

Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy



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The Premier's message



The *Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy*, a first of its kind in Australia, sets out to address the visitor journey from a whole of state perspective. It strives to make sure every visitor to Tasmania has access to the right information, has the best experience when they are here, and then wants to return to our shores again. This visitor engagement strategy will lead our visitors to become Tasmania's travelling ambassadors.

The strategy also continues a great tradition whereby industry and government work together to consider, support and create great visitor experiences.

Our world-class tourism industry is continuing to grow. Tasmania has outperformed domestic and international visitor forecasts over the past five years, and the outlook for future demand is positive. Tasmania has what the world wants and we need to continue to focus on sustainably growing our visitor economy.

My government and the tourism industry have committed to continued growth through the joint aims of *T21 – The Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy* to fulfil five major goals by 2020. These goals include attracting 1.5 million visitors and \$2.4 billion in visitor spending annually, delivering more direct and indirect tourism employment in Tasmania, sustaining a high level of regional visitor dispersal and achieving greater visitor satisfaction.

This *Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy* is a key action of T21 and sets out the guiding principles, elements and actions we will undertake with industry to rethink and strengthen our approach and develop a new way of visitor engagement that is unique to Tasmania.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Hodgman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Will Hodgman

Premier

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events

Today's visitors

In 2015-16, Tasmania attracted 1 167 900 visitors, which was two per cent more than the previous year.

In the same period, air capacity to Tasmania increased 4 per cent and the number of visitors travelling to Tasmania on the Spirits of Tasmania also rose 13 per cent.

The number of visitors travelling to Tasmania's regions grew by up to six per cent and tourism business confidence rose to record levels.

These visitors spent a record total of \$2.05 billion throughout the state during their stay, and they stayed a total of 10.2 million nights in the state, with each visitor staying an average of 8.7 nights.

Tasmania's visitor economy is dominated by Australian travellers, mainly from the eastern states. Interstate visitors account for around four out of every five visitors to the state, with Victoria providing the greatest share followed by New South Wales and Queensland.

Internationally, Tasmania has seen strong growth in the number of visitors from the Pan Asian region to complement its traditional western markets.

China has now grown to become a substantial international source market for Tasmania. When combined with Hong Kong, it is almost 50 per cent larger than our next largest market, the United States of America. While future market growth is likely to be dominated by Asia, our western markets remain very important to Tasmania's visitor economy.

Tomorrow's visitors

T21 – *The Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020* aims to fulfil five major goals for Tasmania's visitor economy by the end of 2020. These goals include attracting 1.5 million visitors and \$2.47 billion in visitor spending annually, delivering more direct and indirect tourism employment in Tasmania, sustaining a high level of regional visitor dispersal and achieving greater visitor satisfaction.

Looking to the future, the latest national tourism forecasting suggests domestic travel growth in Australia over the next 10 years will increase, but still be relatively low.

Domestic visitor nights are forecast to increase by 3.8 per cent in 2016-17 while the 10 year average growth rate is forecast to be around 3.1 per cent.

On the international front, the current forecast for international tourism to Australia is healthy.

Inbound visitor arrivals are forecast to increase 6.7 per cent in 2016-17 while the 10 year average growth rate is forecast at 5.6 per cent, up from the previously forecast 4.1 per cent. China is expected to deliver a substantially higher level of visitor growth than this over the coming decade.

What is visitor engagement?

Visitor engagement has become an all-encompassing term for communication with visitors throughout the entire trip cycle. It describes the ways in which our visitors interact with a destination, our tourism products and with one another.

