

2030 Visitor Economy Strategy

Cruise Shipping 4-Year Action Plan



Introduction

Three pieces of research commissioned by Tourism Tasmania inform this plan: the value proposition of cruise shipping (KPMG, 2025), brand alignment of cruise with Tasmania as a visitor destination (Kantar, May 2025), and Tasmanian community sentiment toward tourism (EMRS, ongoing).

This work found that mid to large ships and the luxury segment deliver the greatest economic benefit through onshore expenditure and regional dispersal; that Tasmania is broadly seen as a good fit for cruise with positive sentiment growing from 2022 to 2025; and that cruise accounts for approximately one per cent of community concerns.

This action plan sets out our approach to the cruise market, organised around the goals of the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy: growing value over volume, supporting regional dispersal, making a positive environmental contribution, maintaining community harmony, and delivering a genuinely distinctive Tasmanian experience.

Context

Australia’s cruise sector has experienced a sustained national downturn, with the cost of doing business, global instability and federal policy settings all contributing to the country’s diminishing competitiveness in the global cruise market. Tasmania has felt this directly. After recovering strongly post-COVID to a peak of 143 vessel calls in 2023–24, generating approximately \$184 million in overall economic contribution with \$43 million of that in direct onshore visitor expenditure, calls have since declined to 84 by 2026–27, a loss of approximately \$76 million. Yet domestic and global cruise demand remains robust, and this represents a genuine opportunity for Tasmania to position itself for sustainable growth as the market recovers.

Tasmania is committed to growing the value of cruise ship visitation to its ports. This action plan sets out how we will realise on that opportunity and outlines our strategic priorities: attracting high-value international cruise vessels, strengthening the economic and social benefits that flow to local hospitality and tourism businesses, and positioning our ports and communities for sustainable cruise growth. These actions reflect our focus on maximising the positive impact of cruise shipping for Tasmania.

1.0 Grow value over volume

Cruise value is primarily generated through onshore expenditure, with mid to large ships and the luxury segment delivering the greatest economic benefit. Our focus on value over volume means attracting ships and itineraries that maximise time in port and shore tour participation.

1.0 ACTION

1.1	Develop and implement a luxury cruise attraction plan, to drive growth from high value segments of the cruise market.
1.2	Work with the cruise industry and shore tour operators to grow participation in shore tours, with a focus on extending time in port, improving accessibility to key attractions and product training for cruise trade partners.
1.3	Progress turn-around opportunities and small ship homeporting in Hobart to grow economic benefit through provisioning, crew spend and pre and post cruise stays.
1.4	Update online cruise information and resources providing clear guidance on processes, requirements and product opportunities for operators building itineraries in Tasmania.
1.5	Continued advocacy for Australian Border Force resourcing for cruise clearances, sensible Coastal Trading Act reform and a National Cruise strategy.

2.0 Support regional dispersal

Most cruise calls are concentrated in Hobart. Shore product development near Burnie and the prospect of Inspection Head at Beauty Point create new opportunities in the north, while investment in tender jetty at Port Arthur Historic Site provides options for larger ships on the Tasman Peninsula. Shore tour development is our primary mechanism for spreading economic benefit beyond port precincts.

2.0 ACTION

2.1	Maintain port infrastructure at Burnie to facilitate ongoing cruise ship visitation and continue to investigate opportunities to accommodate larger cruise vessels at the port.
2.2	Ongoing promotion of the Tamar region as a cruise destination for small to mid-sized vessels through existing anchorage and alongside options. Continue exploring opportunities for infrastructure improvement at Inspection Head (Beauty Point) to support an alongside berthing option on the West Tamar for small luxury class vessels.
2.3	Support growth in cruise visitation to Port Arthur, including shore tour development and port access planning.
2.4	Invest in shore tour product development and connecting cruise lines to regional attractions, destinations and experiences, with a focus on dispersal beyond Hobart.

3.0 Make a positive impact on our environment

Environmental costs are primarily driven by vessel emissions in port; shore power and newer fleet technology are the key levers to reduce this impact. Expedition ships operating in sensitive and remote areas carry greater preservation and incident risk – due to limited emergency response capacity the south and west coasts have higher levels of restriction.

3.0 ACTION

3.1	Continue to work with key stakeholders to investigate commercially appropriate opportunities for shore power installation at Hobart to reduce vessel emissions while cruise ships are in port.
3.2	Continued advocacy of the cruise industry's sustainability management, for waste and emissions while in port, including through use of scrubbers, fuel switching and operational measures.
3.3	Promote sustainable and responsible visitation, environmental standards and community expectations to cruise lines visiting Tasmania .
3.4	Establish the Expedition Cruise Coordination Group (ECCG), facilitated by Tourism Tasmania, with membership including NRET, TasPorts, MAST to provide statewide coordinated approach.
3.5	Review the fee framework for cruise ship access to protected areas.
3.6	Promote and facilitate passenger and crew participation in conservation projects while ships are in port, in partnership with conservation organisations and cruise lines.
3.7	Increase clarity for expedition cruise lines on locations and activities suitable for expedition ship access informed by the Sustainable Visitation Framework.

4.0 Be valued by Tasmanians

Community surveys indicate that Tasmanians hold broadly positive views about tourism, with cruise accounting for approximately one per cent of community concerns. Peak season visits can contribute to congestion at popular sites and crowding in smaller communities, and we see access management and sentiment monitoring as important safeguards for that social licence.

4.0 ACTION

4.1	Cruise visitation managed within the Sustainable Visitation Framework to monitor and manage pressure points and identify opportunities to grow cruise in locations with available capacity.
4.2	Continue to monitor Tasmanian community sentiment toward cruise shipping as part of 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy monitoring.
4.3	Develop mechanisms to manage cruise ship access to smaller and remote communities where infrastructure capacity is limited, in consultation with local government and community groups.

5.0 Deliver a genuinely Tasmanian experience

Cruise passengers have high intent to return to Tasmania as independent travellers, and the luxury segment in particular responds to cultural, culinary and immersive experiences that connect visitors with our people and landscapes. Shore tours offering access to experiences not available elsewhere are a key differentiator in a competitive global cruise market.

5.0 ACTION

5.1	Support tourism and hospitality businesses to develop shore tours, packages and in port experiences that are distinctively Tasmanian.
5.2	Work with partners to address shortages and improve quality of local step-on tour guides
5.3	Attract cruise visitation in shoulder months of cruise season.
5.4	Work with the industry to grow local produce and content on board ships to show case Tasmania

6.0 Governance and reporting

Tourism Tasmania will lead implementation in collaboration with TasPorts, state government agencies and stakeholders.

6.0 ACTION

6.1	Report on cruise action plan delivery as part of the 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy.
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