utilising new technology to take more operators to market more effectively.
- To maintain the Call Centre in Launceston as a key contributor to our ‘value-add’ proposition as a destination creating a real point of difference for Tasmania. The Call Centre will embody best practice in its operations and will be used it as the mainstay of a true one-on-one relationship with our customers.

As part of delivering on the strategy, a Steering committee has commenced articulating the key technical requirements and capabilities that will be needed to meet the following objectives:

- Enhance Tourism Tasmania's Call Centre capability
- Provide expanded distribution opportunities for Tasmania's tourism industry
- Increase the quantity of online bookable Tasmanian tourism product available to consumers

The project involves the following key steps:

- Issuance of this document and two related RFIs to a list of potential suppliers in the first week of January 2008.
- Responses to be received by 01 February 2008.
- Based on responses to the RFI, a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Tender (RFT) **may** be issued to suppliers with detailed requirements, contractual details and key success criteria for successful bidders.

## **2 Requirement**

### **2.1 Business requirement to implement Tourism Tasmania's Digital and Distribution Strategy.**

The Steering Committee has undertaken a comprehensive mapping process to identify the enterprise and business architecture currently in place, as well as to identify key new elements required to deliver on the Digital and Distribution Strategy going forward. While the final business and financial modelling work is still underway, the Committee has identified three key elements that will be required, regardless of the financial or business model eventually approved by the Board:

- Dynamic Packaging
- Inventory Exchange Platform
- Call Centre Systems.

This RFI seeks information about the provision of an exchange environment but it is suggested that respondents make themselves familiar with the content of the other two RFIs as part of developing their response. The business requirement for this exchange environment is to:

- Provide additional channels to market for Tasmanian tourism operators.
- Meet changing consumer needs by providing wider choices/channels to purchase product.

### **2.2 Exchange Environment**

#### **Background**

Tourism Tasmania's wholesale operation, Tasmania's Temptations Holidays, supplies bookable inventory to the retail travel network both within Australia and internationally. Some 500 Tasmanian operators (of a total of close to 2,000) participate by allocating inventory into the Inventory Management System (IMS). This inventory is then sold via the retail travel network or, in limited numbers, direct to the consumer.

The vast majority of Tasmania's tourism operators also participate in the Tourism Tasmania 'Tiger Tour' database, which uploads product and motivational content into the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW). The Tiger Tour database is not bookable. However, 2008 sees the rollout of Tourism Exchange Australia (TXA), by ATDW, which will allow distributors who license content from ATDW to access

suppliers' inventory on any booking system which is connected to the exchange and to sell products based on terms and conditions agreed between the supplier and distributor.

### **2.3 Overview of software requirements**

Tourism Tasmania's core requirements are for a system that by means of an open booking platform allows suppliers (accommodation, tours etc) to present product inventory through as many online distribution channels as they choose (including their own websites).

The system must present (and update) real-time availability to the consumer, and must be able to interface with Tourism Tasmania's existing technology and a wide range of supplier and distributor platforms. In addition, the system must provide a secure payment gateway and deliver instant booking and confirmation details to the customer.

#### **Integration considerations**

Software involved with the booking exchange platform will need to interface with existing applications used by Tourism Tasmania and where relevant, trap information for automatic update of such systems.

Major systems in use include Calypso Travel System, Onyx CRM System, Australian Tourism Data Warehouse local version known as Tiger Tour, DiscoverTasmania.com and a range of custom applications developed in-house.

The booking exchange platform should include open interfaces to enable integration with these systems and with third party 'dynamic packaging' solutions and other front-end systems that require access to bookable product. The system should be able to source inventory from other booking systems, pooling systems or property management systems.

## **3 Instructions to Suppliers**

### **3.1 Other Relevant Information**

In order to best understand related elements of this project, respondents to this RFI may also wish to review two related RFI's being issued concurrently to this one:

- Dynamic Packaging
- Call Centre Systems

### **3.2 Response Requirements**

We wish to learn about your capabilities, but would like to minimise the amount of preparation that you need to do at this stage. We expect our requirements will not require the preparation of significant new material.

