

CEO Commentary

Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot for the year ending September 2016



With Christmas fast approaching, I am really pleased to be presenting you with such a positive set of figures as we head into 2017. This time a year ago, I was happily reporting a record 1 142 500 visitors for the year ending September 2015.

This year, they are even better. In fact four per cent better with a new record 1 191 900 visitors on scheduled air and sea services. This result keeps us heading in the right direction and brings us closer to reaching our T21 goals by the end of 2020.

Just as importantly, total visitor spending and total nights spent in the state during the year to September both showed even stronger growth of 8 per cent to reach \$2.07 billion and 10.58 million nights respectively. This meant that compared with last year, our visitors stayed here even longer and spent even more while travelling around the state.

These latest results also show that during this period, we passed the \$2.05 billion a year T21 visitor spending target previously set in 2013. Most importantly, we achieved it four years ahead of schedule. Of course, our revised annual spending goal under the new T21 is \$2.47 billion a year, and we appear to be well on track to achieve that.

With visitor numbers to the east coast growing by six per cent and visitors to our other regions all growing by three per cent, it was good to see our visitors exploring beyond our capital city, spending all this extra money on petrol, tours, attractions, accommodation and other goods and services in our regions. This generates jobs in a whole range of businesses that directly and indirectly support our visitor economy.

This time last year I also reported a record 199 100 international visitors to Tasmania, according to the International Visitor Survey.

Twelve months on and we have seen a 15 per cent increase and a new record of 228 500 international visitors to our state during the year ending September 2016. In fact Tasmania recorded the highest rate of growth in international visitors out of all Australian states and territories.

The USA has continued to go from strength to strength as our largest source market for international visitors, and while numbers from China did subside late last year after a surge in visitors around their President's visit, I am pleased to report that visitor numbers from China have returned to steady growth in recent quarters.

Of course, China is not our only Asian source market of interest, and it is good to see strong growth coming from Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. Tasmania has a lot to offer visitors from the Asia region, so the region will remain a significant focus for our international marketing effort in coming years.

Airline partnerships will also continue to be an important part of our future international marketing program, especially in Asia. Earlier this year the Tasmanian Government committed \$1.25 million over two years for marketing partnerships to support codeshare agreements between international and domestic airlines coming to Tasmania. This means that it is easier for holidaymakers from our Asian markets to travel to Tasmania on a single ticket.

Our airlines and the Spirits of Tasmania provide a vital connection to Tasmania for visitors and locals, and judging by the positive performance of our carriers, people are certainly taking advantage of the improving access to the state.

Last month our tourism and hospitality businesses celebrated the 2016 Tasmanian Tourism Awards. Congratulations to all finalists who won an award and I wish all our Gold Award winners every success at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in Darwin next February.

For me, seeing all these great tourism experiences in one room reinforces the depth of amazing experiences we have throughout Tasmania.

Over the next few months, we expect to see over a quarter of a million visitors in Tasmania. That's potentially a quarter of a million people on the ground promoting our state by sharing their great Tassie experiences with friends, family and colleagues back home.

I reckon we've got the kind of experiences that they would want to tell others about, so from 5 December through to 28 February, whenever a visitor or local does something distinctly Tasmanian, we want them to share their #TassieStyle experience through social media. They even can win a major prize for doing so.

We've been working with Tasmania's regional tourism organisations, the Tourism Industry Council Tasmania, the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network and others to get the word out, and the response from our tourism and hospitality industry has been tremendous.

If you're interested in being involved and would like to find out more, go to www.tourismtasmania.com.au. While the number of holiday visitors coming to Tasmania continues to grow, we feel that advocacy campaigns like this will create even more demand for travel to Tasmania.

Creating demand is one of Tourism Tasmania's main [T2I](#) priorities, and judging by recent research, the prognosis for our state is good. Our Tourism Info Monitor (TIM) shows that Tasmania remains as appealing as ever and almost one third of travelling Australians continue to say they are considering a holiday in Tasmania within the next 2-3 years.

Significantly for our summer campaign, the latest TIM survey shows us that around 74 per cent of visitors recommended Tasmania to others after their holiday, more than any other Australian state or territory. It also showed that word of mouth was an important source of ideas and information on Tasmanian holidays for around one in three Australians considering a holiday here.

On the international front, the extremely positive feedback I continue to receive from our international travel partners and the travel trade gives me great confidence that international numbers will continue to grow and break records in the coming year.

So after a busy 2016, the team at Tourism Tasmania is looking forward to the Christmas break before getting stuck into a range of marketing projects in 2017 – some tried and true, and some new and different.

In addition to our #TassieStyle summer advocacy campaign, work is also well underway to finalise our ninth domestic Go Behind the Scenery Campaign, scheduled for late February.

We have seen some great results from recent campaigns and research has encouraged us to use some of the best content from previous campaigns to engage Australians and inspire them to start planning their next Tasmanian holiday.

We are also currently undertaking research to explore and understand new domestic market segments and growth opportunities for Tasmania. This will not be finished until early in the New Year, and I look forward to sharing this work with you then.

There's plenty more to share, but for now, on behalf of the Board of Directors and all the team at Tourism Tasmania, I wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas, and a safe, healthy and prosperous 2017.

Merry Christmas

John Fitzgerald
CEO, Tourism Tasmania