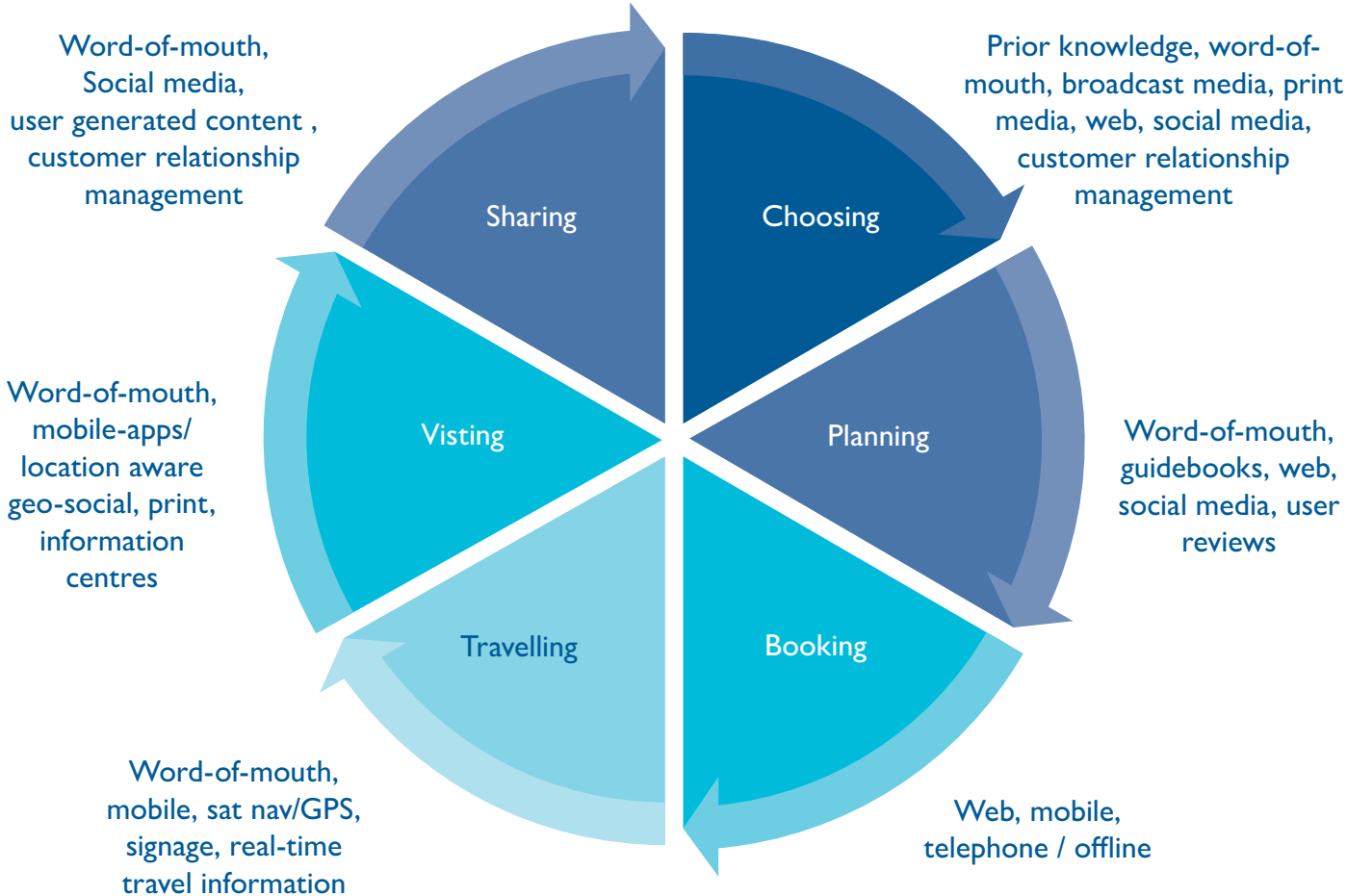
High quality visitor engagement plays a critical role in enhancing the overall visitor experience through creating a positive image of Tasmania, providing a hospitable and friendly welcome and by supporting genuine authentic experiences. It presents an opportunity to inspire visitors to explore the tourism product that is distinctive to Tasmania including its cultural heritage, high quality produce, natural environment and importantly, our people.

An increasingly critical element of the visitor engagement practice is the need to personalise and enrich the experience of visitors by providing opportunities to connect with the local and authentic nature of a destination.

We are seeing a shift in the way destinations are engaging their visitors when they are travelling from place-based traditional, one-way messaging to two-way communication that takes advantage of the opportunities that digital technology and social media platforms provide. We are seeing destinations increasingly seeking to personalise the travel experience for their visitors.



The trip cycle and visitor engagement journey



Key trends

The rapid adoption of smart technology and the growing prominence of social media has resulted in the changing expectations and requirements of our visitors.

We need to understand how they discover Tasmania, where they go, what they ask, what they value, and how they make decisions. Whether through new technology or via face-to-face contact, visitor engagement provides us the opportunity to influence their experience, their length of stay, what they see, do and hear during their visit and what they tell the rest of the world about us.

- Visitors are looking for a personalised travel experience and one that allows them to experience a local's way of life.
- Peer-to-peer buyer influence is driving purchases, 74 per cent of travellers use social media while on holiday and 76 per cent of travellers use social media to share their experiences after they return.
- 92 per cent of consumers trust peer recommendations more than advertisements.
- Mobile platforms and apps are becoming the primary engagement platform for travellers; 85 per cent of travellers use their smartphones while abroad.
- Travellers are demanding more information, control, interaction and personalisation.
- Technology is enabling faster decision-making by visitors.
- Smart technology is creating new opportunities for innovative services and processes.

