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Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Strategy



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Image credits: Brendan Boucher, Flow Mountain Bike, Rob Burnett, Tourism Tasmania.

Message from the Premier



Tasmania has an enormous opportunity to emerge as the cycle tourism capital of Australia.

Our state has a competitive edge unlike any other, we have unrivalled natural scenery.

When coupled with our unique communities, world renowned cycling events and new tracks, trails and cycleways, Tasmania can be unbeatable.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to realising the potential of Tasmania's cycle tourism opportunities.

Through the Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Strategy we will work with the industry, key stakeholders and all other levels of government to take advantage of the growth in cycling tourism.

The strategy will guide the development of Tasmania's cycling tracks and trails, grow and promote experiences and events, and improve safety for all cyclists.

The Tasmanian Government has committed \$6 million to establish a Cycle Tourism Fund to make this happen.

This will support projects to achieve our vision to make Tasmania the nation's leading cycle tourism destination.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Hodgman'.

Will Hodgman

Premier of Tasmania

Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events

Minister for Sport and Recreation



Tasmania's cycling tourism industry

Tasmania is poised to emerge as Australia's most exciting cycle tourism destination. Infrastructure developments in Northern Tasmania and West Coast regions, and new developments in Hobart and the South East region, are leading to a significant rise in tourists participating in cycling. Further developments set to come online in the next few years will add to the state's appeal. While current numbers are on the rise, there is great potential to accelerate growth in this sector. Cycle tourism, encompassing the touring, mountain biking and events based / personal challenge segments will contribute to the success of Tasmania's tourism industry.

The Tasmanian Department of State Growth developed a Draft Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Strategic Action Plan in 2016, and sought comment from interested parties. Feedback from stakeholders in response to the draft has been considered in the development of this strategy. This Tasmanian Cycle Tourism Strategy identifies the priority opportunities that can deliver on the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 goals and drive Tasmania towards being Australia's best cycling destination.

Becoming a world class cycling destination

A range of factors combine to make world class cycling destinations, including an authentic visitor experience, quality infrastructure and a strong local cycling culture. These are important to attract a range of markets with different needs and expectations. While a destination may have world class riding opportunities that meet the local community needs, it is the combination of rides, trails and events plus the overall visitor experience that combine to make a compelling cycling destination.

Importantly, recent consumer research¹ has concluded that no single Australian state currently 'owns' cycle tourism as central to their tourism proposition. While the report was focused on Victoria, it highlighted Tasmania's opportunity to establish a reputation as Australia's premier cycling tourism destination.

Priority areas

Three Priorities have been identified to realise our potential, these include:

- **Priority One**
Infrastructure that provides diverse, accessible and high quality visitor experiences: Tracks, routes and trails
- **Priority Two**
Education and support that leads industry and community development, services and businesses: Business support and education
- **Priority Three**
Experience development that positions Tasmania as Australia's best cycling destination: Marketing and events

¹ Tourism Research Australia, 2015, Growing Cycling Tourism in Victoria (conducted by EY Sweeney).

Priority One – Infrastructure that provides diverse, accessible and high quality visitor experiences

Tracks, routes and trails

1. Continue to consolidate and strengthen cycle tourism in Tasmania through:
 - supporting and continuing to develop the North-East Tasmanian cycling hub
 - supporting and developing the emerging hub of Hobart and the Southern region
 - maturing and growing the West-North West offering to provide unique cycling experiences that complement those in the North and the South to become a hub for cycle tourism.
2. Coordinate between mountain bike and rail trail managers to implement high quality, consistent signage and wayfinding and consistent marking of trails (difficulty rating, ascents, distances which could be adopted Tasmania wide).
3. Identify and promote a range of road rides of different lengths and difficulty as the lead road rides. These might include the existing rides (such as The Fish Shop Ride, Scottsdale Loop, Poatina Ride) branded by local cyclists.

