



GEORGE TOWN

Destination Action Plan 2018 –2021

November 2018



Acknowledgments

The development of the George Town Destination Action Plan (DAP) has been facilitated by Tourism Northern Tasmania (TNT), supported by George Town Council in partnership with the Department of State Growth.

The process brought together representatives from all stakeholder groups that benefit from the visitor economy, local government, industry and the community, to develop a plan. This Plan seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities facing the destination and to establish achievable, affordable priorities that if delivered would increase the destinations competitiveness.

Specifically, we would like to thank the individuals that participated in the plan development process:

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Destination Action Plan Leadership Group

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Maureen Lacey – Harcourts East Tamar

Shirley Lincoln – Low Head Penguin Tours

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Jye Marshall – Tammy Marshall Coffee

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Theresa Plumstead – East Beach Tourist Park

Sue Sherriff – News Xpress

Adrienne Smeeton – Lighthouse Regional Arts

Mike Turner – Enviroinex

John Watts – Low Head Pilot Station Maritime Museum

Lorraine Wootten – George Town and District Historical Society

Images used within this document are courtesy of George Town Council, Tourism Tasmania, Annette Freeman, N.R. Goldsmith, Knox Photographic Society and Bret Salinger.

Introduction

Tourism Northern Tasmania is supporting the Destination Action Plan process with George Town in recognition of the potential of the region, and to build on the key pillars of the Northern Tasmanian Destination Management Plan.

The Destination Action Plans are an implementation initiative of the Tasmanian Visitor Economy Strategy 2015-2020 (T21): Priority #4: Building capability, capacity and community.

A core strategy is to recognise that visitors to the region are primarily attracted to destinations and experiences. Therefore the development, marketing and management of the region's destinations are pivotal to the success of the whole region.

The Destination Action Plan for George Town identifies priority strategies and actions which if implemented over three years will enhance competitiveness of George Town as a primary visitor destination of the region. These strategies will also facilitate regional collaboration and cooperation.

The Plan has been prepared by a facilitated workshop process involving business and community representatives who considered and reached consensus on tourism development, marketing and management opportunities and challenges. The group then identified and agreed on the key priorities and actions that would make a positive difference to the growth and sustainability of the George Town visitor economy and experience.





George Town and surrounds

George Town and the East Tamar region in Tasmania are uniquely located to offer exciting opportunities to invest, live and visit. The region has a mild temperate maritime climate and has direct frontage to the Tamar River Estuary as well as fantastic ocean beaches on the edge of Bass Strait. Coastal and river environments are held in high regard by many people across Australia and internationally, who are looking for attractive investment and lifestyle options in close proximity to a regional city (Launceston) and a large regional airport (Launceston Airport one hour away).

The working Port of Bell Bay is a deep water harbour adjacent to the George Town area. Good recreational boating facilities exist on the edge of the town, along with a successful seafood factory, selling Tasmania's freshest and best quality fish and chips. The East Tamar area surrounding George Town in the Pipers River district is home to many cool climate wineries producing Australia's world class premium sparkling wine and pinot noir. Peppers York Cove offers outstanding accommodation, hospitality, conference facilities and contemporary dining options, providing a great base to explore the region and perhaps find your idyllic holiday home!

The region has a rich maritime history which you can explore at the Low Head Pilot Station, Maritime Museum, Bass & Flinders Centre and lighthouse.

George Town – facts and figures

Location

Northern Tasmania, at the mouth of the Tamar River (Kanamaluka), 45 minute drive from Launceston City, one hour to Launceston Airport.

Area

64,900 ha

Population

George Town 4,300; Council area 6,700

Temperature

Average daily maximum 21c in summer, and 12.5c in winter. Average rainfall less than 800mm per year, with a distinct seasonal cycle.



Objectives

The common objectives for tourism are:

1. To increase visitor numbers
2. To increase visitor length of stay
3. To increase visitor expenditure
4. To increase visitor dispersal (geographically and seasonally)
5. To increase visitor satisfaction.