On arrival in Tasmania, our visitors are presented with a variety of opportunities to gain information and engage with the tourism industry.



The world is becoming much smaller and people are seeking a sense of connection and showing increased interest in embracing Tasmania's authenticity and simplicity to slow down and explore nature and the wild world.

Our current approach

Gateways – air and sea ports

Tasmania has an advantage over mainland destinations due to the limited number of gateways:

- Burnie Airport
- Devonport Airport
- Flinders Island Airport
- Hobart Airport
- King Island Airport
- Launceston Airport
- Burnie Cruise Ship Terminal
- Devonport Ferry Terminal
- Hobart Cruise Ship Terminal

Our gateways need to reflect the brand and be a place where our visitors have a personal experience with Tasmania.

Visitor information centres

Tasmania has 19 yellow *i* Visitor Information Centres (VICs) licensed under the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network (TVIN) plus an extensive number and range of white *i* centres in addition to visitor information centres run by Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) and a small number of 'pop up' information centres' that occur at peak times in high volume visitor nodes.

Visitors want well trained, knowledgeable, professional, approachable, friendly staff and volunteers.

Directional signage

The level and style of directional and welcome signage throughout Tasmania is coordinated by state and local governments, guided by the Tasmanian Signs Manual and the Tourism Signing Guidelines.

Our signage system needs to encourage visitors to tell their stories through a focus on the journey not the signage and a minimalist approach that supports wayfinding and navigational assurance while ensuring visitor safety.

Drive journeys

Tasmania currently has many drive journeys known as touring routes, trails and self-drive itineraries. These have been developed over time with several established as part of the Drive Tasmania marketing strategy in 2004. The most recently developed is the successful Great Eastern Drive launched in 2015.

We need to have a smaller number of exceptional journeys that drive visitor itineraries and are well planned in every way... the journey, the experience, the personal interaction, industry engagement and supported by high quality infrastructure.

Internet and social media

Close to a third of all bookings in Tasmania come through online only providers, while travel providers such as the Spirit of Tasmania also provide an important entry point for information and bookings. An increasing number of visitors are choosing not to book until in the state providing them with freedom of movement and itinerary planning.

Product that does not have an online presence is invisible to the majority of our visitors.

Collateral

Tasmania has a wide and varied range of collateral available to the visitor, both pre-arrival and during the visit, many of which are commercially produced focussed on securing advertising.

Collateral needs to be part of an integrated system that gives the visitor the information they need, the experiences they can access, how to get to the experience and how they can book.

Personal interactions

Visitors continue to seek out credible and trusted sources of information about local activities and directions. They want local insights into the area, unique information they can't get anywhere else to add value to their experience in the destination and to confirm information and affirm decisions.



This is at the heart of a new approach to visitor engagement. The personal interaction that our visitor has with Tasmania will be the story they tell when they return home. It will be the way they engage and experience the island, the first and the last memory they gather. It will be our core strength.

Guiding principles for a new way of visitor engagement

The research undertaken to inform this strategy included a series of think tanks and interviews with a range of industry and government stakeholders to explore the future of visitor engagement. Stakeholders worked together to identify future visitor wants, needs and aspirations; what we believe visitors want and in turn how we can move beyond the expected.

From these discussions the following principles were developed to guide the future of visitor engagement in Tasmania.

1. Provide a landscape where visitors engage in meaningful experiences rather than skimming the surface of the destination.
2. Encourage greater interaction between locals and visitors.
3. Help visitors connect with the rich stories that set Tasmania apart.
4. Inspire visitors to create and share unique itineraries that meet their special interests and get off the beaten track.
5. Let the landscape, culture and people of Tasmania lead the story through seamless and, where possible unobtrusive visitor engagement.



A new model to engage our visitors

It is now time to turn our minds to finding new engagement solutions that are more inclusive of the changes to our visitors' needs and wants and their growing need to stay connected. We will need new engagement solutions that are more inclusive of digital technology and the online platforms that have disrupted the communication landscape.



Tourism Tasmania's 'Go behind the scenery campaign' utilises personalised authentic stories from locals as a way to promote Tasmania and the experiences on offer. This approach can also be extended to the way we engage our visitors when they arrive and how they experience Tasmania.

The range of stories visitors can share about Tasmania with their offline and online networks are as vast as the number of experiences possible while they are here. The abundance of perspectives creates a powerful opportunity to inspire a high volume of positive stories, word-of-mouth referrals, inspiring new visitors and making return trips for those who have visited previously, more enticing simply by the way we engage with them while they are here. This can lead to wider benefits for the visitor economy.