Priority Two – Education and support that leads industry and community development, services and businesses

Business support and education

1. Develop and implement an education campaign aimed at all road users to improve awareness of safety, including:
 - ensure cycle needs are considered in all state road upgrades
 - safe road riding practices by cyclists (implementation of the new 'a metre matters' regulation)
 - wide promotion of the campaign and its measures to local communities and visitors through sources such as local council information, local media, social media, and visitor information sources, cycle clubs, motoring organisations.
2. Continue to support initiatives like the Tourism Industry Councils 'Bike Friendly Business Program', which helps businesses understand the importance of Tasmania's growing cycle tourism industry.

Priority Three – Experience development that positions Tasmania as Australia's best cycling destination

Marketing and events

1. Promote the unique experiences of Tasmanian cycle tourism as hubs focused on:

- North-East Tasmania
- Hobart and the Southern region
- West Coast region (including North West).

The differentiating features and brand values of the three regions should be defined and used to guide marketing.

2. Support and grow calendar of cycling events in Tasmania, including touring, road racing, mountain bike, track and BMX and prepare and implement a cycle tourism marketing plan, including:

- a comprehensive, go-to cycle tourism website as part of Tourism Tasmania's site, or an 'umbrella site' that directs visitors to up to date and high quality sites currently providing information
- encourage industry to package experiences, and provide comprehensive maps and planning information.
- link cycle experiences to accommodation / activities / food and wine develop itinerary options for multi-activity holidays.
- Coordination of sector-wide development and marketing by a dedicated person or team.

3. Cross-promote experiences in other regions of Tasmania and establish a program of cycle-hub related social media, news and public relations activities as new trails and developments come online.



Implementation

As a key part of the Tasmanian Government's T2I Visitor Economy plans this Cycle Tourism Strategy is supported by funding of \$6 million.

The funding will be utilised to support the elements and priority opportunities outlined in this Strategy and includes the \$1 million for the St Helens Mountain Bike Trail Network to create a unique 66 kilometre Stacked Loop Network, which is part of stage two of the expanded Derby - Blue Tiers project along with the \$800 000 committed to the Blue Derby Mountain Bike Trails.

Cycle Tourism Fund

The Tasmanian Government has established a Cycle Tourism Fund (the fund).

The Fund is available for applications from local government, key industry stakeholders and peak bodies to make application for projects, programs or relevant initiatives that support the priority opportunities outlined in this Strategy. The Fund will look to support projects that grow Tasmania as Australia's leading cycle tourism destination for the road, mountain biking, touring and cycle event markets.

Funding available is \$4.2 million.

Fund criteria and application details can be accessed at www.stategrowth.tas.gov.au



Cycling in Tasmania

1.1 Cycling participation

Participation in cycling in Tasmania is close to the Australian average. In 2015, 17.8 per cent of Tasmanian residents (91 600 people) rode a bicycle in a typical week – an increase in weekly participation levels from 13 per cent in 2013². An estimated 34.8 per cent of Tasmanian residents (179 300 people) cycle at least once in a year. Cycling participation among people under 30 years of age in 2015 was higher in regional Tasmania than Hobart, but participation among people over 30 years was higher in Hobart.

1.2 Cycle tourism in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Visitor Survey shows that while overall numbers are modest, there is a trend of significant growth in the number of interstate and international visitors to Tasmania that participate in cycling activities:

- In 2016, a total of 38 823 visitors said they participated in cycling and / or mountain biking activity while they were in Tasmania.

Anecdotal information indicates that there is considerable growth in cycle tourism in the northern Tasmania particularly associated with the Derby and Blue Tier mountain bike hub. Increased road riding is also reported.

1.3 Mountain bike and off-road cycling

A 2009 survey of Tasmanian mountain bikers (conducted for the Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan³) found that the Tasmanian mountain bikers shared the following characteristics with mountain bikers in Australia and other countries:

- predominantly male (though increasing female participation)
- mainly in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups
- rode on a regular basis
- several years' experience – 38 per cent more than 10 years
- tertiary educated
- higher than average income
- willing to travel for exceptional riding experiences and events
- most (over 80 per cent) preferred or participated most often in cross country / all mountain riding, 28 per cent participated in downhill riding, 24 per cent participated in off-road touring and 14 per cent participated in dirt jumping or free riding.