The Visitor Economy

Indicator of Performance
(YE March 2015)

George Town

George Town
3 year average (Annual growth)

Visitor nights

Non-Tasmanian

62,424

23.5%

Intrastate

44,000

2.4%

Average daily spend

Non-Tasmanian

\$197

3.1%

Intrastate

\$111

n/a

Visitor expenditure

\$17.2 million

Non-Tasmanian visitor dollars

\$12.3m

Intrastate visitor dollars

\$ 4.9m



Our collective strengths

- Day tour base
- Weather
- Clean beautiful river
- Family safe beach
- Surfing
- Fishing
- Fresh food
- Wineries
- Central location
- Art
- Range of accommodation
- Visual amenity, unspoiled
- Escape
- Close to City of Launceston – 30 minutes
- History
- Nature
- Adventure – treetops, mountain biking
- Mt George Lookout
- Walking – flat
- Wildlife
- Community friendly
- Relaxed lifestyle
- Less traffic
- Affordable real estate
- Free parking
- Volunteers – local, dedicated
- Retail, shopping
- Health & other services
- Quiet



Our challenges

- Activate the plan – leadership
- George Town website accuracy and current
- Poor communication – stakeholders
- Negative view of George Town (internal & external)
- Competitive advantages (unique selling points)
- Off season visitation
- Strong LTO – coalface
- Low Head – poor connection
- Event/market positiveness
- Investment attraction (new business)
- More promotion – all to take responsibility, education & training (about what George Town has, including schools)
- Product awareness (internal & external)
- Attractions not tourist ready
- Fear of change
- Penguins & whales – increase visitors
- Lack of signing – (wayfinding & attractions)
- Volunteer renewal
- George Town myths
- Red tape for change
- Diversity of food offerings
- Utilise airfield
- Local news gap
- Road access – diversify, upgrade
- Complete bike, walking tracks to Low Head
- Bridge access (across Tamar)



Our opportunities



- Events development
- Local tourism group/leadership
- History & heritage attraction development & promotion
- Improve townscape & related overall presentation
- Extend shopping hours
- North Eastern Advertiser to extend to George Town or alternative
- Educate younger generation (pride, knowledge, social media)

- Promote genealogy assets
- Promotion including co-op (local and West Tamar Council)
- Develop foreshore
- Fresh produce availability (& farmers market)
- Local visitor hub (tours, local produce, services)
- Seafood cooking show
- Develop events that showcase George Town
- Stop & stay in George Town (journey end)

- George Town Council and West Tamar Council to cooperatively market
- Targa – visit George Town
- Visitor passport
- Lifestyle events
- Digital engagement
- George Town to 'Own the Tamar River'

Success factors

DIAGNOSTIC RATING

Characteristics	Rating	Comments
1. Strong local organisations focused on their core role of visitor servicing	5	Need to strengthen
2. Strong regional organisations focused on their core role of regional marketing and development	5	Increase communication
3. Local Government support	6	Good with room for improvement
4. Strong, consistent and effective leadership by individuals or organisations	5	Develop and support
5. Strategic planning for the region with economic, social, environmental and cultural objectives supported by local destination plans	5	Regional in place. Destination in progress
6. Consistent visitor service excellence	6	Opportunity to improve
7. Research driven cooperative marketing	4	Engage with TNT
8. A breadth and depth of tourism infrastructure, experiences and events matched to market demand	4	Development opportunity
9. Risk management plans in place	5	Include visitor management
10. Supportive communities which understand the value of tourism.	5	Attention required



Action Plan implementation

The following Action Plan outlines priorities and actions as a guide for George Town to collaboratively and cooperatively implement the Plan.

