

CEO Commentary

Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot for the year ending June 2017



The latest figures are out and I am pleased to confirm that Tasmania continues to see good growth in overall visitor numbers and a strong increase in the number of holiday visitors for the financial year 2016-17.

The total number of visitors to Tasmania has increased to 1.27 million reflecting a 9 per cent growth rate when compared to the previous year. As part of that total, holiday visitors have increased by 13 per cent and people travelling to Tasmania to visit friends or relatives (VFR) increased by 11 per cent.

In addition to the overall increase in visitors, the amount of money they spent in our state was \$2.26 billion up by 10 per cent from the previous year. This level of spending makes a significant contribution to the state's economy and Tasmanian communities. The overall impact on Tasmanian businesses and workers who rely on a strong visitor economy for their revenue is positive and the flow on to related sectors advantageous.

Tourism Tasmania's specific focus is on marketing Tasmania as a holiday destination and attracting leisure visitors, which includes people on holiday and people visiting family or friends. I am naturally pleased with the increase in this market as they are high value visitors who are more likely to stay longer, spend more and do more.

This is also good news for our regions who are sharing in the benefits that leisure visitors travelling outside our major centres bring, including increased spending on petrol, tours, attractions, accommodation and other goods and services in regional businesses.

In 2016-17 the East Coast and Northern regions experienced double-digit growth in visitors with a 13 per cent and 11 per cent increase respectively. We also saw solid increases in the South and the Cradle Coast regions as well.

Regional dispersal of visitors is an important focus for Tourism Tasmania. However we know that this may not be evenly distributed throughout some areas and will continue to work with the regional tourism organisations to promote their area.

The latest figures from the National Visitor Survey conducted by Tourism Research Australia has also yielded positive results for Tasmania. It indicates that Tasmanians are enjoying their own state and holidaying at home in greater numbers, with the number of intrastate holiday trips increasing by 6 per cent. This all contributes to a healthy visitor economy in our state.

And on another very positive note, we saw the number of interstate visitors coming to Tasmania grow by 6 per cent as we continue to welcome over one million visitors annually from our northern neighbours. Compared to the same time last year, we have seen double-digit growth in visitors from Queensland, which is up by 12 per cent and NSW up by a healthy 13 per cent as well.

This growing interstate demand was further demonstrated with the recent announcement of Jetstar's new direct flight service between Adelaide and Hobart.

This service is expected to attract more than 46,000 passengers per year with 5,000 seats sold in just the first 12 hours. To support this, we have expanded our cooperative marketing with Jetstar and have rolled out our Go Behind the Scenery domestic marketing campaign into the Adelaide market this spring.

The tenth version of our Go Behind the Scenery campaign is running until 27 October 2017 and showcases authentic Tasmanian stories distributed through multiple channels. Tasmania's four regional tourism organisations were closely involved in the development of the campaign with stories and suggested itineraries from around the state included. Please visit gobehindthescenery.com.au to explore the new content and watch our latest videos.

This time last year, I reported a record number of international visitors to Tasmania from the International Visitor Survey. Twelve months on, I am pleased to report we have continued this trend with a new record of 253,200 international visitors in the 2016-17 year. This represents a 13 per cent increase on the previous year and is the highest rate of international growth of all Australian states and territories.

International visitors provide an increasing growth opportunity for our visitor economy and are an important focus for our marketing activities. We have recently completed a comprehensive review of our international market approach and are in the process of implementing a few changes to enable more targeted, focussed and smarter ways to engage these potential visitors.

Included in this new approach is an innovative partnership with Tourism Australia to employ Tasmania marketing managers within the organisation in the key western markets of Europe and North America. This partnership will allow us to benefit from the significant Tourism Australia networks in their respective markets and respond effectively to new PR and media opportunities.

Our focus on Asia will continue and at the time of writing we are finalising the recruitment of in-market representatives in our key eastern markets of China, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Although Tasmania's visitor numbers are growing steadily, we are not resting on our laurels. We recently launched Tourism Tasmania's corporate plan which outlines our strategic approach over the next three years, our priority programs for the next 12 months and our focus to help achieve the goals outlined in the T21 Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy.

Alongside this work we recently looked at how we can realign the organisation and strengthen our teams to support our global marketing approach and help us deliver our corporate plan. The team is excited about the new realignment, which I look forward to sharing with you over the coming months.

I am also very pleased to welcome Ian Rankine to the Tourism Tasmania Board. Ian Rankine has been appointed as the Tourism Industry Council's new nominee and replaces Simon Carrant who recently retired from the board after 16 years' service as the TICT-nominated director. In addition, James Cretan has been reappointed as Chair for a second term until 2020, with Rebecca King and Michelle Cox being reappointed as directors for a further two and three years respectively.

There is no doubt the stewardship of the organisation is in good hands as we look to deliver our corporate plan and work towards reaching our T21 visitor economy goals.

John Fitzgerald
CEO, Tourism Tasmania