



# T21 Visitor Economy Action Plan

PROGRESS REPORT FEBRUARY 2021



Tourism Industry Council Tasmania



# T21 Visitor Economy Action Plan

PRIORITIES: AUGUST 2020 – FEBRUARY 2021

Dates forecast as planned are subject to timing of border and other COVID-19 restrictions.

## Priority 1: Rebuilding visitation

Implement a destination marketing program supporting our highly desirable brand		
Grow demand through a single, integrated demand plan across all key demand drivers – leisure, business and events – and leveraging market opportunities.	TTas, TT-Line, SG (Events Tasmania), BET, RTOs, HBA, LST, operators	Demand Recovery Working Group established and work underway to connect demand driving activities of all leisure, business and event organisations/agencies. Single demand recovery plan is a living document that will be adapted as markets open/change.
Encourage Tasmanians to explore the State and support tourism and hospitality businesses	TTas, DSG	\$12.5 million travel voucher program was implemented through two releases, in September 2020 (\$7m) and again in October 2020 (for an additional \$5.5m), equating to approximately 70,000 available bed nights to stimulate travel activity within the State that otherwise would not have taken place during travel restrictions and lockdown events in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme closed on 31 December 2020, with approximately 27,000 vouchers redeemed, equating to almost \$28 million of additional expenditure in to the market (\$7.37m of this on food and beverages). The <i>Welcome Back</i> and <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> campaigns continue in the Tasmanian market.
Plan agile market engagement as markets re-open.	TTas	Interstate market engagement has been activated aligned with border restrictions.
Re-enter the domestic market with phase 2 of the <i>Tasmania - Come Down For Air</i> brand campaign.	TTas	Interstate campaign launched mid-October and concluded on 19 December 2020. A second burst of activity has been in market 11 January – 31 January. Key domestic source markets include Queensland, NSW, ACT, VIC, South Australia and WA.
Launch a drive/touring marketing program and associated five drive journeys to support regional visitation.	SG, TTas, RTOs	Program launched to the Tasmanian market in November 2020. The interstate touring marketing program launched on 1 February 2021 and will run through to 30 June 2021.
Re-enter the New Zealand market with a campaign to drive visitation to Tasmania.	TTas	Market re-entry launched on 17 January 2021 and will run through to 30 June 2021.
Partner with Tourism Australia on its <i>Holiday Here this Year</i> campaign to showcase Tasmania in the interstate market.	TTas	Work with Tourism Australia is ongoing.
Our home-grown festivals and events		
Provide grant assistance to events proposed for 2021 to implement COVID-19 safe practices	SG	Event Ready Grant Program ran 23 September to 15 November 2020 – available in grants of up to \$5,000 to help events implement COVID-19 safe practices and increase marketing and promotion capability within the COVID-19 environment. A total of \$320,968 was granted to 69 successful applicants (out of a total of 73 applications). A second round of the Event Ready Grant Program opened 15 February 2021. Based on feedback received following the first round, assessment of applications in the second round will be ongoing to accelerate the approval and payment process. \$2.5 million Event Infrastructure and Critical Support Small Business Grant Program ran from 14 October to 13 November 2021. Grants from \$5,000 to \$100,000 were confirmed supporting 39 local businesses who can provide critical event support infrastructure and other services essential to the running of events; e.g. marquee hire, portable toilets, AV and technical support, as well as professional event organising businesses and promoters.
Invest in attracting participation-led events with potential to fill out the demand in regional and urban areas across all seasons.	SG	New round of the Championship and Touring Grants Programs open for application from eligible touring groups and competitions that are able to promote pre & post championship travel within the state. While traditionally the funding criteria for these grants is based on interstate (and international) visitation, the program has been adjusted to include intrastate movement as a criteria for the 2021 calendar year.
Encourage the development of innovative and new event opportunities with potential to be held in 2021-22.	SG, RTOs	Framework for COVID-19 Safe Events and Activities released 23 October 2020.