To facilitate this, an Implementation Leadership Group of representatives will be formed. While the Plan identifies primary organisational responsibilities and in many cases joint responsibility, it is reasonable to expect that the Implementation Leadership Group will consider and review this progressively. One key consideration will be the availability and securing of resources to progress the implementation of the Plan in a timely manner. It may also be appropriate and necessary to involve other organisations and to seek funding for specific projects.

The Plan does not commit any organisation to the actions proposed but is a guide to pursuing priorities and actions which will make a positive difference to the achievement of the tourism objectives noted above.

The priority actions have been assigned a KPI priority rating as a guide. These ratings are:

HIGH	within the first year
MEDIUM	within one to two years
LOW	within three years

Progress of implementation of the Plan will be undertaken annually by Tourism Northern Tasmania in consultation with the DAP Leadership Group. This may result in a revision and updating of the Plan. Regardless, a new plan will be prepared in three years.



PRIORITY 1

Establish the leadership capacity to drive delivery of the Destination Action Plan.

Actions	Lead organisation	Priorities
1. Establish a DAP Implementation Steering Committee/Leadership Group that meets regularly.	DAP	High
2. Consider a formal launch event for the DAP to engage and motivate all stakeholders.	DAP	High
3. Establish a closed Facebook group as a means of maximising communication of progress and activity. Support this with regular community/industry networking meetings.	DAP	High
4. Consider establishing a Tourism Leadership Development program for young business people and emerging leaders. <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bring in speakers on Visitor Economy (e.g. Chris TNT, other leaders)▪ Famils to tourism businesses▪ Explore opportunities for engaging young participants	DAP/ Chamber/ Beacon	Medium
5. Encourage and support tourism businesses to enter the Tasmanian Tourism Awards. Consider businesses entering the Launceston Chamber of Commerce awards as a first step.	DAP	Medium
6. Consider sponsoring young and aspiring business leaders to attend the Tasmanian Tourism Conference and Australian Regional Tourism Network Conference.	DAP/Council	Low





PRIORITY 2

Raise community awareness of the value of the visitor economy.

Actions		Lead organisation	Priorities
1.	Develop and follow an industry Communications Plan, identifying who we want to talk to and what communication channels we want to use.	DAP Group	High
2.	Establish a school's engagement program to provide knowledge and engagement opportunities (famils) of local attractions and the value of the visitor economy.	Council/Beacon Foundation	Low
3.	Establish a locals 'famil' program to encourage local residents and business people to visit and experience attractions and service providers and to become visitor ambassadors.	DAP Group	Medium/Low





PRIORITY 3

Develop infrastructure, product, and visitor services to match demand.

Actions	Lead organisation	Priorities
1. .Support George Town Council in the development of a Master Plan.	DAP	High
2. Advocate for development of a recreational mountain bike park in the George Town area.	DAP/ TNT	High
3. Support the ongoing provision of visitor information in George Town. (This needs clarification)	DAP Group	Medium
4. Support and help enable Councils events strategy including development and promotion of a calendar of events to share with visitors and businesses.	DAP	Medium
5. Encourage increased retail and hospitality services opening hours to meet visitor demand. Consider cooperative rostering and customer referral coordination. Invite existing business owners to motivate collaboration.	Council/DAP Group	High
6. Expand our plan to include the region which George Town is in – the surrounding visitor attractions such as wineries, fresh produce, cafes and dining experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ George Town is missing from the Tamar Valley Wine Route – develop opportunities for wineries and regional produce for George Town and the district▪ Need to improve and develop George Town as a 'base camp' and leverage off the proximity and access to wineries.	Council/TNT/ DAP	Medium







PRIORITY 4
Marketing

Actions

Lead organisation

Priorities

1. Develop and follow a marketing plan including social media plan..	DAP/ TNT	High
2. Produce a visitor focused map for George Town and surrounds and distribute to northern Visitor Centres and local businesses.	TNT/DAP	High
3. Work collaboratively with TNT to incorporate George Town information into the northerntasmania.com.au website..	TNT/Council	High