A 2013 survey in relation to mountain biking and other trail proposals for Wellington Park near Hobart⁴ revealed:

- 26 per cent of respondents participated in mountain biking once a week or more, and a further 21 per cent participated one or more times in a two-month period

² Australian Bicycle Council & Austroads (July 2015). Summary sheet: 2015 National Cycling Participation Survey: Tasmanian Cycling Participation.

³ Sport and Recreation Tasmania (2009), *Tasmanian Mountain Bike Plan: Main Report*, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, Hobart.

⁴ TRC Tourism (March 2013). *Potential for Mountain Biking in North Eastern Tasmania: Market Demand and Economic Assessment*. Prepared for Northern Tasmania Development.

- 42 per cent of respondents were most likely to participate in half day mountain biking activities, 27 per cent in full day activities and a smaller percentage participated in multi-day mountain biking
- the majority (about 60 per cent) of respondents were willing to travel for more than an hour for a half-day or a day mountain biking experience
- for a multi-day experience, 14 per cent of respondents were willing to travel up to three hours, another 14 per cent would travel up to four hours and 57 per cent would travel for more than four hours.

1.4 Opportunity for growth

Tourism Research Australia⁵ found the domestic cycle tourism market is relatively small, but participants are active, often taking multiple trips each year. Forty-five per cent of participants and 36 per cent of spectators had gone on at least three cycling trips in the previous year. They engaged in a range of activities, including different styles of cycling and participating / spectating at events, and often travel to regional areas. Key aspects of the research included are listed below.

Most popular cycling experience on holiday

- Sightseeing around city / town (41 per cent)
- Cycling on cycle path route along a foreshore, river or lake (35 per cent)
- Daytrip along metropolitan cycle paths (25 per cent)
- Watching a cycle race or event (24 per cent)

Most significant reasons for participating in cycling experiences or spectating

- Health and fitness (50 per cent)
- Relaxation (42 per cent)
- I enjoy being outside / out in open air (42 per cent)
- I enjoy cycling for recreation (41 per cent)
- Sightseeing (40 per cent)

Positive attitudes towards cycling

- Cycling is a great way to experience new places and sights (52 per cent)
- Cycling is a great activity to do with friends / family while on a holiday / trip (48 per cent)
- I am a confident cyclist (28 per cent)

Negative attitudes towards cycling reported

- I don't feel experienced enough to consider cycling as part of my holiday / trip (51 per cent)
- It takes a lot of time and effort to plan a cycling trip (43 per cent)
- I'm concerned about cycling problems like punctures and breakdowns (40 per cent)
- It is difficult to find accommodation I like while on a cycling trip (16 per cent)

⁵ Ibid

The Tourism Research Australia data highlights that significant market share could be targeted by capturing the attention of those who have not yet decided, or who 'don't know' their views on Tasmania as a cycle destination.

Research recently conducted in Victoria found that people considering a cycle holiday in the next five years, would be most encouraged by downloadable maps of tracks, trails and facilities, accessible information online, extensive cycle paths and trails and a website that provides comprehensive information about planning a cycle trip.

Significant opportunities for Tasmania to improve its reputation as a cycling tourism destination have also been highlighted by the results highlighted below.

The greatest number of respondents (23 per cent) stated that Tasmania was the state with the best natural scenery, well ahead of Queensland (14 per cent), Victoria (13 per cent) and New South Wales (nine per cent).



Tasmania ranked fourth (behind Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland) for 'best cycling experiences as part of a holiday, short break or day trip'.



Only five per cent of respondents rated Tasmania's quality of cycling tracks and trails as the best. However, 47 per cent answered 'don't know'.

Tasmania ranked fourth for cycling tourism facilities and accommodation, and was only ranked best for cycling tourism facilities and accommodation by five per cent. 34 per cent answered 'don't know'.





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