With this in mind, please provide the following information in your response:

1. Two copies of marketing material or relevant documents describing your organisation and detailed information on your product offerings which should establish your capability to assist Tourism Tasmania with its intentions for an inventory exchange platform as outlined by this RFI;
2. In particular, this material should be supplemented, where required, by the following details:
  - How does the platform connect to the range of booking engines and property management systems used by industry?
  - How it relates to other distributors?
  - An overview of how product content and availability is managed?
  - An overview of how it can be accessed via other front end systems.
  - Details of the platforms support for a range of business models?
  - Transactional capability including:
    - GST

- Tax

3. Responses to the following questions to the best of your ability.

Question	Response
Company name  Parent company	
Company address	
Name of person responsible for the information contained in this RFI	
Telephone number  Facsimile number  Email address  Web page	
Initial year of operations	
Company location:  Corporate office  Local offices (Tasmania)  Other office	
Number of employees:	

Question	Response
<p>Total</p> <p>Australia Total</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Implementation</li> <li>• Sales &amp; administration</li> <li>• Support</li> </ul> <p>Key employees (names and terms of contract)</p>	
<p>Give details of your business continuity arrangements.</p>	
<p>Total number of installations of the version of the software being proposed.</p> <p>Have you supplied to customers in a similar industry, with a similar growth profile that would act as a reference site for you?</p>	
<p>Describe any third party alliances/relationships that might impact on a potential relationship with Tourism Tasmania.</p>	
<p>Please provide details of any outstanding legal action against your company or any directors or partners that may have a material impact on your service offerings to Tourism Tasmania.</p>	
<p>Are there any anticipated mergers or acquisitions pending that might impact on your current market offerings.</p>	

Question	Response
Please provide information on your implementation methodology.	Attach as required.
What documentation is provided for the software/system?	
Was your software written by your organisation or acquired from a third party?	
<p>Training:</p> <p>Do you offer formal user training?</p> <p>What type of courses do you run and what is their duration?</p> <p>What level of training would you recommend?</p> <p>Describe any training materials offered?</p>	
<p>Please provide details of how the product is supported across multiple sites.</p> <p>What levels of support are available, definition of each level and what are the hours of operation and response times?</p> <p>Where are the support services located?</p> <p>Does support include product updates, as well as bug fixes at no extra charge?</p> <p>What is the helpdesk escalation procedure?</p>	

### **3.3 Reimbursement**

Tourism Tasmania will not reimburse submitters for any costs in conjunction with their response to this RFI.

### **3.4 Lodgement Address**

Responses to this RFI should be forwarded to:

Rowan Sproule,  
Director Organisational Development and Strategy,  
Tourism Tasmania,  
Level 2, 22 Elizabeth Street,  
Hobart, 7000

by close of business on 1 February 2008, along with all required material.

Information which can be e mailed should also be sent to the following e mail address in addition to the mail lodgement.

Rowan can be contacted on 03 6230 8101 or [Rowan.Sproule@tourism.tas.gov.au](mailto:Rowan.Sproule@tourism.tas.gov.au) should you have any queries prior to lodgement on content or the process.

## **4 Response Review Process and Schedule**

### **4.1 Review Process**

This RFI is issued with the intent to survey industry to obtain information that provides planning guidance, and which may be used by the Steering Committee in preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Tender (RFT).

Based on responses to the RFI, a RFP or RFT **may** be issued to suppliers with detailed requirements, contractual details and key success criteria for successful bidders.

When responding to this RFI, suppliers should clearly indicate any material that they consider to be copyright.

### **4.2 Clarification**

To fully comprehend the information contained within a response to this RFI, the Steering Committee may seek further clarification on that response. This clarification may be requested in the form of verbal communication by telephone; written communication; electronic communication; or a presentation of the response to a meeting of the Steering Committee.

### **4.3 Schedule**

The schedule for responding to this RFI is as follows. Please note that early responses are encouraged

RFI issued:	2 January 2008
RFI responses due:	1 February 2008
Review of RFI responses:	4 February – 15 February 2008