Prioritise actions that support intrastate business events.	BET	Event planners and organisers worked to adapt to the intrastate market while that opportunity existed. With borders reopening the BET sales team is seeing increased bidding activity from the interstate market, and some new events have been contracted in the last month.
Use the Business Events Attraction Fund (BEAF) to be competitive in attracting business events.	BET	Review of eligibility criteria of the BEAF undertaken and criteria changed to be more flexible for the post-COVID business events market. Current discussions with State Growth to convert BEAF to a grant deed, will allow BET to be more aggressive and agile in attracting new business events to the state, in the highly competitive post-COVID market.
Strategic targeting of business events that are rescheduling international programs.	BET	A strong focus of BET has been planning famil activity for the first quarter of 2021 for both the Conference and Incentives (C&I) and Association market. The extent of this activity is dependent on funding confirmation. BET has also delivered marketing activity via a digital marketing campaign, promoting Tasmania as a premium business events destination as borders reopen.
Focus on the corporate incentives market as the business events market adjusts.	BET	Strong focus on attracting the C&I market to Tasmania, with famil activity planned for the first quarter of 2021. The scale of that activity is dependent on funding confirmation. This famil activity will be supported by a broader C&I sales and marketing campaign.
<b>Drive holidays and Tassie road trips</b>		
Launch a compelling program to position Tasmania as the leading road-trip destination.	TTas, RTOs	Self-drive touring program launched to interstate market on 1 February 2021.
Launch Tasmania's Drive Journeys.	SG, RTOs	Launched in November 2020.
Deliver Tassie's Top Tourism Towns Program.	TICT	St Helens officially named Tassie's Top Tourism Town 2020. The Search for Tassie's Top Tourism Town 2021 officially launched in February 2021, as part of the national Australia's Top Tourism Town competition.
Co-invest and align marketing activities around Tasmania's destination brand as part of a coordinated strategy between Tourism Tasmania and TT-Line.	TTas, TT-Line	A cooperative marketing program has been developed with TT-Line that will be in market Q4.
Stimulate demand for Spirit of Tasmania services through incentives to support additional sailings to meet demand.	TT-Line	Spirit of Tasmania recommenced promoting in market in November 2020.
<b>Uniquely Tasmanian operators and experiences</b>		
Support and champion quality tourism operators that enhance our brand through prioritising marketing assistance, industry development support, advocacy and other assistance.	TICT, TTas, SG, RTOs	The Tourism Industry Marketing Support Program that closed in October 2020 provided a total of \$370,000 in grants to 199 successful applicants to undertake interstate marketing activities. Australian Tourism Accreditation Program fees waived for all operators in 2021 to ensure operators continued participation in the program. Other programs in development.
Continue to invest in industry-led customer service enhancement, tourism accreditation and quality assurance and awards programs to maintain and elevate industry standards and the visitor experience.	THA, TICT	THA Great Customer Experience program continuing, and including THA provided (free till Easter 2022) on-line learning Framework with non-accredited skills training, including COVID-19, and endorsed certification. TICT Quality Tourism Program continuing, with waived accreditation fees. Tasmanian Tourism Awards to be re-launched in March 2021.
Maintain focus on tourism as a priority area for attracting investment and working with proponents to support new projects and address barriers.	OCG, RTOs, DPIPWE	OCG continues to work with Tasmanian businesses seeking investment and is proactively working to attract new tourism developments by hosting delegations and making key introductions that strengthen Tasmania's position as recovery continues.
Invest in Tasmania's iconic historic sites to support recovery.	DPIPWE	\$20 million in additional financial support for the Port Arthur Historic Site.  \$4 million to the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens to finalise development of a new visitor centre and improvements to access points across the Gardens.  \$3 million towards construction of the new History and Interpretation Centre at the Cascades Female Factory.

Playing to our creative strengths		
Work with Brand Tasmania and tourism partners to provide access to cultural and creative products and experiences that are distinctly Tasmanian.	SG, Brand Tas, RTOs	Under development. Launched the Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy: 2020 and Beyond. \$2.5 million over two years for an Arts and Cultural Support fund including grants to support performers and artists to produce new works.
Launch Tasmanac, a platform that connects Tasmania's cultural collections and encourages dispersal to our regional towns.	TMAG	Project manager for production phase contracted and platform is in final stages of development.

