

# CEO Commentary

## Tasmanian Tourism Snapshot for the year ending September 2017



Christmas is fast approaching and I'm really pleased to be presenting you with another positive set of figures as we head into 2018.

In the 12 months to September 2017 we welcomed a record 1.28 million visitors to Tasmania, up eight per cent from the previous year. This result keeps us heading in the right direction and brings us much 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 also increased to reach \$2.3 billion and 10.73 million nights respectively. The strong growth in visitor spending now puts us only \$170 million from our T21 visitor spending goal.

With Tourism Tasmania's focus on marketing Tasmania as a holiday destination and attracting leisure visitors, I am naturally pleased to see a 12 per cent increase in total leisure visitors to 982,300. I'm looking forward to seeing these leisure numbers pass the one million mark next year, as they are high value visitors who are more likely to stay longer, spend more and explore our regions.

Pleasingly, the latest figures also indicate growth in visitor numbers across each regional area. In the year to September 2017, the east coast experienced ten per cent growth, the northern region grew by 11 per cent with seven per cent and three per cent growth in the southern and Cradle Coast region respectively.

Growth in regional dispersal of visitors is a positive sign and it's good to see visitors exploring beyond our capital city and spending money on petrol, tours, attractions, accommodation and other goods and services in our regions. We need to keep encouraging regional visitation as this dispersal generates jobs in a whole range of businesses that directly and indirectly support our visitor economy.

The government's recent announcement of new purpose built Spirit of Tasmania vessels for 2021 is welcome news for Tasmania. We know that on average travellers on the Spirits stay nine nights longer than air travellers, spend more and visit twice as many places. So, our regions will clearly benefit when these new ships commence sailings.

The latest international results for Tasmania are equally outstanding, with a 17 per cent increase of international visitors to Tasmania over the same period. This makes Tasmania's growth rate higher than the national average of seven per cent, and the highest rate of international growth of all Australian states or territories.

Tasmania's strong international growth has come from our key source markets of the USA, New Zealand, UK, Germany and Pan-Asia markets. Hong Kong has also surged ahead of the UK to dominate the position as Tasmania's third largest international source market, and visitors from China have grown by 40 per cent from the same time the previous year.

We have also begun to welcome visitors on the new direct services from Adelaide and the Gold Coast by Jetstar and Tigerair. Tourism Tasmania has been supporting these new routes through cooperative marketing and other promotions and I am happy to report that early demand has been strong with inaugural flights from the Gold Coast being nearly full.

The new services will greatly increase access to the state, providing visitors and Tasmanians with more travel options. Increasing air and sea access to the state is key to the growth of our visitor economy and achieving the Government and industry's T21 visitor economy goals.

In other news, the Helloworld Travel Frontliners Forum was hosted in Hobart in late November over three days of unseasonably warm weather. Helloworld is a leading Australian based travel network and the forum was attended by 550 frontline retail travel consultants and their management team. The feedback from delegates was very positive and it was a wonderful way to introduce so many influential travel agents to the fabulous charm and hospitality of our state.

I would also like to pass on my congratulations to all the tourism and hospitality businesses that were celebrated at the 2017 Tasmanian Tourism Awards and I wish all our Gold Award winners every success at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards in Perth next February. For me, seeing all these great tourism experiences in one room reinforces the depth of amazing experiences we have throughout Tasmania and is a great opportunity to celebrate our fantastic industry.

This summer we are expecting around 250 000 holidaymakers to visit Tasmania, and many Tasmanians to also be out and about holidaying in our state. That makes it an ideal time to harness the promotional power of passionate advocates, encouraging them to share their own unique Tassie experiences with their friends and family.

We know word of mouth recommendations are a powerful influence on people's holiday choices and today's likes and shares can bring tomorrow's visitors. We also know Tassie has its own way of doing things and has a little bit of something for everyone. Tassie holidays can provide unedited experiences, laugh-out-loud adventures and reality checks and quickly has a positive effect on visitors. Pretty soon they start to do things a bit differently, and we hope they will share their own 'TassieStyle' experience with their networks during their stay.

Last December, we launched our first summer engagement campaign to incentivise visitors and locals to post images of Tasmania to their social media accounts using the #TassieStyle hashtag. The response was tremendous with over 67 000 images currently tagged with #TassieStyle on Instagram, including 25 000 images added since the campaign ended!

This level of success could not have happened without the strong support we received from tourism operators, event partners, industry groups, regional tourism organisations, the Tasmanian Visitor Information network, local Tasmanians and many more.

On the back of last year's success, we have taken on board some learnings and are reactivating the #TassieStyle summer engagement campaign and I encourage you to get involved. The campaign is a cost effective opportunity for you to create a buzz for your own business or region and will again offer your guests a chance to win great prizes.

This year the campaign is running on Instagram-only for a longer period from 18 December 2017 to 15 April 2018. To find out more and download a digital industry toolkit to get you started, visit [www.tourismtasmania.com.au](http://www.tourismtasmania.com.au).

So after a busy 2017, the team at Tourism Tasmania is looking forward to a short Christmas break before getting stuck into a range of marketing projects in 2018 – some tried and true, and some new and different.

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 2018.

Warm regards

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

**12 December 2017**