By working together to set the stage for unique and personalised experiences and providing facilities and services that enable their creation we will meet and frequently exceed the expectations of our visitors and provide a competitive advantage to Tasmania.

Traditional visitor engagement services will need to adapt to the needs and wants of our new visitor markets. We need to develop new value-producing roles for visitor information provision and relationships with visitors in this redefined marketplace.

We also need to harvest the resulting intelligence for further visitor engagement and destination enhancement.

Visitor engagement is now a place for collaboration between visitors, community and industry for building and improving products and experiences. We need to redefine roles and services to focus on authentic, timely and personalised engagement that synthesises visitors' perspectives, needs and stories at their destination through ongoing conversations in places and times of their choosing. We must develop strategies for each of the three phases of the visitor relationship cycle: stimulate discovery, deliver on-site visitor support, and encourage further experience-sharing.



Three strategies for change

1. Engage with new and existing markets

Technology and its impact on the visitor travel experience; with digital tools to facilitate real experiences and connections with real people locally, must be addressed to drive value into the future:

- Embrace technology to support visitor engagement and the Tasmanian brand.
- Strengthen emphasis on market segmentation and personalising visitor engagement.
- Develop new strategies to refocus existing infrastructure such as visitor centres, touring routes and way finding.
- Continue to cater for markets who use traditional engagement.

2. Protect and communicate the Tasmanian brand

Continue to protect and communicate the strong brand and the authenticity of Tasmania, the environment and sustainability:

- Enable the local community to play a central role in advocacy in destination experiences.
- Connect visitor experiences with quality of life in Tasmania.
- Create roles as experience ambassadors of particular destinations.
- Balance the need for growth with responsible and sustainable development.

3. Create a new model of collaboration

The ability to collaborate together, with a clear and consistent voice to attract the global traveller and build international popularity:

- Develop and implement service standards and consistently measure and reward performance.
- Agree on uniform methodology to measure impact of visitor engagement.
- Use collaborative technology to collect data.

Priority elements and actions

Digital strategy and collateral

Tasmania as a destination of choice for travellers all over the world is seeking to be a world leader in visitor engagement. The trip cycle informs us that the first engagement with a visitor occurs before that person may have even dreamt of a visit, or when they first think about a holiday.

Tasmania currently has a range of printed and digital collateral for visitors. There are some very good approaches to the provision of information, but there is an opportunity to do it better and do it through a consistent framework that is visitor-centric, not company or booking specific, and not competing or conflicting with visitor brand across different platforms and sites.

We need an approach that provides visitors with their needs throughout the trip cycle, from engagement in the dreaming phase to joining the club and sharing memories at the end.

Actions

For the tourism industry and the Tasmanian Government to engage with and leverage the results of Tourism Tasmania's current review of consumer target markets. The review will identify the most optimal segmentation of that market to ensure all the marketing activities are promoting the right message to the right customer at the right time.

Share Tourism Tasmania's brand positioning and subsequent assets to the Tasmanian tourism industry to ensure a consistent brand connection and narrative through the visitor's entire journey from their home and throughout their Tasmanian travels.

Gateways

The points of entry and departure are equally important in different ways but both offer opportunities to connect with the visitor in a way that makes them feel welcome and may encourage them to share their experience and return. Each offers a range of ways that the visitor can enjoy personal connection with local people and ambassadors.

With our limited number of gateways, we have the opportunity to make the gateways an experience in their own right where the visitor feels welcome, knows they are in Tasmania and has the opportunity to gather last minute destination information talking with local people or accessing online sources.

Tasmania has an advantage over every other state in Australia. We are an island.

Actions

Tourism Tasmania will continue to leverage access partners owned assets with high impact, brand-aligned collateral to extend and enhance the visitor experience.

Continue support for the Tasmanian Gateway Visitor Engagement Program to develop contemporary visitor engagement infrastructure at our gateways.

Reimagining our Visitor Information Centres

Visitor Information Centres (VICs) will continue to play a role for a proportion of visitors seeking face-to-face validation and word-of-mouth recommendations around their journey, whether pre-planned or not. It is recognised that the closer a visitor is to their destination, the more localised their information needs are as they become specific to the experiences available at the destination.

However, these types of traditional channels of visitor engagement were originally developed in a marketplace without the current range of digital promotion and distribution channels that today's traveller now has. Our visitors now engage with Tasmania through a range of sources at various stages of their journey that directly impact on decisions they make about their holiday and their satisfaction with their visit.

The challenge for a destination is to ensure information is available when our visitor wants it and in a way they want it.