## Priority 2: Restoring access

Re-establish our network of core routes between Hobart, Launceston, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane and work with carriers to increase frequency and capacity.	TTas, SG	All carriers responded with significant capacity into Tasmania as border restrictions lifted in November 2020 with strong loads reported for the Christmas/New Year period. As new border restrictions came into place late December, there was significant impact on capacity between Tasmania and NSW, VIC and QLD resulting in significant loss of visitors to Tasmania over this period. With relaxation of border restrictions in late January, there is a return of capacity from February on the BNE/ SYD and MEL routes to Tasmania. Capacity is still very fluid and continually changing according to operational demand. Tourism Tasmania marketing activity underway in the eastern states is driving demand generation and should demand continue to grow, all carriers will retain/adjust/grow capacity to meet this demand.
Undertake cooperative marketing using access partner channels to drive conversion.	TTas, SG	In-market activity planned with major access partners (air and sea) between now and June 2021.
Stimulate and meet demand through additional sailings of the Spirit of Tasmania ferries.	TT-Line	Additional sailings to be provided in response to demand.
Support intrastate connections with our Bass Strait islands subject to commercial viability.	TTas, SG	Direct flights between Hobart and King and Flinders Islands commenced 30 September 2020; extension of the Hobart to King Island and Flinders Island routes has been approved and will now operate till 30 April 2021. Discussion continues with Sharp Airlines on the ongoing sustainability / operation of these flights post April 2021 through the winter months. As at 31 Jan 2021 – a total of 2,720 passengers had travelled on the Hobart to Bass Strait Island services: 1,470 passengers on the Flinders Island service and 1,250 on the King Island service. The flights have been promoted to the intrastate market through Tourism Tasmania's <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> campaign.
Initiate capacity-recovery and demand-generation activities to return passenger volumes to our smaller regional airports including the Bass Strait islands.	TTas, SG	The <i>Make Yourself at Home</i> campaign features demand generation promotions for King and Flinders Islands. In late December key stakeholders, RTOs and local operators attended a session with TTas and Sharp Airlines on a team-led approach to sustainability and marketing of services.
Prioritise re-establishing direct flights from Gold Coast and Perth and identify other direct city opportunities.	TTas, SG	Hobart and Gold Coast route reinstated by Jetstar on 1 December 2020 at four services per week and are continuing to operate. Hobart and Canberra launched by Link Aviation on 5 November 2020 at four services per week have grown to six services per week. Hobart and Canberra launched by Qantas on 4 December at three services per week. Hobart and Perth launched by Qantas 14 November at three services per week, with extra flights scheduled over Christmas/ New Year and which continue to operate through February/March at five – six per week.
Secure trans-Tasman flights from New Zealand with facilities at Hobart Airport to support a long-term international connection to New Zealand.	TTas, SG, HBA	Business case developed and preferred carrier identified for operation of direct services between Tasmania and New Zealand targeted for 2021. Negotiations with preferred carrier are in the final stages. Operation of flights between Tasmania and New Zealand is dependent on opening of borders by Australian and New Zealand Governments. Additionally, operations will require construction of temporary international passenger border processing facilities at Hobart Airport and the stand-up of ABF/Bio Security/AFP resources. Construction of border processing facilities underway.

