

# CEO Commentary

## Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot for the year ending December 2014



The latest results confirm that Tasmania performed well during the 2014 calendar year in relation to a number of key tourism measures like visitor numbers, nights being spent in the state, visitor spending, holiday arrivals and regional tourism numbers.

Figures from the Tasmanian Visitor Survey for the 12 months to December 2014 show that around 1 068 100 interstate and international visitors came to Tasmania on regular air and sea passenger services during this period. This was around three percent more than the number of people who visited us during 2013.

These figures represent another positive result for Tasmanian tourism, and I am especially pleased about the 16 per cent growth rate for holiday visitors to Tasmania. Of course, these figures do not include the tens of thousands of cruise ship passengers and crew who also experienced a little of Tasmania as part of their cruise.

Not only did we see more visitors, but they also spent quite a deal more per person while they were here. In 2013, total visitor expenditure throughout Tasmania was \$1.58 billion. In 2014, our visitor's total spending rose by 11 per cent to \$1.76 billion, which was driven not only by more visitors, but also by an increase in the amount each person spent while they were here of around \$100.

The growth in the holiday travel market continues to be the key to Tassie's tourism success, and this benefits our regions. The latest results show that all regions continued to see positive results compared with 2013, with visitor numbers to the South, East, North and Cradle Coast regions growing by 6, 8, 2 and 6 per cent respectively in 2014.

Promoting holidays in Tasmania requires everyone in the industry to play their part, including our major airlines, the TT Line, other commercial travel partners, regional tourism organisations, local hospitality and tourism businesses, and many others. Clearly everyone is doing a fine job.

In recent quarters, the standout performer for Tassie has been Queensland, and this has continued with visitor numbers growing by 13 per cent in 2014, compared with last year. As I said previously, visitors from Queensland tend to spend more and stay here longer, and I think this is reflected in our current results.

In 2014, our airlines and the Spirits of Tasmania also continued to carry more visitors than in 2013, with growth rates of 3 and 4 per cent respectively.

While this is all good news, I suggested in my previous commentary that we could not take recent high levels of growth for granted in future results. A number of supply-related factors outside of marketing will also need to be addressed if we are going to sustain a higher level of growth in visitors to the state.

Compared with 2013, passenger loads on existing air and sea services have increased despite limited growth in capacity, and we have heard in recent months about accommodation supply constraints in some parts of the state during peak periods.

It goes without saying that further increases in access, more accommodation in key hot spots, and the introduction of new tourism experiences will be required to support the ongoing marketing efforts of Tourism Tasmania as well as commercial travel and industry colleagues. I am pleased to say that work is well-underway in these areas to help us elevate the rate of visitor growth.

Our ongoing research suggests that demand for travel to Tasmania continues to be strong, and recent high profile events and accolades, have helped to keep us in the hearts and minds of domestic and international travellers.

Right now, our fifth *Go Behind the Scenery* campaign is in full swing and the early results coming from the campaign's microsite [www.gobehindthescenery.com.au](http://www.gobehindthescenery.com.au) are very encouraging. So far, we have seen over 36 000 people visit the campaign website and their level of engagement with the material contained on the website has been outstanding. Importantly, more people are choosing to check out a range of Tassie travel packages and deals.

Unfortunately, for those of you who have been waiting for the latest results from the International Visitor Survey (IVS) for 2014, these will be delayed a few months. Tourism Research Australia, who produce the quarterly IVS results for Australia and all states/territories, has advised that due to a delay with the passenger card processing undertaken by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP), their IVS results for the 2014 calendar year will also be delayed, possibly until July 2015.

This means that we have had to retain their international visitor results for the 12 months to September 2014 in our latest Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot. However we will update those results as soon as we receive the new figures from Tourism Research Australia. We'll also let our industry know about the updated IVS results when we have them to hand. I imagine they will also be very positive.

Right now, we're approaching the end of what is traditionally our busiest period, although with the events in recent months, including the Cricket World Cup games, I expect this season to continue strongly for a little while longer. I have been hearing that this somewhat extended tourism season is placing quite a deal of strain on many businesses and their staff, and I hope you all find a little time out to 'catch your breath'.

In the meantime, our major domestic campaign for autumn continues to attract interest and generate travel enquiries, and we are also working with a number of commercial travel partners to generate further travel sales for Tassie for the coming autumn and winter.

In the coming weeks, I will also be travelling to China with the Tasmanian Government to continue to build the positive relationship we engendered with the Chinese presidential visit last November. There is a great deal of anecdotal evidence to suggest that President Xi's visit has already sparked greater interest and generated a noticeable increase in Chinese visitors travelling our state, and this can only be expected to grow further.

Given the events of last October and November, our amazing summer of events, and the feedback I am receiving from our industry regarding the past few months, I am confident our next survey results covering the first quarter of 2015 will produce more good tourism numbers for Tassie.

**John Fitzgerald**  
**CEO, Tourism Tasmania**