Actions

The Tasmanian Government in partnership with industry and Local Government will develop the framework for the optimal state wide visitor information provision model. The model to include identification of the key locations which are the decision points for our visitors, including attractions and venue co-location options. Aligned to the Tasmanian brand the framework will include an integrated digital strategy and booking system.

The tourism industry in partnership with the Tasmanian Government to lead the development of a flagship Tasmanian Visitor Experience Centre (TEC). The TEC to be an attraction in its own right encompassing the guiding principles of visitor engagement and aligned with the Tasmanian brand. The TEC to have a visitor-centric approach that offers a great place to visit, to learn, to book, to buy, to download, to recharge, to talk with an informative local ambassador.

Directional and way finding signage

We live in an era that offers new digital solutions daily, the delivery of a seamless visitor journey experience requires an integration of a number of elements that, along with maps, brochures, apps, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and visitor information centres, also includes the delivery of great wayfinding including directional signage.

One of the most important but least understood aspects of tourism destination management is visitor navigation. Regions devote a large amount of time and resources to attracting people, yet only a fraction of the time to enhance the experience of visitors once they are in the area.

Clear, current signage systems are an integral part of delivering a safe and seamless visitor journey and enhancing the quality of the experience.

Action

Undertake a review of the tourism signage system and guidelines. The system and guidelines will align with national and International standards in major directional signage to ensure safe driving, encompasses the guiding principles of visitor engagement and addresses the issues of responsibility, ownership and ongoing maintenance of signage in Tasmania.

Drive journeys

Drive journeys play an important role in Tasmania's visitor offerings, and an important way of directing visitors to great experiences and attractions as well as encouraging dispersal into regional areas. Touring routes are used the world over as a means of guiding visitors into areas that can provide an experience the visitor is seeking and of focussing infrastructure investment to support visitor needs. The collateral and digital strategy associated with touring routes ensures the experience matches the visitor expectations.

We continue to resonate as a strong touring destination with a focus on self-drive by free independent travellers. The beautiful and diverse landscapes and coastline provides a perfect opportunity for visitors to soak up the natural beauty of the touring journey as they travel from cities to towns, and mountains to beaches.

Well planned drive journeys and experience trails are critical to the future success of visitor experience and engagement in Tasmania.

Action

Collaborate with industry on the development of a new two-tiered driver journey framework. The framework will develop criteria that will guide the development and prioritisation of icon drives and experience trails and will encompass the successful design and implementation aspects of the Great Eastern Drive and Cradle Coast Tasting Trail.

Destination and experience advocacy

Innovation in visitor engagement is frequently about community. People, not product, are an important aspect of Tasmania's visitor engagement and through word-of-mouth communications, everyone from visitors to niche influencers, non-traditional partners and residents are touch points for engagement – they provide the content for experiences and the stories that visitors share with others.

Story telling is central to visitor engagement and the development of Tasmania as a destination. Stories are the result of people (storytellers) who have experiences and share them. These stories are crafted by locals and visitors alike. These stories reach out to the world through various social media channels.

We can influence these stories by creating outstanding experiences and creating personal interactions with visitors at different points in their journey.

Actions

Tourism Tasmania's Visitor Summer Advocacy Campaign will encourage and enable visitors (and locals) to share their Tasmanian experience with their friends, relatives and broader networks while they are in Tasmania and post trip. The campaign, in market from December 2016 until February 2017, will activate an army of passionate advocates that will represent a powerful word-of-mouth marketing tool for the state.

Tourism Tasmania's Tasmania Advocacy Campaign – to increase advocacy from locals by creating a Tasmanian Advocacy Program increasing Tasmanian public engagement across Tourism Tasmania's marketing initiatives. The Program, will aim to harness the power of Tasmanians to share Tasmanian stories and experiences, and advocate and stimulate conversations about Tasmania ensuring the destination is top of mind when travel decisions are made .



Implementation

The three priority actions are:

1. **Reimagining our Visitor Information Centres.**
2. **Directional and way finding signage.**
3. **Gateways.**

Recognising that all of the elements and actions are interconnected and key touch points for visitors to Tasmania, the remaining actions will be implemented as required to support our new model of visitor engagement:

1. **Digital strategy and collateral.**
2. **Drive journeys.**
3. **Destination and experience advocacy.**

The T2I Steering committee will oversee the implementation of the Tasmanian Visitor Engagement Strategy and report progress to the Premier's Visitor Economy Advisory Council.

**GOOD VISITOR
ENGAGEMENT**



**CONSISTENCY
OF EXPERIENCE**

Acknowledgements

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