### Priority 3: Supporting our people

Business owners		
Prioritise industry uptake of the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) to develop contemporary multi-channel distribution capabilities for tourism and hospitality operators.	TTas, RTOs	Contact program underway with operators to foster uptake of ATDW. Broader program under development to focus on multi-channel distribution capabilities.
Prioritise small-business support through grant, loan and business assistance schemes to sustain themselves, build resilience and innovate.	SG	<p>\$60 million Business Growth Loan Scheme released 14 September 2020 and is ongoing.</p> <p>The Business Continuity Grant Program opened on 26 March 2020 and closed on 4 May 2020. 2,080 businesses were funded.</p> <p>\$20 million allocated in the 2020-21 State Budget for the Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Assistance Package, as well as the Event Infrastructure and Critical Support Small Business Grant program. This assistance package included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A \$15 million Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Grant program, which opened on 3 August 2020 and closed on 24 August 2020. Grant decisions were made by an independent panel and \$9.5 million was allocated in grants of \$5,000 to 1,904 eligible businesses. The remaining \$5.5 million will be allocated to initiatives to support the sustainability and recovery of Tasmanian businesses.</li> <li>- An additional \$2 million provided for a second round of the Small Business Continuity Grant program, which opened on 10 August 2020 and closed on 2 October 2020.</li> <li>- \$462,000 was allocated in grants of \$750 to 616 businesses. (2,080 businesses were funded in the first round March – May 2020). The remaining \$1.5 million has been allocated to the Small Business Advice for Recovery Grant Program, which opened on 28 October 2020 and closed on 22 February 2021.</li> <li>- \$3 million to enhance existing business support programs, including the Tourism Industry Market Support Program, access to additional free business advice through Enterprise Centres Tasmania, increased access to the Digital Ready for Business Program and additional initiatives to improve access to mental health support for small businesses through a new Mental Health Support Program.</li> </ul> <p>\$10 million committed in 2020-21 State budget to reimburse small businesses up to a capped amount against their energy bills for first quarter.</p> <p>Annual liquor licensing fees waived for 2021 relieving the hospitality industry of approximately \$1 million in costs.</p> <p>Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme and Small Business Grants scheme extended to all industries for a further 12 months until 30 June 2022.</p>
Support our tourism operators to re-engage with the interstate visitor market as Tasmania's borders re-open.	SG, TTas, RTOs	<p>The Tourism Industry Marketing Support Program that closed in October 2020 provided a total of \$370,000 in grants to 199 successful applicants to undertake interstate marketing activities.</p> <p>A \$250,000 state-wide campaign encouraging Tasmanians to support hospitality venues over summer was run between November 2020 and January 2021. The campaign, "Eat It Tassie!" was delivered across radio, TV, print and campaign-owned social media channels, supported by a website and directory listing that was open and free to all hospitality venues.</p> <p>Over the two months of the Eat It Tassie! campaign, 141 venues from around Tasmania signed up to the Eat It Tassie! directory. The Eat It Tassie! Facebook page made 70 posts and gained 823 followers. The TVC campaign saw 275 ads played in the north and 274 in southern Tasmania.</p> <p>The campaign directors are in discussion with Government about ongoing funding for the campaign concept with regional based event and public relations extensions.</p> <p>TICT Tassie's 5 for COVID Safe Travel industry campaign released 15 October 2020.</p>
Share forward demand, research data and market insights to inform businesses in their planning.	TTas, SG, RTOs	Forward accommodation demand data secured with new providers, with editions of a new monthly report published in December 2020 and January and February 2021. The <i>Industry Research and Insights Update</i> includes forward accommodation demand outlook for the state and indicative regions, as well as broader consumer and industry insights.

Provide regular opportunities for industry to share information and remain connected.	RTOs, TICT, THA, TTas, SG	Ongoing program of industry online and in person events. Includes three-weekly 'Product Showcase' presentations by industry operators to Tourism Tasmania staff (in person and/or online). Continuing weekly 'Regional Industry Recovery Check-in' meetings between the RTOs, TTas and SG. Record attendance of 460 delegates at the 2020 Tasmanian Tourism Conference, held across two days in Launceston and Hobart in October/November 2020. 160 industry stakeholders and operators attended the West x North-West Regional Tourism Forum in January. Two editions of the TICT Quarterly distributed to industry. Tourism Tasmania conducted seven industry workshops around the state in February providing an update on marketing activities including the winter program for 2021.
Launch a new online solution to connect employment opportunities with tourism and hospitality professionals.	TICT, THA	Decision to not proceed with this model at the current time.
Provide an industry mentoring initiative, Incubator Plus, linking experienced tourism and business specialists with operators needing professional assistance with business continuity and support in resetting for new markets.	TICT	Over 470 business operators participated in Incubator Plus throughout 2020.
Continue to collaborate with the University of Tasmania around its graduate certificate scholarships.	TICT	900 students enrolled and collaboration will continue.
<b>Workforce</b>		
Establish a new industry-owned and led vocational training provider for the tourism and hospitality sectors, and a Ministerial Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Advisory Committee as a landmark investment in training and development for tourism and hospitality.	SG, THA, TICT	The Tasmanian Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Advisory Committee has been approved by the Minister with the first meeting anticipated in March 2021. \$1 million committed in 2020-21 budget to support establishment of the new not-for-profit registered training organisation. Tasmanian Hospitality and Training Ltd established with CEO recruitment underway.
Prioritise low-cost training, mentoring and professional development opportunities for our workforce to fill immediate skill gaps, future needs and to respond to COVID-19 requirements.	SG, TICT, THA	\$6.3 million Rapid Response Skills Initiative enables eligible job seekers to access up to \$3,000 towards the cost of training and up to \$500 for employment advice. The JobTrainer program has made over \$20 million in fee-free training available to young people and job seekers in a range of priority qualifications and skills sets, including hospitality and tourism. A new program 'Mentoring for Success' to support apprenticeships and traineeships in small and medium enterprises through group training organisations is under development.
Support practical initiatives that connect employers to job-ready people.	SG, TICT, THA	THA working with venues to promote job vacancies and job-ready people through social media and other channels.

#### Priority 4: Shaping our future

<b>Tasmanian Aboriginal people</b>		
Encourage Tasmanian Aboriginal people to maintain a program of cultural presentations and workshops with the broader Tasmanian tourism industry.	TICT, RTOs, TTas	Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural presentations included in Tasmanian Tourism Conference in Hobart and Launceston. Follow up cultural exchange sessions being offered to industry. Tasmanian Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training for TTas staff commenced in February 2021.
Work with the community in ensuring Tasmania's Aboriginal culture and tourism experiences are appropriately and respectfully represented in destination marketing activities.	TTas, RTOs	Tourism Tasmania has commenced development of a Reconciliation Action Plan that will include destination marketing activities.

Climate change		
Commission research to assess the costs, benefits, value proposition and the pathway in making Tasmania a carbon-neutral destination.	TICT, TTas	\$50,000 Tasmanian Government Climate Change grant to TICT to progress research. Reference Group established and first meeting convened. Research projects currently underway with expected finalisation of modelling of costs and pathway to being a carbon neutral destination expected to be completed by April 2021.
Inclusive tourism		
Audit Tasmanian listings in the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) to assess the current supply of inclusive tourism product, identify gaps and encourage all operators to complete new accessibility criteria.	TTas, TICT, RTOs	Inclusive Tourism reference group established. Audit of ATDW accessible product listings completed and shared with Inclusive Tourism reference group at first meeting held 17 December 2020. Tasmania planning to be the first state to launch the new Accessible Tourism Quality Assurance module in March 2021.
Cruise ships		
Research the value proposition of the cruise market for Tasmania to determine its costs and benefits and its alignment with Tasmania's brand.	TTas	Consultant, KPMG, engaged and work commenced on the project in January 2021.
Our future tourism network		
Pilot an ambassador/host program to engage locals in welcoming visitors and providing information services.	TICT, SG, TTas, RTOs	Ambassador/host program concept being progressed with intent to launch first pilot destination in April 2021.
Review the roles and responsibilities, structures and resources, being clear on the value proposition for each organisation within the visitor economy network.	TTas, SG, TICT, RTOs	Review commenced and interim paper presented to T21 Recovery Committee.

## Agencies

TTas	Tourism Tasmania
SG	Department of State Growth
TICT	Tourism Industry Council Tasmania
RTOs	Regional Tourism Organisations
THA	Tasmanian Hospitality Association
TT-Line	TT-Line
OCG	Office of the Coordinator-General

DPIPWE	Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
TMAG	Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery
BET	Business Events Tasmania
Brand Tas	Brand Tasmania
HBA	Hobart Airport
LST	Launceston Airport